Science Evaluation

Bucket 2 – Council Selected Restoration Component

PROPOSAL TITLE

Gulf of Mexico Habitat Mapping and Water Quality Monitoring Network

LOCATION

FL,AL, MS, LA, TX

SPONSOR(S)

DOC/NOAA, DOI/USGS

TYPE OF FUNDING REQUESTED (Planning, Technical Assistance, Implementation)

Technical Assistance, Planning

REVIEWED BY:

DATE:

12/23/2014

Best Available Science:

These 6 factors/elements help frame the reviewers answers to A, B and C found in next section:

1. Have the proposal objectives, including methods used, been justified using peer reviewed and/or publicly available information?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

Proposal uses well-established, agency-accepted methods. An additional benefit of the proposal is that by including other existing monitoring programs, there is the potential that techniques and procedures used by other organizations may be standardized to the system used by the federal agencies, allowing better integration of data beyond the scope of this project.

2. If information supporting the proposal does not directly pertain to the Gulf Coast region, are applicant's methods reasonably supported and adaptable to that geographic area?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

3. Are the literature sources used to support the proposal accurately and completely cited?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

4. Are the literature sources represented in a fair and unbiased manner?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

5. Does the proposal evaluate uncertainties and risks in the scientific basis for the proposal, including any identified by the public and Council members?

- ( ) YES
- ( ) NO
- (●) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

Although the proposal did review the risk and uncertainties with the proposed activities, I did not note where the proposal discussed risks and uncertainties SPECIFICLY related to the Scientific Basis. That said, I think the proposal adequately addresses general risks and uncertainties.

6. Does the proposal evaluate uncertainties and risks in achieving its objectives over time? (e.g., is there an uncertainty or risk that in 5-10 years the project/program will be obsolete or not function as planned given projections of sea level rise?)

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Comments

Based on the answers to the previous 6 questions, and giving deference to the sponsor to provide within reason the use of best available science the following three questions can be answered:

A. Has the applicant made a reasonable determination that the proposal is based on science that uses peer-reviewed and publicly available data?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Information Needed:

B. Has the applicant made a reasonable determination that the proposal is based on science that maximizes the quality, objectivity, and integrity of information (including, as applicable, statistical information)?

- (●) YES
- ( ) NO
- ( ) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Information Needed:

One aspect of the project proposal that is particularly strong is that it will take information collected from various sources and seek to standardize it.

C. Has the applicant made a reasonable determination that the proposal is based on science that clearly documents and communicates risks and uncertainties in the scientific basis for such projects?

- ( ) YES
- ( ) NO
- (●) NEED MORE INFORMATION

Information Needed:

See comment about. Although I did not note where the proposal discussed risks and uncertainties in the "scientific basis", the proposal DOES cover risks and uncertainties in the project itself.

Science Context Evaluation

A. Have other methods been discussed and reasons provided to why the method is being selected (e.g., scientifically sound; cost-effectiveness)?

yes

B. Has your agency/vendor/project manager conducted a project/program like the one proposed?

Yes, the agencies conducting the project have a strong track record using related methods. The proposed project is taking established techniques and applying over a gulf-wide scale.

C. Is there a risk mitigation plan in place for project objectives? (captures risk measures as defined under best available science by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

One aspect of the project has relatively low risk (due to experience of the applicant). The risks associated with the other aspect of the project should be relatively easy to mitigate should they arise.

D. Does the project/program consider consequences with implementation? (captures risk measures as defined under best available science by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

Yes

E. Does the project/program have clearly defined goals?

Yes, the goals and objectives are well laid out.

F. Does the project/program have clearly defined objectives?

Yes, the goals and objectives are well laid out.

G. Does the project/program have measures of success? (captures statistical information requirement as defined by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

Yes, the measures of success are detailed for each aspect of the project individually, as well as both aspects collectively.

H. Is a monitoring program in place to determine project goals, success and help adaptive management (if applicable)? (captures statistical information requirement as defined by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

Yes, a monitoring program is described. Although this section of the proposal is relatively brief, it is also relatively straightforward, so a longer description may not be necessary.

I. Does the project/program consider recent and/or relevant information? (captures statistical information requirement as defined by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

Although I am not familiar enough with the specifics of the methodology to be employed to ascertain if it is the most recent or relevant information, given the qualifications and experience of the applicants and partners (as indicated by letter of support from DOI).

J. Has the project/program evaluated past successes and failures of similar efforts? (captures the communication of risks and uncertainties in the scientific basis for such projects as defined by the Comprehensive Plan and Act)

Yes, as noted above, the applicants have long-stranding experience with similar methodologies.

Please summarize any additional information needed below:

One aspect of the proposal that I did not feel I had enough information to evaluation was the reasonableness of the budget. Based on the "high-level budget narrative", the project appears to cost quite a bit more than I would have anticipated based on the existing capabilities and logistics already in place.