



GULF OF MEXICO RESEARCH INITIATIVE RESEARCH BOARD

PRESS RELEASE

For release: June 7, 2011

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Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative Announces Availability of New Funding for Short-Term Continuing and Emergent Observations and Sampling on Effects of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

Grants Will Support Observations and Sampling in the Gulf of Mexico in July – September 2011

RESTON, VA – The Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GRI) Research Board announced today that up to \$1.5 million in grants will be available to provide funds for the acquisition of samples and critical observations of effects of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The Request for Proposals (RFP-III) announced today will support sampling during July 1 to September 30, 2011. The RFP-III addresses the urgent need to provide stop-gap or emergency funding to continue observations and sampling and/or to initiate new observations and sampling during the summer months when GRI Year 1 funds would be depleted and before funds from RFP-I and RFP-II could be distributed. Sustainability of time series observations is critical to enhance understanding of the Gulf of Mexico system.

“The Research Board recognizes the importance of ensuring acquisition of samples and observations throughout the summer. Therefore grants will be made ranging in size from \$50,000 to \$300,000. Our intent is to make these awards by the end of June. The grants will allow scientists to continue important observations and sampling in the Gulf of Mexico while the Research Board receives and reviews RFP-I and RFP-II longer-term grant applications for research under the five major research themes of the GRI, which are described below,” **said Dr. Rita R. Colwell, Chairman of the GRI Research Board.**

“This funding ensures critical samples and observations will be collected this summer,” **said Colwell.** “The RFP-III will provide continuity in data gathering, including initiation of new observations and samples deemed critical for multidisciplinary understanding of the Gulf of Mexico system. It is intended to protect against gaps in important observations or loss of samples that will help to understand effects of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.”

The GRI Research Board is an independent body established by BP and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) to oversee BP’s \$500 million commitment to fund independent research on the effects of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The GRI research

program is separate from, and in addition to, BP's commitments under the Natural Resources Damages Assessment process.

“The GRI is committed to investigating impacts of the oil, dispersed oil, and dispersant on ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico and affected Gulf Coastal States in the broad context of improving fundamental understanding of the dynamics of such events, associated environmental stresses, and public health implications,” **Colwell said**. The GRI will also develop improved spill mitigation and oil and gas detection, characterization, and remediation technologies. The ultimate goal of the GRI is to improve society's ability to understand and respond to the impacts of petroleum pollution and related stressors of the marine and coastal ecosystems, with emphasis on conditions in the Gulf of Mexico. Knowledge gained will be applied to restoration and to improvement of the long-term environmental health of the Gulf of Mexico.

The GRI emphasizes interdisciplinary science and technology and will fund experts in physical, chemical, geological, and biological oceanography; marine biology; coastal and reef ecosystems, fisheries and wildlife ecology; public health; and associated development of physical, chemical, and biological instrumentation, advanced modeling, and informatics.

“Activities to be selected for GRI funding will combine state-of-the-art research with deep scientific knowledge of the ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico. Success of the GRI will depend on a combination of regional knowledge with regional, national, and international research innovation,” **said Colwell**.

Total annual funding for the GRI will be \$50 million. BP provided GRI Year 1 (June 1, 2010 to May 31, 2011) funds directly to Gulf Coast State institutions in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi and to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Institutes of Health, in the immediate aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Funds for subsequent GRI Years will be distributed in broad announcement of requests for proposals.

On April 25, 2011, the GRI Research Board released RFP-I, the object of which is to provide funding during GRI Years 2-4 (June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2014) for Research Consortia. A Research Consortium is defined as four or more institutions. The total funds available for distribution to Research Consortia through RFP-I will be a minimum of \$37.5 million per year. Four to eight Research Consortia will be selected, and funding for each is estimated to be between \$1.0 million and \$7.5 million per year. RFP-II will provide smaller awards and will be issued at a later date. RFP-II will fund individual investigators or teams comprising of a principal investigator and co-principal investigators from no more than three additional institutions. The same research themes will apply for RFP-II as for RFP-I. The total funds available for RFP-II will be up to a maximum of \$7.5 million per year; and funding for each approved proposal is estimated to be between \$100,000 and \$1.0 million per year for GRI Years 2-4.

The purpose of RFP-III is to ensure that critical observations and sampling will continue during July 1 to September 30, 2011 until grants can be made under RFP-I and RFP-II.

Accelerated proposal submission, review, and grant allocation will be employed for RFP-III. No letter of intent is required from potential grant applicants for RFP-III. **The deadline to submit a proposal for RFP-III is June 17, 2011 at 9:00 p.m. EDT.** Awards will be announced on June 30, 2011.

Detailed information about RFP-III, including grant application requirements and procedures, is available on the GRI Research Board web site at <http://griresearchboard.org/rfp/RFP-III.html>

Work performed under RFP-III must contribute to the major research themes identified in RFP-I. These are:

1. Physical distribution, dispersion, and dilution of petroleum (oil and gas), its constituents, and associated contaminants (for example, dispersants) under the action of physical oceanographic processes, air-sea interactions, and tropical storms.
2. Chemical evolution and biological degradation of the petroleum/dispersant systems and subsequent interaction with coastal, open-ocean, and deep-water ecosystems.
3. Environmental effects of the petroleum/dispersant system on the sea floor, water column, coastal waters, beach sediments, wetlands, marshes, and organisms; and the science of ecosystem recovery.
4. Technology developments for improved response, mitigation, detection, characterization, and remediation associated with oil spills and gas releases.
5. Fundamental scientific research integrating results from the other four themes in the context of public health.

RFP-III funds will support operating expenditures, including costs for:

- Field work associated with observations and sampling and other time-sensitive research.
- Personnel critical for the observations, sampling, and emergent research.
- Proper preparation or storage of observations and samples for future need.

Potential applicants are advised that successful proposals for RFP-III funding must make a compelling argument for why samples and or observations are needed, what opportunity will be missed if samples and/or observations are not made, and how funds will be spent.

RFP-III is open to all academic and research institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and Federally Funded Research and Development Centers.

Awards will be made in a competitive review of proposals submitted. The review process will be carried out by a Proposal Review Committee of the Research Board. Evaluations and recommendations will be made by the Committee to the Research Board. Final selection of proposals will be made by the Research Board.

Proposals must be submitted to <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/request-for-proposals/rfp-III/rfp-III-submission-forms-templates/rfp-III-online-submission-form/>. Requests for clarification of RFP-III and proposal instructions must be submitted by June 13, 2011 via the GRI website:

<http://griresearchboard.org/faq-r/>. Questions will not be accepted by phone or direct email to BP, the GRI Administrative Unit, Research Board members, or any other body. Please review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) posted on the website before submitting a question. The FAQ will be updated regularly with responses to submitted questions.

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About GRI:

For more information about the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative visit <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org>. For more information about the Research Board and RFPs, please visit the GRI Research Board website <http://griresearchboard.org>.

About Dr. Colwell:

Dr. Rita R. Colwell is an internationally recognized environmental microbiologist and scientific administrator. Dr. Colwell serves as the Chairman of the GRI Research Board, and is a Distinguished Professor at the University of Maryland at College Park and in the Bloomberg School of Public Health at The Johns Hopkins University. She has previously served as Director of the National Science Foundation. The recipient of numerous honorary degrees and the Order of the Rising Sun from the Emperor of Japan, in 2006 Dr. Colwell received the National Medal of Science from the President of the United States. In 2010, Dr. Colwell was honored with the Stockholm Water Prize by the King of Sweden for her contributions to solving water-related public health problems. Dr. Colwell has authored or co-authored 17 books and more than 750 scientific publications.

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