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## Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

### OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

#### Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality

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Eli D. Cabrera  
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### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

#### RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-087

#### CNMI Coral Nursery Out-Planting and Up-Scaling Project

The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality- Division of Coastal Resources Management (BECQ-DCRM) is soliciting proposals from qualified individuals, organizations, consultants or other equally relevant firms to maintain, manage and up-scale the DCRM coral nursery on Saipan. The selected entity will work closely with BECQ-DCRM to ensure adequate selection and in-water design for additional coral trees and tables to increase the nursery's current capacity. The project's overall intention is to build off of previous work and increase the CNMI's ability to maintain a standing stock of at least 1,000 coral colonies, which would supply out-planting efforts on an annual basis.

Interested parties may pick up the applicable scope of work (SOW) and submittal requirements at the Office of the Acting Director of Procurement Services, Capitol Hill, Saipan on **May 04, 2021** from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM (Monday through Friday, and except on holidays).

Questions regarding this project can be addressed to DCRM Biologist, Denise Perez by email at [dperez@dcrm.gov.mp](mailto:dperez@dcrm.gov.mp), no later than the close of business, **May 12, 2021, ChST**. Responses to questions shall be shared with all prospective proposers. The questions from prospective applicants and the responses from BECQ-DCRM will also be posted to the websites that listed the RFP, in an addendum.

Proposals must be sealed and marked "**RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-087, CNMI Coral Nursery Out-Planting and Up-Scaling Project.**" For proposers within the CNMI, **one (1) original and five (5) copies** must be submitted to the Acting Director of Procurement Services, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP, **no later than 10:30 a.m., local time, June 02, 2021.**

Proposers located outside of the Commonwealth **MUST** fill out the Notice of Intent Form (**Page 4**) in order to receive this additional seven (7) working days for receipt of the actual proposal documents. This Notice of Intent form may be submitted to the Acting Director of Procurement Services via facsimile to (670) 664-1515 or emailed to [joaquin.reyes@dof.gov.mp](mailto:joaquin.reyes@dof.gov.mp) but must be received no later than **10:30 a.m., local time, June 02, 2021.** **Note that failure to submit this Notice of Intent will be subject to rejection of proposal.**

For proposers located outside the CNMI, **one (1) original and five (5) copies** of the sealed proposal must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service

of a foreign country no later than **June 02, 2021** and mailed to the Acting Director of Procurement Services at P.O. Box 10008 C.K., Saipan MP, 96950 and must be received by the Acting Director of Procurement Services no later than close of business, **June 11, 2021**. **Note that failure to submit the required number of copies of the proposal may be cause for rejection of a proposal.**

Proposal submissions must precisely follow the submittal requirements identified in the Scope of Work and Submittal Requirements.

Procurement of these services is made in accordance with the NMIAC Section 70-30.3.210 of the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Proposals for the project will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Team Qualifications and Relevant Experience	30%
2. Cost	30%
3. Proposed Methods	20%
4. Project Timeline	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Technical merit and experience will be given greater importance than overall cost, and the Government reserves the right to award this RFP to a bidder other than the lowest cost applicant. For proposals of equal merit, the overall cost will gain greater importance for a final decision.

Discussions may be conducted with applicants who submit proposals determined to be reasonably credible of being selected for award, for the purpose of clarification. Discussions may also be conducted and to ensure full understanding and fulfillment of solicitation requirements. Applicants shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. Revision of proposals may be permitted after submission, and prior to award date for the purpose of obtaining the best final offer. In conducting discussions, there shall be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing applicants. After a selection is made, negotiations will be conducted with the highest qualified firm to determine the final fair and reasonable price of the contract for the work to be performed. The selected firm will be subjected to a responsibility and responsiveness determination in compliance with Section 70-30.3-245 of the CNMI Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the applicant awarded a contract. The applicant selected will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the NMIAC Section 70-30.03-245 of the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Award shall be made to the responsible proposer whose proposal is determined in writing to be most advantageous to the government, taking into consideration price and the evaluation factors set forth in this request for proposal. No other factors or criteria shall be used in the evaluation.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfections in any proposal if, in its opinion, to do so would be in the best interests of the CNMI government. All proposals shall become the sole property of the CNMI government.

# NOTICE OF INTENT

(This ONLY applies to Bidders/Proposers located outside of the CNMI)

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Dear Mr. Francisco C. Aguon,

\_\_\_\_\_ is submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid/Propose  
**Company Name**

FOR RFP21-BECO/DCRM-087  
**ITB No. / RFP No.**

**Provide the Following Information:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Last Name,                      First Name                      M.I.                      Position Title:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Email:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone No.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Fax No.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:**

**Notice to all Proposers/Bidders located outside of the Commonwealth Northern Mariana Islands. This Notice of Intent MUST be filled out and submitted on or before the given ITB/RFP submission deadline to the Acting Director of Procurement Services via email to [joaquin.reyes@dof.gov.mp](mailto:joaquin.reyes@dof.gov.mp) or via facsimile to (670) 664-1515. Note that failure to submit this required document will be subject to rejection of bid/proposal.**

## BREACH OF ETHICAL STANDARDS

(To be part of Solicitation for quotes, ITBs and RFPs)

- **Gratuities.** It shall be a breach of ethical standards for any person to offer, give or agree to give any employee or former employee, or for any employee or former employee to solicit, demand, accept or agree to accept from another person, a gratuity or an offer of employment in connection with any decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, preparation of any part of a program requirement or a purchase request, influencing the content of any specification or procurement standard, rendering of advice, investigation, auditing or in any other advisory capacity in any proceeding or application, request for ruling, determination, claim or controversy, or other particular matter, pertaining to any program requirement or a contract or subcontract or to any solicitation or proposal therefor. NMIAC Section 70-30.3-725(a).
- **Kickbacks.** It shall be a breach of ethical standards for any payment, gratuity or offer of employment to be made by or on behalf of a subcontractor under a contract to the prime contractor or higher tier subcontractor or any person associated therewith as an inducement for the award of subcontractor or order. NMIAC Section 70-30.3-725(b).
- **Contingent Fees.** It shall be a breach of ethical standards for a person to be retained, or to retain a person, to solicit or secure government contracts upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage or contingent fee, except for retention of bona fide employees or bona fide established commercial selling agencies for the purpose of securing business. NMIAC Section 70-30.3-730.

The government reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any imperfection in a proposal if in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All proposals shall become property of the CNMI government upon submission.

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/ ELICEO D. CABRERA  
Administrator  
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON  
Acting Director  
Procurement Services

**RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-087**  
**SCOPE OF WORK**  
**“CNMI CORAL NURSERY OUT-PLANTING AND UP-SCALING PROJECT”**

**PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT**

The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality – Division of Coastal Resources Management (BECQ-DCRM) is soliciting proposals from qualified organizations to maintain, manage and up-scale the DCRM coral nursery on Saipan. The selected entity will work closely with BECQ-DCRM to build off of previous work and increase the standing stock of the DCRM’s coral nursery from 300 to 1,000 coral fragments, affording the CNMI adequate ability to out-plant corals colonies at a scale needed for mitigation of coral-reef decline caused by global bleaching events, storms and typhoons, ship groundings, predatory out-breaks, and diseases.

In addition to this the selected entity will coordinate the selection and collection of coral species to be populated within the nursery, design and development of additional coral tree and/or table designs, and collect standard growth and survival data for corals reared within the nursery.

**BACKGROUND**

In 2020 BECQ-DCRM, contracted a private entity to assist in the development and deployment of a coral nursery in Saipan’s Northern lagoon, which will be completed in 2021. Once completed the nursery will be stocked with 6 coral trees and 2 nursery tables able to accommodate approximately 300-500 coral fragments. However, the amount of colonies reared in the nursery would not be sufficient to make a relative positive impact on reefs identified for out-planting activities, or mitigation efforts required for vessel groundings or storm events.

To ensure the ability of the DCRM nursery to effect positive change on the CNMI reefs, the request for services is aimed at increasing and maintaining a standing stock of at least 1,000 coral fragments that can allow for increased out-planting activities within the CNMI in upcoming years.

**DELIVERABLES**

The Contractor shall provide the following services throughout the period of performance and complete the following projects and deliver them to BECQ-DCRM no later than the end of the period of performance for each line item. The Contractor shall follow the Schedule of Services provided in this SOW as outlined in the Tasks and Deliverables section and upon completion shall turn in all data, maps coordinates and reports to BECQ-DCRM. Due to the remote location, limited logistical resources, propensity for storms and general nature of this project the Contractor may need to shift the timing of certain deliverables. Any changes shall be cleared with the BECQ-DCRM project manager.

DCRM seeks to hire a Contractor to support the up-scaling of its coral nursery on the island of Saipan, CNMI. The Contractor shall be expected to conduct support services under: (1) mixed operations involving local agencies; and (2) Contractor operations in which the Contractor provides personnel and/or equipment for operations from a government-owned or third-party vessel with a range of tasks including: scoping, construction, deployment, maintenance and monitoring as listed below.

## **DESCRIPTION OF TASKS**

### **Task #1** Management of environmental compliance documents

Description: Work with local and federal partners to ensure all environmental compliance documents required for the DCRM Nursery project are included prior to deployment of nursery structures and collection activities as described in Task #7 and Task #8.

Deliverable:

- Completed NEPA, Section 7 Endangered Species Act, Essential Fish Habitat, Historic Preservation Office, USACE, BECQ and DLNR permits by 2/28/2022.

### **Task #2** Initial meeting with BECQ-DCRM project leads.

Description: The contractor will work with BECQ-DCRM and DLNR-DFW to review the current list coral species reared within the nursery. Together the Contractor and BECQ-DCRM project leads will discuss the addition of species within the nursery and determine which additional species to include.

Deliverable:

- An updated list of target species is circulated to all stakeholders, due 7/01/2021.

### **Task #3** Finalize site selection for collection of wild coral fragments, and proposed out-planting sites.

Description: The Contractor will provide vessel and personnel to scope sites and clearly document and map proposed collection and potential out-planting sites.

Deliverable:

- Vessel and personnel support for an estimated two (2) field days for scoping sites for coral fragment collection, due 8/01/2021 for collection sites.
- Maps, pictures and GIS layers clearly demarcating collection areas, due 9/01/2021.
- Out-planting site recommendations due 2/28/2022.

### **Task #4** Identifying a lab and submission of samples for genetic analysis.

Description: Clonal diversity is an important component of ensuring the success of corals reared within nurseries and their survival at out-planting sites. Therefore, genetic testing of colonies is a necessary component of this project.

Deliverable:

- Developing and implementing a sampling plan to test the genetic diversity of corals from collection sites and/or corals growing in the nursery, due 9/1/2021
- Identification of a lab and coordinating genetic testing of samples (i.e. paying for shipping and lab services), due 9/01/2021
- Sharing of results with local stakeholders as part of the final report, due 5/31/2022.

### **Task #5** Procure materials for nursery trees and/or nursery tables, anchorages, shackling and shade structures.

Description: Once the designs have been approved by BECQ-DCRM the Contractor will purchase the necessary materials ensuring that shipping times will not delay a May/June deployment window.

Deliverable:

- Materials purchased for a minimum of 10 nursery structures by 8/01/2021 and received by 9/15/2021.

**Task #6** Build nursery structures and anchor systems.

Description: To the extent practicable the nursery tree/tray/rope or other selected nursery type, anchor and shackling systems will be constructed prior to deployment.

Deliverable:

- Construction of a minimum of 10 nursery systems completed prior to deployment, estimated date 10/31/2021.

**Task #7** Deployment of nursery trees, anchorages and shackling.

Description: The Contractor will provide vessel and personnel to deploy and anchor the nursery trees.

Deliverable:

- Vessel and personnel support for an estimated 4 field days to deploy a minimum of 10 nursery tree structures, due before 12/01/2021 but dates may vary depending on weather, shipping schedules, or the occurrence of a global pandemic.
- Maps, pictures and GIS layers clearly demarcating the location of the nursery trees, due 12/31/2021.

**Task #8** Collection and translocation of coral fragments to nursery trees.

Description: The Contractor will provide a vessel and personnel to harvest coral fragments from the collection sites and to translocate and secure those fragments to the nursery trees. The Contractor is responsible for translocating a minimum of 1,000 coral fragments from collection sites to the nursery structures.

Deliverable:

- Vessel and personnel support for an estimated 5 field days to fragment and translocate a minimum of 1,000 corals from those species prioritized in task 1.

**Task #9** Data collection, maintenance and protection of nursery structures and algae control.

Description: The Contractor or a representative will visit the site on a bi-monthly basis to collect data on growth rates, perform maintenance and algae control and if warranted deploy shade structures to help protect the nursery corals from bleaching. The Contractor will also visit the site after storms to perform maintenance as needed.

Deliverable:

- Vessel and personnel support for an estimated 10 field days over the course of 12 months to collect growth data, perform maintenance and algae removal.
- The Contractor may be able to utilize local agencies and/or citizen science to help meet some of these regular data and maintenance needs

**Task #10** Meeting with local stakeholders sharing progress and lessons learned (bi-annual)  
Description: The Contractor will organize meetings with local stakeholders and other interested parties to discuss project progress no less than twice a year and preferably after meeting each major milestone.

Deliverable:

- Meetings scheduled and agendas and summaries circulated to the stakeholders no less than twice a year beginning in Aug. 2021

**Task #11** Ready the nursery to include space for corals of opportunity.

Description: In addition to the fragmenting of wild corals there are also opportunities to save corals that have been or will soon be impacted by disturbance or development. These “corals of opportunity” are a valuable addition to nursery development adding potential diversity to both species and growth forms for out planting but they may not be a viable option for attachment to nursery trees. The nursery will have (2) table structures that can be utilized for corals of opportunity prior to the selection of a suitable Contractor. This task will be on-going throughout the contractual period.

Additional tasks and deliverables may include:

- Identify corals of opportunity with local stakeholders
- Out plant corals from tables as part of the nursery tree fragmenting and out planting actions

**Task #12** Generation of a project report for local stakeholders summarizing project including appendices for genetic results and scientific instrument analysis.

Description: The Contractor will write a technical memorandum that summarizes the project, provides lessons learned and includes appendices for all relevant data, maps and pictures generated as part of this project.

Deliverable:

- The Contractor will submit an end of performance period report summarizing the project after its completion. This document is due 05/01/2022 to allow DCRM time to review and provide comment. The Final Draft is due 05/31/2022.

Bidders are encouraged to itemize costs for the required subparts of the guidebook as well as any supplemental proposal costs in the RFP response. The final Scope of Work (SOW), including potential discussions regarding project phasing and final timelines, will be agreed to in the final contract.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

The successful contractor should have:

1. Have the capacity to remain at or near the operation area for the duration of the scheduled activity.
2. Be capable of operating in waters as shallow as five feet.
3. Meet all required United States Coast Guard (USCG) safety requirements for this size vessel.



4. Have the capability to provide 100% oxygen to a non-breathing diver.
5. Be equipped to allow the safe exiting and boarding of the vessel by full-equipped SCUBA divers.
6. Have the capacity to safely transport dive team, crew and equipment needed for operation.
7. Have the ability to launch and retrieve small to medium size scientific instruments.
8. Be capable of deploying coral nursery structures, anchorage and shackling.

Divers provided by the contractor shall be certified to a level commensurate with the type and conditions of the diving activity being undertaken. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that any SCUBA diving activities meet, at a minimum, all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations pertaining to the type of SCUBA diving being undertaken.

**PROPOSALS**

Interested contractors shall prepare and submit a proposal and cost estimate that responds to the objectives and deliverables of this Scope of Work.

Proposals submitted must contain at a minimum:

1. The name and address of the applicant/s and their organization.
2. Narrative of methodology and anticipated output.
3. The name/s and CV/s of the staff that will participate on the project.
4. Schedule for completing the project. This schedule shall indicate the duration of each task and specify an anticipated timeline for submission.
5. Preferred payment schedule.
6. Detailed cost estimate for completion of the project, including direct and indirect costs, detailed by project components. **Proposal estimates must be within DCRM’s allotted budget of \$60,000.**

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**

1. Team Qualifications and Relevant Experience	30%
2. Cost	30%
3. Proposed Methods	20%
4. <u>Project Timeline</u>	<u>20%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**KEY PERSONNEL**

It is essential that the successful applicant provide adequate staff and experienced personnel, capable of and devoted to the successful accomplishment of the work to be performed for the project. The contractor must assign specific individuals to the key position/s. Once assigned to work under the contract, key personnel will not be removed or replaced without consideration of impact on the contract, or without written approval from BECQ-DCRM.

**CANCELLATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality-Division of Coastal Resources Management reserves the right to cancel this solicitation, and any or all proposals may be accepted, modified, or rejected in whole or part.

The government reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any imperfection in a proposal if in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. All proposals shall become the property of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands government.

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/s/ ELICEO D. CABRERA  
Administrator  
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON  
Acting Director  
Procurement Services