

New Jersey Offshore Wind Research & Monitoring Initiative

Request for Proposals

for

**Addressing New Jersey's Highest Priority Research and
Monitoring Needs for Environment, Wildlife, and Fisheries**

Associated with Offshore Wind

RFP ISSUANCE DATE:

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RESEARCH AND MONITORING INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

VISION STATEMENT

The New Jersey Offshore Wind Research and Monitoring Initiative addresses the need for regional research and monitoring of marine and coastal resources during offshore wind development, construction, operation and decommissioning as recommended in the New Jersey Offshore Wind Strategic Plan. The Initiative funding is provided by developers through New Jersey’s Offshore Wind Solicitation 2 and 3. The Initiative takes a rigorous scientific approach to uphold the State’s mandate to protect and responsibly manage New Jersey’s coastal and marine resources while supporting the State’s Offshore Wind Economic Development Act, [Executive Order 8](#), [Executive Order 92](#), [Executive Order 307](#), and the [Energy Master Plan](#), which respond to climate change and protect our environment for future generations.

GOAL

Execute a robust Research and Monitoring Initiative to support the responsible implementation of offshore wind energy in the waters off New Jersey’s coastline. The Initiative employs the best available science and is consistent with mandates to protect and responsibly manage New Jersey’s marine and coastal resources.

Table 1. New Jersey Research and Monitoring Initiative Short-Term Highest-Priority Research Needs. Also available on the RMI Webpage.

Short-term Highest Priority Research & Monitoring Needs*		
Data Management	1	Data standardization, processing, analysis, housing, and QA/QC
Environmental Change	2	Examine impacts of OSW energy development on seafloor, light conditions, and ocean stratification (I.e., how could potential changes in circulation patterns due to OSW development affect geological and physical oceanographic properties, such as the mid-Atlantic Cold Pool?)
Benthos	3	Identify & evaluate valuable bottom habitats (e.g., sand ridges, surfclam beds, SAV in estuaries – use survey work in lease areas to identify habitat types) and organisms (summer flounder, skate, dogfish, horseshoe crab, sturgeon); model potential changes to these habitats and organisms
Birds	4	Develop baseline estimates of population-level distribution information (with focus on red knot, piping plover, and roseate turn) by expanding GPS, Motus, and satellite tag technology to characterize migratory movements – particularly flight altitudes – throughout the NY Bight
Bats	5	Update known population data at the proposed development sites (I.e., how many bats will potentially be interacting within the known lease areas)
	6	Use best available technologies (e.g., nanotags and Motus network) to determine the extent of bat migration/activity offshore in the NY Bight (especially for hoary, silver-haired, and Eastern red bats)
Fishes & Invertebrates	7	Examine effects of OSW on the distribution/connectivity of fish & invertebrate species and communities (e.g., acoustic tags for horseshoe crabs or species with obligate migration paths)
	8	Examine the distribution and use of habitat by larvae and juveniles (fish/crustaceans) in the New York Bight (e.g., nursery function and spawning grounds)

Sea Turtles	9	Collate existing data for sea turtle movement, distributions, and habitat use patterns; conduct beach surveys where possible (i.e., how do these animals use the space?)
Marine Mammals	10	Estimate habitat use, distribution, and abundance by season (e.g., overwintering harbor seals) for the right whale, other whales, and dolphins through supporting PAM efforts in the NY Bight; identify environmental variable driving these patterns
	11	Evaluate relative threat of mortality/injury for the right whale, other whales and dolphins from vessel strikes (including increased vessel interactions due to creation of traffic corridors) associated with OSE and non-OSW activities.
Fisheries	12	Adapt DEP trawl survey design to allow for comparison of biases/limitation in and outside of OSW development areas and calibrate new time series
	13	Identify and implement methods to determine how dredge, purse-seine, and trawl fisheries will be affected by construction/during operation; model increased vessel interactions due to creation of traffic corridors
	14	Develop and implement methods to assess impact of OSW on recreational fisheries (e.g., changes in access within the WEAs)
*These priorities are not listed in any ranked order		

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Applicant – A vendor or bidder submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP.

BOEM – Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

Contractor – The bidder awarded a contract.

Data – An electronic database of all quantitative and qualitative information collected as part of the study.

Division – The Division of Science and Research of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

May – Denotes that which is permissible, but not mandatory.

NOAA - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA Fisheries.

NOAA-NEFSC – NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center.

NJDEP – New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

PAM - Passive Acoustic Monitoring.

PI – Principal Investigator. The individual with primary responsibility for communications, preparation, conduct, and reporting related to the proposed work.

Project Manager – Person who shall be the primary point of contact with the NJDEP.

Shall – Denotes that which is a mandatory requirement.

Should – Denotes that which is recommended, but not mandatory.

RFP - Request for Proposal – this document, which establishes the bidding and contract requirements.

ROSA – Responsible Offshore Science Alliance

RWSC - Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind.

State – State of New Jersey.

State Contract Manager – Point of contact in the NJDEP for contract-related matters for the project.

Steering Committee – The New Jersey Offshore Wind Research & Monitoring Initiative’s decision making body.

New Jersey Research and Monitoring Initiative

Request for Proposals

for

Addressing New Jersey’s Short-Term, Highest Priority Research and Monitoring Needs Associated with Offshore Wind

1. Introduction

The State is charged with the management and protection of New Jersey’s natural resources, and as such the mitigation of the potentially severe impacts of climate change on these resources is essential. Offshore wind development is a climate mitigation strategy that can be implemented in New Jersey as described in the State’s Offshore Wind Economic Development Act, [Executive Order 8](#), [Executive Order 92](#), [Executive Order 307](#), [Energy Master Plan](#), and the [Offshore Wind Strategic Plan](#). This Request for Proposals (RFP) supports New Jersey’s Research and Monitoring Initiative (RMI), which addresses the need for regional research and monitoring of marine and coastal resources during all phases of offshore wind development: preconstruction, construction, operation, and decommissioning. The current phase of the RMI will fund research that addresses baseline and/or effects of construction activities on New Jersey’s living or non-living resources (including wildlife, habitats, and fisheries) and/or addresses the effects of offshore wind development and construction on a resource. The RMI supports applied research that builds upon the initial NJDEP Baseline Ecological Studies and many other subsequent preconstruction resource assessments to inform our understanding of how to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential effects of offshore wind development on New Jersey’s natural resources.

2. Purpose of Solicitation

The RMI is tasked with assessing the impact of offshore wind energy development on environmental and ecological resources in the waters off New Jersey’s coastline from preconstruction through construction, operation, and decommissioning. The RMI has identified fourteen short-term, highest-priority research and monitoring needs for marine and coastal resources during the preconstruction phase of offshore wind development in New Jersey (see Table 1). Research conducted during this phase will build upon the State’s baseline data for assessing impacts of offshore wind energy on the State’s natural resources during all phases of offshore wind development. Toward this goal, the RMI seeks proposals that address one or more of the research needs listed in Table 1 and/or one or more of the focus areas listed below (described in further detail in Section 3). The RMI will consider proposals that address baseline resource characterization and/or address impacts to a resource during offshore wind construction. Proposals submitted should clearly and concisely describe what measurements, analyses, or tool(s) are necessary during the preconstruction and construction phases of offshore wind development to achieve this central objective of the RMI. Approximately \$4.75 million in RMI funding is available through this solicitation and funds will be allocated between focus areas as described below. The RMI Steering Committee (hereafter the “Committee”) anticipates funding one proposal in each focus area, however, funds may be redistributed between focus areas at the discretion of the Committee. The Committee may also allocate additional RMI funds to award

multiple projects in a focus area depending on the number and quality of proposals received and the funds necessary to meet the desired outcome of this solicitation (i.e., to promote a balanced RMI research portfolio). To avoid duplicating effort, applicants are encouraged to review the research previously funded by the RMI (see awarded [projects](#)) and regional research that is ongoing or planned (RWSC [Wind and Wildlife Database](#); ROSA [Fish FORWARD](#)).

Focus areas for this solicitation are the following (descriptions provided in Section 3):

- Non-extractive methods for surveying wildlife and habitat (\$500,000)
- Technological innovations in data collection, analysis, and management (\$500,000)
- Fishery sustainability and socioeconomic impacts of offshore wind activities (\$750,000)
- Identifying and reducing offshore wind noise impacts on marine wildlife (\$750,000)
- Characterization of benthic ecosystems and primary productivity (\$1,000,000)
- Assessing bird and bat abundance, migration patterns, and risk exposure associated with offshore wind (\$500,000)
- Proposals that address one or more of the research needs listed in Table 1 (\$750,000)

All proposals submitted in response to this solicitation shall identify opportunities to coordinate with New Jersey and regional research efforts (e.g., RWSC, ROSA, etc.), to ensure that proposed studies build upon existing work without duplication and contribute to advancing knowledge in this space. Cost sharing with other funding entities to address regional research needs may be considered and leveraging other research projects and resources is encouraged, but not required. RMI reserves the right to build teams between selected contractors and stakeholders to maximize research efforts and improve regional coordination. The RMI may request minor changes and refinement of proposals following the review process to ensure program objectives are met.

Study design should be temporally limited to three years or less and the proposed activities should be planned to initiate no earlier than December 2025. Project contracts may be renewed for additional time at the discretion of RMI and with the agreement of the Principal Investigator(s) (PI) and will be determined as studies near completion. Proposals should be geographically focused on the NJ-NY Bight region and applicants are encouraged to consider cooperative research efforts with New Jersey based commercial and fishing industries, or other New Jersey businesses and residents, if relevant for the proposed study: such partnerships can provide valuable site-specific expertise to inform research activities. Additional proposal requirements are described in Section 4.

3. Research and Monitoring Focus Areas

Non-extractive methods for surveying wildlife and habitat (\$500,000 available)

The RMI seeks proposals that employ non-extractive data collection methods to support offshore wind research related to habitat characterization and monitoring wildlife presence, distribution, abundance, movement, behavior, or health. Non-extractive methods, such as passive or active acoustic monitoring (includes passive monitoring cetacean and bird vocalizations, active acoustics for plankton/fish survey, etc.), remote underwater or aerial imaging (e.g., baited remote underwater video, unmanned drone with visual/thermal/infrared imaging capacity, satellite imagery), environmental DNA, and other methods offer promising alternatives or additions to traditional sampling platforms. Proposals that calibrate non-extractive techniques against traditional surveys or refine processes to improve

efficiencies and data quantity, quality, or utility will also be considered. Studies that assess abundance, distribution, and spatiotemporal dynamics for larval or juvenile fishes and invertebrates are of particular interest, although proposals addressing any life stage will be considered. Preference will be given to projects that work cooperatively with fishery stakeholders.

Technological innovations in data collection, analysis, and management (\$500,000 available)

The RMI seeks proposals that advance autonomous or remote technological solutions for detecting, deterring, and mitigating impacts to environments, habitats, wildlife, and fisheries during OSW activities. Proposals may include developing and testing novel technologies or refining existing tools, sensors, systems, or processes to improve efficiency (i.e., cost or time savings), access, and data quantity, quality, resolution, or utility. Technological solutions may also include improved data transmission, processing, and analysis (including advances in areas such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and computer vision, sensor networking, genomics, and data communication). Proposals that address improved processes/mechanisms for using data to inform management decisions and policy will also be considered. Any new technology, gear, code, or other tools resulting from awarded projects are to be openly shared and will not be proprietary.

Fishery sustainability and socioeconomic impacts of offshore wind activities (\$750,000 available)

The RMI seeks proposals that investigate novel approaches to sustaining existing commercial or for-hire recreational fisheries in New Jersey during offshore wind development. Proposals may include designing and/or testing new or modified vessels, gear, or operations; new product and market development; stock enhancement; survey methods; training; safety; or other approaches to better understand and respond to problems and opportunities related to fishing and offshore wind. Proposals must describe the fishery and impact that will be addressed and demonstrate how the applicant has and will continue to work cooperatively with the fishing industry to design a project that will provide useful information for supporting fishery sustainability during offshore wind development. Research proposals are sought for studies that assess the potential positive and/or negative socioeconomic impacts of offshore wind energy development on commercial fisheries and their shoreside dependents. Proposed work should improve methods for evaluating socioeconomic impacts, detect socioeconomic impacts if they occur (actual economic losses that are caused by offshore wind energy development), or inform non-compensatory mitigation efforts for fisheries. Mitigation proposals should describe research that directly informs mitigation measures, which may include evaluating existing mitigation for success or testing novel mitigation for avoiding, minimizing, or offsetting economic impacts as offshore wind development. Preference will be given to projects that work cooperatively with fishery stakeholders. Any new technology, gear, code, or other tools resulting from awarded projects are to be openly shared and will not be proprietary.

Identifying and reducing offshore wind noise impacts on marine wildlife (\$750,000 available)

The RMI seeks proposals related to the effects, and mitigation of, offshore wind related noise on marine wildlife relevant to New Jersey. The RMI will consider proposals that characterize baseline, preconstruction soundscapes as a foundation for assessing disturbance to wildlife during construction and operational phases of offshore wind development. The RMI will also consider proposals that address behavioral and/or physiological impacts of construction noise to marine wildlife, including fishes and invertebrates, sea turtles, marine mammals, birds, and bats. Special consideration will be given to studies that address these concerns for fishes and invertebrates and/or address impacts on multiple

species. Based on research priorities identified in the RWSC [Science Plan](#) and the NYSERDA State of the Science [Workgroup Report on Sound and Vibration Effects on Fishes and Aquatic Invertebrates](#), proposals in this category may include identification of indicator species, assessing responses in behavior or displacement, species sensitivity, standardization of methods, and mitigation measures for reducing impacts of offshore wind related noise on marine wildlife. Of particular geographic interest are New Jersey's prime fishing areas (see [New Jersey Coastal Zone Management Rules 7:7-9.4](#) for definition) and other important habitats for migration or spawning. Proposals may include field or laboratory-based studies and should respond to identified information gaps for species and habitats that are of particular interest to New Jersey, including (but not limited to) species described in the following resources; [NJ Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Species](#), [NJ Species of Greatest Conservation Need](#), [New Jersey State Wildlife Action Plan](#), [DEP Ecological Baseline Studies](#), and RWSC [Science Plan](#). Preference will be given to projects that work cooperatively with fishery stakeholders.

Characterization of benthic ecosystems and primary productivity (\$1,000,000 available)

The RMI seeks proposals that investigate the baseline and effects of offshore wind energy development on benthic environments and primary productivity. Special areas that have particular ecological value are recognized in [N.J.A.C. 7:7](#) NJ Coastal Zone Management Rules and include shellfish and surfclam habitat, prime fishing areas, finfish migratory pathways, submerged vegetation, shipwrecks, and artificial reefs. The physical properties and dynamics of these areas support valuable commercial and recreational fisheries and are essential fish habitat for numerous species, as well as important foraging and nursery grounds for threatened and endangered marine mammals and turtles. Construction of offshore wind energy projects may cause temporary or permanent changes to the benthos, with unknown cascading ecosystem effects ([Dannheim et al., 2020](#); Degraer et al., [2020](#), [2021](#); [Regional Synthesis Workgroup of the Environmental Technical Working Group, 2022](#); [SEER, 2022](#)). Knowledge gaps the RMI seeks proposals to address include evaluating change associated with offshore wind development in habitat type, characterization, or function as well as changes in hydrodynamic properties, redistribution or introduction of toxins and contaminants, spread of invasive species, and changes in productivity (including primary productivity). Proposals may investigate using nature-based turbine and array design for net-positive impacts on biodiversity and biomass, including measuring and interpreting significant indicators of ecosystem change. Proposals may also investigate cumulative effects of multiple OSW energy projects and/or potential offshore wind impacts contextualized by climate change, fisheries activity, or other potential sources of change on the NJ/NY Bight ecosystem. Preference will be given to projects that work cooperatively with fishery stakeholders where possible.

Assessing bird and bat abundance, migration patterns, and risk exposure associated with offshore wind (\$500,000 available)

The RMI seeks proposals that advance knowledge regarding the spatiotemporal movements, migration patterns, behavior, and abundance for bird and bat species in coastal and offshore environments, including New Jersey wind energy areas. Proposals may assess collision risks to associated with offshore wind, including using modeling approaches, and inform measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate deleterious interactions with wind turbines (see NY E-TWG [Avian Displacement Guidance](#)). Several bat species of concern (including Eastern red, Northern Hoary, and Silver haired bats) have been observed in the near-shore and offshore environments of the Mid-Atlantic regions, but little is known about the extent of offshore space use or their risk of exposure to offshore wind development. Proposals should identify focal species of shorebird, seabird, raptor, and songbird populations for study based on their frequency of occurrence in the New Jersey offshore wind energy areas, as identified in the New Jersey

Ecological Baseline Study ([Volume II: Avian Studies](#)) and other resources (e.g., USFWS [IPaC](#), RWSC Science Plan [Bird List](#), [Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal](#)). Bird species prioritization should be further informed by status of conservation concern in New Jersey ([Endangered and Threatened Species list](#) and [Species of Greatest Conservation Need list](#)). Bird and bat survey methods should use appropriate and best available audio, visual, telemetry (nanotag, satellite, GPS/GSM, etc.), or other technologies to optimize data collection and utility. Proposed nanotagging efforts should leverage RMI's investment in twenty new Motus Wildlife Tracking System stations that will be deployed in 2024 at strategic locations inland, coastal, and offshore of New Jersey to augment the regional sensor network (see [Motus project description](#)). All proposed bird and bat tagging efforts should be distributed in areas of New Jersey, the northeastern U.S., and Canada that maximize the likelihood of tagged individuals migrating to/through the New Jersey offshore space. Preference will be given to proposals that address multiple species, and to Applicants with the capacity to organize and support multiple pre-existing projects, and/or collaborate with regional partners to deploy telemetry technology. The Contractor(s) will be responsible for securing all necessary permits and coordinating outreach to landowners, land managers, and leaseholders where necessary to conduct tagging efforts at identified locations.

Proposals that address one or more of the research needs listed in Table 1 (\$750,000 available)

Proposals that do not fall within one of the described focus areas, but that address one or more of the short-term highest priority research needs listed in Table 1 will be considered. Preference will be given to projects that work cooperatively with fishery stakeholders, if appropriate.

4. Proposal Requirements

The PI(s) may submit multiple proposals, but each proposal must be submitted individually with all necessary documentation. Proposals must follow the format outlined below and include succinct information to address the requirements and questions posed in the Proposal Evaluation Criteria (Section 7). Additional documents beyond those required or necessary to provide a complete, comprehensive, and effective proposal will not be considered in the evaluation process. Proposals are limited to less than 40 pages (page limit excludes references, Key Personnel CV's, and any letters of support). RMI may negotiate with a selected Contractor changes to the proposed study design, data management, collaborations, deliverables & reporting, and coordination with stakeholders and regional science entities (e.g. RWSC, ROSA).

Proposals shall be submitted as a single file inclusive of all supporting attachments and documents, including key personnel CVs (required) and any letters of support (not required). Proposals shall be submitted in searchable PDF format. Every page of the proposal shall include consecutive page numbers and the header "NJRMI RFP 2024".

Proposals shall include all the following elements in this format:

4.1 Project Title

4.2 Investigator(s) name(s) and Institution(s)/Organization(s)/Entity(ies)

4.3 Motivation/Objective (Proposal description):

Provide a clear and concise presentation of the rationale for the work. Describe how the proposed work is consistent with the goals and objectives of the RMI. Briefly describe the state of knowledge for the research subject and reference existing literature that addresses the research need (e.g. papers, technical reports, current projects, or research guidance documents such as [RWSC Science Plan](#), [NYSERDA Master Plan 2.0](#), [ROSA Monitoring Framework and Guidance](#), etc.). Describe how the study will specifically address the data gap, research priority, or focus area(s) identified in Sections 2 and 3. Explain how the proposed work will benefit New Jersey, support the RMI mission and regional research needs, and why the proposed work should be of high priority for funding by the RMI. **Clearly identify the research questions, hypotheses and/or predictions that will be addressed by the project.**

4.4 Proposed Research

Research Plan

Provide a clear presentation of the proposed research plan and associated rationale for the proposed work. Describe in sufficient detail how each of the questions, hypotheses, or predictions will be addressed by the proposed activities.

Methodology

Describe what methodologies will be applied to carry out the proposed work and how they will be implemented. Describe the study design, including a detailed description of any experimental protocols, laboratory or field activities, spatial and temporal extent of any field activities, and what data (including what resolution or frequency) will be collected. Describe any quality assurance procedures, statistical analyses or models that will be used to evaluate the data. If a project is designed to collect preconstruction, baseline data then describe how data would be used in future analyses to assess impacts from offshore wind development and identify any potential future data products. If a project is designed to collect pre and during construction data, describe how those assessments will evaluate impacts from offshore wind. Include which personnel and/or subcontractors listed in the Personnel Expertise section (Section 4.8) will be responsible for each of the project activities described.

Schedule of Activities

Provide a description of the approximate schedule for key elements of the proposed work, including in what sequence they occur and the approximate duration of each activity. Include the anticipated timeline for any manuscripts, technical reports, protocols, or other literature or data products resulting from the study. Any significant changes to this schedule shall be approved through a contract amendment.

Expected Outcomes

Describe the expected outcomes of the proposed work, including a description of (a) mechanism(s) for evaluating the success of the proposed work. Include a description of the limitations of the project. Study designs that rely on data collection during offshore wind construction should be aware that construction schedules may be changed and/or delayed beyond the project duration; such proposals should describe how the study design may be modified to collect additional preconstruction, baseline data if construction data is unavailable.

For all proposals, describe how data products or project results could be used in resource management and/or decision making related to offshore wind development. If new technologies, gear, tools, or methods were developed by the study describe the wider benefits to the scientific field and ecological or environmental assessment.

4.5 Regional Coordination, Data Management, Reporting Requirements and Deliverables

Regional Coordination

Provide detailed description of how the Applicant(s) will coordinate project activities with relevant local, state, regional and national entities. Awarded projects will be required to coordinate with ROSA and RWSC, as applicable, including:

- Providing at least annual progress updates to the relevant RWSC Subcommittee(s) (e.g., by attending and presenting during regularly scheduled Subcommittee meetings) and the ROSA Advisory Committee (e.g. presenting at a quarterly meeting).
- Providing project information and project updates to the RWSC Offshore Wind & Wildlife [Database](#) and the ROSA Fish FORWARD [Database](#) following the initial project kickoff meeting with the RMI Projects Manager(s) and following each Progress Report.
- Sharing spatial data representing locations and/or coordinates of planned or ongoing research activities to the RWSC Research Planning Map and the ROSA Fish FORWARD database. The relevant RWSC Subcommittee Coordinator and ROSA staff should be contacted for specific information requests, formats, and other details.
- Contributing project Digital Object Identifier (DOI), essential metadata, and additional information as specified by the relevant RWSC Subcommittee (e.g., specific data collected, data storage, access constraints, point of contact about data use) and/or ROSA Fish FORWARD database manager. The relevant ROSA staff and RWSC Subcommittee Coordinator should be contacted for specific information requests, formats, and other details.

Data Management

Applicant(s) shall identify any relevant data management or best-practices guidelines that will be applied to the proposed research (e.g. [RWSC PAM Best Practices](#)). Proposals shall include a Data Management Plan. The Plan must identify the types of data to be collected by the project and which digital repositories will be used for data storage/archiving, if applicable. Proposed repositories must be consistent with the recommendations in the RWSC [Science Plan](#) and ROSA [Offshore Wind Project Monitoring Framework and Guidelines](#), and approved by the RMI. The Data Management Plan must propose a frequency of data uploads (no less frequently than annually) to the identified digital repository and must be approved by the RMI. All data collected, models, or model parameters, data products or tools created by a selected project must be provided to the RMI in an appropriate digital format before the project is completed. Alternative data sharing scenarios, including embargoed or proprietary data, will be considered with sufficient justification.

Deliverables and Reports

All data products, final literature (e.g. peer-reviewed manuscripts, white papers, grey literature, new protocols, etc.) or other deliverable types should be identified. A Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) must be submitted to DEP within 60 days of the effective date for a project Contract. The QAPP must receive DEP approval before commencement of any data collection.

Regular Progress Reports are required at quarterly intervals from the effective date of the awarded Contract and must be submitted throughout a project’s duration. A Draft Final Report is required two months before the Final Report is due to allow the RMI Project Manager(s) sufficient time to review and comment. Additional guidance on the QAPP, Reports, and other expectations will be provided to the Contractor at a project kick-off meeting. Deliverables should be itemized on the Project Timeline (Section 4.6).

4.6 Project Timeline

An approximate timeline in a table format must be provided that describes key project activities, milestones, and deliverables throughout the project duration (activities can be described by month or quarter). This table should be a visual representation of the timeline description of project activities included in the proposal Schedule of Activities (described in Section 4.4). The final Progress Report schedule will be dependent on the Contract effective date, therefore, progress reports do not need to be included in the table. However, the Draft Final Report and Final Report should be included on the Timeline.

4.7 Budget and Justification

Applicant(s) must include an itemized budget and associated justification provided for projects costs, as shown below. Less than 50% of the final budget can be allocated to subcontracts. Personnel costs (line item “a”) can be itemized as *either* an annual salary and percentage of time *or* an hourly rate and dedicated number of project hours. The example budget template below (Table 2. Example Budget Template) is for a two-year project duration with two research personnel; applicant should add or remove years and research personnel as needed. If fields do not apply then leave them blank or remove them from the budget table included in the submitted proposal.

Table 2. Example Budget Template

Budget Object	Salary: Annual or Hourly Rate	Year 1: % of Time or # Hours	Year 2: % of Time or # Hours	Year 1 Cost: Annual Salary x % of Time or Hourly Rate x # Hours	Year 2 Cost: Annual Salary x % of Time or Hourly Rate x # Hours	Total
Personnel:						
<i>Cost Researcher 1</i>				\$	\$	\$
<i>Cost Researcher 2</i>				\$	\$	\$
a. Total Personnel				\$	\$	\$
<i>Fringe Researcher 1</i>				\$	\$	\$
<i>Fringe Researcher 2</i>				\$	\$	\$
b. Total Fringe				\$	\$	\$
c. Travel				\$	\$	\$
d. Equipment						\$
e. Supplies						\$
f. Contractual						\$
g. Construction						\$
h. Other						\$

i. Total Direct				\$	\$	\$
<i>Indir. Researcher 1</i>				\$	\$	\$
<i>Indir. Researcher 2</i>				\$	\$	\$
j. Total Indirect				\$	\$	\$
k. Total Cost						\$

a) Personnel: \$-

Researcher 1 – if annual salary (\$- salary x % of time = \$- Year 1)
 If hourly rate (\$- rate x # hours = \$- Year 1)
 Researcher 2 – if annual salary (\$- salary x % of time = \$- Year 1)
 If hourly rate (\$- rate x # hours = \$- Year 1)

b) Total Fringe: \$-

Apply appropriate Fringe rate for type of personnel (i.e., PI may have different fringe than a Tech)
 Researcher 1 – Year 1 cost x Fringe rate
 Year 2 cost x Fringe rate
 Researcher 2 – Year 1 cost x Fringe rate
 Year 2 cost x Fringe rate

c) Travel: \$-

Include breakdown calculations. Budget may include travel to annual NJ RMI Symposium (location TBD in NJ)

d) Equipment: \$-

List equipment and estimated cost

e) Supplies: \$-

List supplies and estimated cost

f) Contractual: \$-

Identify any subcontractors

g) Construction: \$-

h) Other Costs: \$-

Laboratory Analysis costs for _____ and miscellaneous parameters from contracted laboratory.
 # samples x cost per sample
 Other parameters - # samples x cost per sample

i) Total Direct Cost: \$-

$$a+b+c+d+e+f = \$-$$

j) Total Indirect Costs: \$-

Indirect rate for salary is calculated as (a+b) x % (NJDEP caps at 10%)
 Researcher 1: (Year 1 Cost + Year 1 Fringe) x %
 (Year 2 Cost + Year 2 Fringe) x %
 Researcher 2: (Year 1 Cost + Year 1 Fringe) x %
 (Year 2 Cost + Year 2 Fringe) x %

k) Total Project Costs \$ _____

Year 1: Total Direct(i) + Total Indirect(j) = \$-
 Year 2: Total Direct(i) + Total Indirect(j) = \$-
 Total Project = Year 1(i+j) + Year 2(i+j)

4.8 Personnel Expertise & Resources

Personnel Expertise

The lead PI and all key project personnel should be identified, and their responsibilities outlined by connecting the expertise of the PI(s) to the tasks laid out in the proposed research section (i.e., which investigator(s) will be addressing which tasks). Abridged CV(s) (no more than 3 pages per CV) for all key personnel shall be provided at the end of the proposal document to demonstrate expertise in their project responsibilities. To demonstrate experience managing research budgets similar to the proposed project, the abridged CVs for the lead PI(s) should include current and past research projects with their associated funding amounts awarded. CV's are excluded from proposal page limitations (i.e. do not count toward the 40 pg limit).

Resources

Applicant(s) must demonstrate possession of or access to sufficient resources to successfully complete the proposed work. Coordination and leveraging other projects, equipment, facilities, or other cost-saving approaches are encouraged and should be described here, if applicable.

4.9 References

Include list of references or literature cited. List of references is excluded from proposal page limitations (i.e., do not count toward the 40 pg limit).

5 Payment Schedule for Awarded Contract

Project payments shall be Deliverables-based and made upon receipt and approval of the QAPP, Progress Report(s), Draft Final Report, and Final Report. Payment amount will be distributed equally between the paid Deliverables. Additional project deliverables (e.g. data products, manuscripts, etc.) will not have associated payments. A payment based on the Final Report deliverable will be reserved until all project requirements are met (e.g., data provided to DEP).

6 Proposal Submission Instructions

Applicants shall notify New Jersey Sea Grant by August 28, 2024 by 5pm EST of their intention to submit a proposal by sending a Letter of Intent to the Designated Contact [Julie Lang, jiang@njseagrant.org]. The Letter of Intent shall be a maximum of two pages and include the project title, collaborators and institutions, a brief summary (maximum two paragraphs) of the proposed study, and an approximate total budget or budget range. The Letter shall also include the names and contact information of five (5) experts who can provide an external peer review of the full proposal. Conflicts of interest can be avoided by suggesting individuals from outside of the Mid-Atlantic region, outside of the PI or other collaborators' home institution(s), with whom those submitting the proposal have not had a working relationship (projects or publications) within the past four years. Please also avoid those who have served as a current or former graduate advisor and former graduate students of those submitting the proposal. No phone inquiries will be accepted. All questions, technical or administrative, should also be sent to the Designated Contact by August 28, 2024. Contacting anyone other than the Designated Contact directly or indirectly (through a lobbyist or other person on behalf of the bidder) may result in the proposal being removed from consideration. Applicants are encouraged to register with the NJDEP Offshore Wind listserve (register [here](#)) to receive email notifications and announcements. Responses to questions about this RFP will be posted on the NJDEP [Offshore Wind webpage](#), the NJSJC Request For Proposals [webpage](#), and distributed to registered email recipients.

Online submission of proposals is required. Submissions shall be provided in a single searchable PDF format and file size should not exceed 20 MB. This PDF document should include the Proposal Elements (see Section 4), references, abridged CV's, and letters of support (if desired). All file names should include the lead PI's surname, "RMI RFP 2024_Proposal", and a unique project identifier. For example, if John Doe and collaborators were to submit one proposal for benthic mapping *and* one proposal for primary productivity assessment the file names would be "Doe_RMI RFP 2024_Proposal_Benthic Mapping" and "Doe_RMI RFP 2024_Proposal_Primary Productivity Assessment". **Submissions shall be emailed to Julie Lang, jlang@njseagrant.org with the subject line "Proposal Submission for RMI RFP 2024". All submissions must be received by 5pm EST on October 22, 2024, for consideration.** Late or incomplete submissions will be disqualified. Applicants will receive submission receipt confirmation within 48 hours, and within one week Applicants will be notified of administrative review and approval for consideration in this RFP opportunity.

7 Proposal Selection Process & Evaluation Criteria

To promote transparency and administer a fair selection process the RMI has contracted New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium to manage the RFP distribution, coordinate subject matter expert reviews for each proposal received, and convene a technical scoring committee to make award recommendations to the RMI Steering Committee for final approval. Technical evaluation criteria are described below in sections 7.1-7.9;

7.1 Motivation/Objective

Is what is being proposed consistent with the goal and objectives of the RMI? How will the proposed work address one or more of the RMI's research priorities (i.e., yield desired outcomes and benefit New Jersey)? Why should this work be of high priority for funding by the RMI? Are research questions, hypotheses, or predictions clearly stated?

7.2 Proposed Research

Research Plan

Is the plan for conducting the proposed work clearly presented, compellingly argued, and well-reasoned? How comprehensive, realistic, and explicit is the Proposal with respect to the project objectives and Proposal requirements? Is the plan to address each of the research questions or hypotheses stated in the Motivation section sufficiently described?

Methodology

Do the proposed methodologies seem reasonable and based on best practice? Is there a clear plan for implementation of these methods (i.e., a study design, a detailed description of the experimental protocol, quality assurance procedures, a description of the data analysis)? How suitable are the proposed project methods and overall research design for meeting the project objectives and yielding expected results? Are the methods outlined in detail and clearly designed to meet the project objectives? For projects designed to be baseline assessment of a resource, can the survey or methods be repeated during future phases of OSW development (construction, operation, decommissioning) to effectively quantify impact? Proposals should include how Applicant(s) will coordinate with relevant national, regional, state, or local research initiatives who are conducting or overseeing similar work, including coordination with the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative.

Schedule of Activities

What are the elements/major project milestones of this Proposal, in what sequence will they occur, and approximately how long will they take? Is the schedule of activities reasonable and based on best practices?

Expected Outcomes

What are the expected outcomes of the proposed work? Does the plan include a mechanism for evaluating the success of the proposed work? Are specific measurable targets of success provided where applicable?

Considerations for Mitigation Research Proposals

Is the purpose of the mitigation research project to investigate (develop and/or test) and better understand existing and potential mitigation methods and techniques? Is the proposed work intended to inform mitigation but not implement mitigation measures (e.g. compensation). Does the project address a likely significant adverse impact from OSW on a resource of concern? Is there sufficient evidence (through substantive literature review) to demonstrate a need for mitigation research? Is the proposed technology and/or methodology likely to address and/or offset the identified adverse impact? Can it be applied to multiple resources or taxa?

7.3 Budget

Is there a reasonable justification for the budget the Applicant(s) request? Are all cost items explained/justified? Are the overall pricing and hourly rates in line with the rest of the market? How justified and reasonable are the proposed cost allocations and co-funding contributions (cash, in-kind services, etc.)? To what degree does the proposal include meaningful cost-sharing from other key organizations important for the success of the project? Is there a detailed budget provided for the overall project, including sufficient detail in the supporting schedule for each cost element, its description, and amount to justify the budget?

7.4 Expertise

Is/are the Applicant(s) well qualified to undertake the proposed work? The Applicant should include any relevant previous experience related to the proposed study. Does the Applicant demonstrate experience in developing and leading a large-scale project and project team with the necessary educational, technical, operations, technology transfer, financing, and administrative experience for successfully completing the project? Are all roles and responsibilities clearly defined? Does the Applicant demonstrate an understanding of the existing offshore wind research efforts? If the proposed work uses data that is not owned by the applicant, or is not publicly available, does the Applicant have appropriate letters of support, participation by the data owners, or other demonstration of access to the necessary data? If relevant, does the Applicant have the site-specific knowledge and expertise to inform successful deployment and maintenance of project sensors or other gears? If not, has/will the Applicant consult or collaborate with individuals who can provide site-specific expertise?

7.5 Resources

Do(es) the Applicant(s) have sufficient resources at their disposal to successfully complete the proposed work?

7.6 Reporting and Regional Coordination

Are the reporting and regional coordination efforts described in the proposal likely to maximize the potential benefits of the project? Will the project result in any technical reports or manuscripts for peer-review publication? How well does the Applicant explain how data and data products will be shared with appropriate regional entities? Does the proposal meet all the regional coordination and engagement requirements?

7.7 Usefulness and Value of Project Results

How useful are the project results expected to be in validating or improving New Jersey State policies, regulations, impact assessments, models, or mitigation methods? What data collected during the proposed project will be useful to other ongoing or future research and monitoring? To what extent will the project use and integrate other relevant data and coordinate with other research/monitoring initiatives (e.g., with field sampling and data analysis) to provide maximum value to the State of New Jersey? Can the proposed project efforts be leveraged to collect additional data, and if so, what value does this additional data bring? Will the project results be available in a timely manner and in a useful format?

7.8 Other Considerations

Projects will also be reviewed to determine whether they reflect the overall mission of the RMI, including the balance among projects, long- and short-term benefits, risk/reward relationships, and whether similar projects are presently or have been previously funded by the RMI or other entity. Minor changes may be requested to modify proposed study designs and/or refinement of proposal text to ensure RMI needs and objectives are met.

8 Acknowledgement & Preliminary Data Sharing

Any presentations, posters, publications/reports, interviews, or other public communications related to the awarded research project must acknowledge the New Jersey Research and Monitoring Initiative and display the contract # and the logos of the NJDEP and NJBPU, which will be provided by the DEP Project Manager. It is DEP Division of Science and Research (DSR) policy that data collected by research partners remains preliminary until it has undergone quality review by the researchers and has been memorialized in a final product deliverable to DSR (e.g. Final Report). Research partners may share preliminary data in presentations, such as at scientific conferences, if the data is clearly marked as “preliminary” on all printed/sharable material and also vocalized during the presentations. Additional details regarding project information disclosure and dissemination will be provided to during the Contracting process and at the kick-off meeting for awarded projects.

9 Grant Agreement Process

A project awarded through this solicitation will be engaged through a Grant Agreement with NJDEP. Grantees must provide a W-9 to the Department to obtain a Vendor Identification number before initiating the Grant Agreement process. Additional information on the Grant Agreement process will be provided to awarded bidders.

10 Additional Terms & Conditions

Patent and Copyright Liability:

The Contractor shall hold and save the Department, its officers, servants, and employees, harmless from liability of any nature or kind including but not limited to actual use, perceived use, or threatened use for or on account of the use of any copyrighted or uncopyrighted composition, patented or unpatented invention, article, or appliance furnished or used in the performance of this project. This is in addition to and in no way limits any other indemnification provision in the project, including but not limited to Paragraph IV, Indemnification of the General Terms and Conditions.

Delay of Project:

The Contractor is responsible for completing the project as required by the Scope of Services and according to any approved project work schedules. However, a project schedule may be extended for delays caused by events which could not reasonably be anticipated, and which are reasonably beyond the control of the Contractor. Such causes include but are not limited to action by employees or other contractors employed by the Department, unanticipated work changes ordered by the Department, strikes, lockouts, fire, delays caused by common carriers, unavoidable casualties, work stoppage orders and suspension riders. If such an event occurs, the Contractor shall submit written documentation to the Department's project manager detailing the reason why the work was not completed within the required timeframe. Project extensions shall be requested at 6-month intervals for no more than months.

Dissemination of Information:

During the course of this project and for two (2) years following submission of an approved final report, the Contractor shall not print, publish, disclose or otherwise make known to third parties the content of any data, information, studies, computation, memoranda, graphs, reports or other material arising from this project without at least thirty (30) days prior written notification to the Department, and without informing the Department of the nature of such disclosures. The Contractor shall coordinate all such disclosures with the Department and shall permit the Department to preview any such disclosure prior to its release. Contractor agrees to seriously consider the comments and suggestions of the Department in the final drafting of all publications. During the above thirty (30) day period, the Department may request a delay of any disclosure for up to one (1) year, if necessary, in order to protect the public interest. If the Contractor is publishing materials that the Department has reviewed and found unsatisfactory, inadequate, or unacceptable, at the request of the Department, the Contractor shall include in any publication of materials resulting from this project a statement, conspicuously placed, that the Department finds the material inadequate or unsatisfactory, that the Department disagrees with the analyses, interpretations, or conclusions contained therein, or both.

Acknowledge/Co-Authorship:

Publication by the Contractor of any work or portion of work arising from this Project must include a written acknowledgment of the Department's assistance (e.g., financial, equipment, manpower). Also, where a Department employee has contributed substantive work on the project, the appropriate State employees (Project Manager or other significant Department participants) shall be named as co-authors on publications arising from this Project.

Access to Material:

Unless otherwise specified in this Project, the Department shall have access to all data, samples,

material, evidence, and documentation gathered, originated, or prepared for the Department by the Contractor during the performance of contractual responsibilities for a period of five (5) years from the submission of the approved Final Report. During that time period, any such data, samples, material, evidence and documentation shall be provided to the Department in a reasonably timely manner upon request by the Department.

Substitutions of Personnel and Subcontractors:

If, during the course of the Project, the Contractor cannot provide the personnel or subcontractors identified in this Project, and desires to substitute personnel or subcontractors, the Contractor first must request in writing from the Department permission to substitute personnel or subcontractors. Such written requests must:

1. Explain the reasons why the original persons cannot be provided;
2. Demonstrate that the qualifications of the substitution are equal to or better than the originally proposed persons; and
3. Warrant that the substitution will be provided at no additional cost to the Department.

Preliminary Data

Any written or verbal disclosure of information that is based on preliminary data (i.e., data that has not been accepted by the Department as being part of a defined final deliverable) must be clearly marked/identified as “preliminary” by the Contractor. All requests to use preliminary data in an abstract, presentation, or similar form must be reviewed and approved by DEP/Division of Science and Research Project Manager at least two weeks before submittal.

Intellectual Property and Data Ownership

All data and other intellectual property created generated, delivered, or otherwise prepared for or resulting from this Agreement, including but not limited to all papers, reports, surveys, plans, charts, records, analyses, or publications produced, regardless of state of completion, shall be jointly owned by the DEP and Contractor. Each party shall have a perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free, non-exclusive worldwide right and license to freely use, make, have made, reproduce, disseminate, display, perform, and create derivative works, in all media and all forms, such data.

Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)

For any scope of work that requires a QAPP, the QAPP must be approved by the Department in writing and prior to the initiation of any project activities including monitoring, measurements, or data generation. However, upon a showing of extraordinary circumstances and with the prior, written approval of the Department project manager, certain authorized project activities may begin before receipt of QAPP approval. In the event the contractor engages in project activities prior to receipt of a Department-approved QAPP or written approval to proceed under extraordinary circumstances, the associated costs of such unauthorized project activities may not be reimbursed by the Department. Any revisions or changes that occur to the approved sampling plan/QAPP during the contract working period will require an amendment to the approved QAPP and additional review and approval by the Department project manager.

PLEASE NOTE:

This request for proposal does not commit the State of New Jersey to engage the services of any vendor for any of the items either within or outside the outlined scope of work.