Science Evaluation

Bucket 2 – Council Selected Restoration Component

PROPOSAL TITLE

Strategic Conservation Assessment of Gulf Coast Landscapes

LOCATION

Across the landscapes within the Gulf Coast Region (AL, FL, LA, MS, TX)

SPONSOR(S)

Department of the Interior

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

Planning

REVIEWED BY:

DATE:

1/8/2015

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

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

This proposal directly pertains to the Gulf Coast region.

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

The accelerated time frame to develop the CPT and SCA are addressed and appear to be optimistic as do the budget projections. DOI accounts for additional staff to be embedded within the LCCs for completion of projects that will feed the CPT and the SCA. This is an area of concern (albeit small) should funding for these projects, specifically the monitoring aspects of this project, not happen. DOI is aware of these concerns but does not offer alternate means to address shortcomings should these projects and or additional staff need funding.

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

DOI recognizes that potential future funding requests may be required to update the CPT and SCA.

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:

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:

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. Developing a shared priority and objectives list from a diverse set of stakeholders such as GOMA, LCCs, Joint Ventures, SWAPs, PGCLC and NEPs cuts both time and budgeting concerns for a project of this magnitude.

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

Yes.

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)

Yes. The adaptive management and monitoring section of this proposal addresses this concern. Linking shared objectives and priorities to conservation decisions as well as developing a metric for monitoring plans will allow for refinement of the values and weights assigned to each criterion of the SCA as well as determining if monitoring is done at a resolution that is meaningful for management decisions.

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. This project aims to connect efforts and solicit participation from organizations and entities with similar goals to provide a decision support tool for conservation planning.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes, however instead of measuring traffic to specific web pages housing tools developed under this project, DOI should track the number of times a tool is downloaded.

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.

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

Yes. By working with the LCCs, GOMA, Joint Ventures, NERRs, etc., DOI should have information and priorities that are current and up to date.

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 it relates to outreach. DOI plans to use the South Atlantic LCC's model of a dedicated extension specialist to provide support to partners.

Please summarize any additional information needed below:

Support for this proposal is granted by the reviewer; however there are some issues that need to be considered. The development of another portal for this project is in the data management/information sharing section. It will be imperative that DOI reach out to the Council, GOMA and others to ensure that their information is available through REST services or WAFs or some agreed upon, automated processess (meaning other web sites can harvest this data information automatically). The data management protocols outlined in the LCC's policy are adequate however limits to access and use of data after project completion should be removed (meaning data should always be available).