

Division of Aquatic Resources

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
No. DAR RFP 2026 03

SEALED OFFERS
FOR

False Killer Whale Research

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND & NATURAL RESOURCES

WILL BE RECEIVED UP TO 2:00 PM (HST) ON

September 11, 2026

ELECTRONICALLY THROUGH THE STATE OF HAWAI'I ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEM (HiePRO).

Laura Jackson

Laura A Jackson
DAR Procurement Officer

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES
1151 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 330
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813

NOTICE TO OFFERORS

Specifications for Solicitation No. **DAR RFP 2026 03 False Killer Whale Research** are available for download on the State of Hawaii Electronic Procurement System (HlePRO). **All offers are due through electronic submittal on HlePRO by:**

Offers are due: **Date: September 11, 2026**
 Time: 2:00 PM (HST)

At the time of the Award, Offeror shall be compliant with the State Rules and Regulations through Hawai'i Compliance Express (HCE), if not compliant, award shall not be issued. Offeror shall submit the original signed OFFER FORMS for DAR RFP 2026 03 and their full proposal per this RFP uploaded to HlePRO.

The award, if awarded, shall be subject to the availability of funds.

Should there be any question on this matter, please contact Laura Jackson at laura.a.jackson@hawaii.gov.

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION, TERMS AND ACRONYMS, KEY DATES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is requesting proposals for contracted data collection in cooperation with the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), to continue a study to support cooperative conservation and long-term management of the insular population of false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*) in Hawai'i. This consists primarily of field work to collect health data and samples from live Main Hawaiian Island False Killer Whales (MHI FKWs) using a variety of techniques and subsequent data analysis.

DAR Principal Investigator: Jordan Lerma, DAR Protected Species Lead
jordan.k.lerma@hawaii.gov

1.2 CANCELLATION

This request for proposals (RFP) may be canceled and any or all proposals rejected in whole or in part, without liability to the State, when it is determined to be in the best interest of the State.

1.3 TERMS AND ACRONYMS USED THROUGHOUT THE SOLICITATION

BAFO	= Best and Final Offer
CPO	= Chief Procurement Officer
DAGS	= Department of Accounting and General Services
DAR	= Division of Aquatic Resources
DLNR	= Department of Land and Natural Resources
GC	= General Conditions, issued by the Department of the Attorney General
GP	= General Provisions
Procurement Officer	= The contracting officer for the State of Hawaii, State Procurement Office

RFP = Request for Proposals

State = State of Hawaii

1.4 RFP SCHEDULE AND SIGNIFICANT DATES

This schedule represents the State’s best estimate of the schedule that will be followed. All times indicated are Hawai’i Standard Time (HST). If a component of this schedule, such as “Proposal Due deadline” is delayed, the rest of the schedule will likely be shifted by the same number of days. Any changes to the RFP Schedule and Significant Dates shall be reflected in and issued in an amendment. The approximate schedule is as follows:

Release of Request for Proposals	August 11, 2026
Due Date to Submit Questions	August 24, 2026 @ 2:00 PM HST
State’s Response to Questions	August 28, 2026 @ 2:00 PM HST
Proposals Due Date/Time	September 11, 2026 @ 2:00 PM HST
Notice of Award	TBD
Contract Start Date	As determined by the Notice to Proceed

1.5 QUESTIONS ON RFP

The purpose is to provide Offerors an opportunity to submit written questions about the procurement.

All questions shall be submitted by the due date specified in Section 1.4 *RFP Schedule and Significant Dates*, as amended.

The State will respond to questions through Addenda/Amendments by the date specified in Section 1.4, *RFP Schedule and Significant Dates*, as amended.

SECTION TWO

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVE

The Main Hawaiian Islands population of false killer whales (MHI FKW) has seen a dramatic decline in population over the years and was listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in November 2012. Abundance estimation efforts accounting for sampling bias have shown that the population has continued to decline since listing, with an estimate of fewer than 140 individuals remaining (Badger et al. 2023, Badger et al. 2025).

Under previous funding, the State of Hawai'i's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), its contractors and primary research partners, accomplished much on behalf of MHI FKWs. The understanding of overlap of MHI FKW territories with commercial fisheries was vastly improved. The analyses of biopsies and deceased individuals provided valuable insight into the health of MHI FKW and biological and environmental threats affecting them. Public education and outreach with new materials quadrupled at community events and fishing tournaments. DAR has received additional funding to continue this work.

The primary goal of the portion of DAR's project outlined in this RFP is to fill data gaps that help halt the continued decline of MHI FKW. This consists primarily of field work to collect health data and samples from live MHI FKWs using a variety of techniques, and subsequent data analysis.

2.2 SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work includes field work to collect health data and samples from live MHI FKWs. Field work allows for the assessment of factors that influence body condition (e.g., age, sex, season, social cluster, prior fishery interactions, levels of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and calving history) and will include a combination of image recording, biological sample collection (biopsies, breath, fecal), and satellite tagging.

The scope of work also includes working closely with DAR and research partner University of Hawai'i Health and Stranding Laboratory (UHHSL). It includes the analysis of all photographs, photogrammetry, and satellite tagging data for a variety of variables as outlined in Section II,

Data Analysis. It includes sharing data and biological samples with specific research partners as outlined in Section III, Data Sharing and Communication.

I. FIELD WORK

The field work outlined in this proposal must be authorized under NMFS scientific research permits. Any contractor awarded will be required to hold the necessary research permits, valid for the species and activities in this scope of work, for the full term of the contract. The Offeror shall identify its permit number(s) and expiration date(s) in its proposal, and shall notify DAR promptly of any lapse, modification, or renewal.

- A. Field work must maximize encounters with different social clusters and obtain coverage that is representative of the population, especially targeting social clusters with less available information and known areas of high overlap with fisheries.
- B. Conduct field efforts to collect photographs, videos, blubber samples, breath samples, and fecal samples from live MHI FKWs. MHI FKW field work must include the following, but is not limited to:
 - Collection of photos of individuals for identification, assessment of injury, and photogrammetry, including both waterline and UAV photos.
 - Collection of breath samples from individuals for which UAV images for photogrammetry/body condition assessment have been obtained allowing for comparing respiratory microbiome to body condition.
 - Collection of fecal samples using methods developed for fecal sample collection from southern resident killer whales or adapted methods using a drone to assist in fecal sample collection (e.g., Baird et al. 2022).
 - Collection of biopsy samples, specifically targeting individuals for which UAV photogrammetry images and breath samples have been obtained.
 - Deployment of satellite tags on MHI FKW to obtain movement and dive data.
- C. Opportunistically collect data or photos on threatened and endangered marine species encountered in Hawaiian waters during the course of MHI FKW field work: oceanic manta rays (*Mobula birostris*), oceanic white tip sharks (*Carcharhinus longimanus*), sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*), Hawaiian monk seals (*Neomonachus schauinslandi*), and sea turtles.
- D. Opportunistically record marine debris and derelict fishing gear, and privately deployed fish aggregating devices (FADs), encountered during MHI FKW field work, including photographs and the recorded location of each.

II. DATA ANALYSIS

A. Analyze data collected in the field from photographs, UAV images, and satellite tags, as follows:

- Archive and match new MHI FKW photo-identification data obtained during field work, from other research groups, and from community hotline submissions (see Mahaffy et al. 2023), to a long-term, archipelago-wide photo-identification catalog;
- Match tagged individuals to a MHI FKW photo-identification catalog to determine individual and cluster identity. Filter data to remove unrealistic locations. Upload filtered data to the Animal Telemetry Network DAC and compare to previous data obtained for that social cluster;
- Assess photographs of individual MHI FKWs for fishery-related injuries, including both mouthline and dorsal fins;
- Use imagery collected in the field, including but not limited to UAV photogrammetry, to assign or estimate age class, assess body condition, and determine near-term pregnancies of known individuals, applying the probabilistic age-estimation protocol of Kratofil et al. (2025) as integrated into the long-term catalog;
- Examine MHI FKW movements in relation to fish-aggregating devices (FADs), including State-permitted and privately deployed FADs, using the existing satellite tag dataset and new data from tag deployments for increased location accuracy;
- Address gaps in MHI FKW cluster spatial data, including temporal (seasonal and inter-annual and in response to longer cycles such as ENSO and PDO) and group-specific patterns;
- Assess temporal and spatial variability in diving behavior in relation to known prey species, areas of fishing effort overlap (see Baird et al. 2021), and MHI FKW social clusters (see Mahaffy et al. 2023);
- Analyze diving behavior data in relation to bottom depth, time of day, and lunar cycles, and interpret it in the context of knowledge of prey distribution in the water column; and
- Working with UHSL, compare dive behavior data and prey DNA data from fecal collections by cluster to strengthen interpretation of foraging activity and habitat use of MHI FKWs.

- B. Catalogue and properly store MHI FKW breath samples, fecal samples, and biopsy samples (including skin samples) and prepare for shipment to appropriate research partners (see Section III, Data Sharing and Communication).
- C. Properly catalogue and provide metadata for any opportunistic data or photographs of other ESA-listed marine species.

III. DATA SHARING AND COMMUNICATION

The Contractor will:

- A. Regularly communicate with DAR and UHSL to discuss research activities;
- B. Provide UHSL with biopsies, fecal samples, and breath samples along with data identifying individuals.
- C. Provide skin subsamples from previously unsampled MHI FKW individuals to NOAA's Southwest Fisheries Science Center for genetic analysis.
- D. Provide DAR with semi-annual reports summarizing activities conducted during the reporting period, aligned to the federal award reporting periods and submitted no later than fifteen (15) days after the close of each period, to be included in DAR's semi-annual reports to the funder, NOAA's national Protected Species Program;
- E. Provide DAR with a final report summarizing activities conducted, research findings, and a statement of how fiscal match requirements were met;
- F. Provide products from field operations (photos, video, maps) to the State and partners for use in outreach efforts, and provide DAR with copies of all photographs and video collected under this Contract, together with associated metadata, at the close of the contract term and at any other time upon request, for archival purposes;
- G. Photographs and video provided under this Contract shall be credited to the Contractor, and to the individual photographer where identified, in any public use by the State where crediting is reasonably practicable, and where the imagery was collected under a NMFS scientific research permit the applicable permit number shall be included in the credit or caption. The State and the Contractor shall each notify the other in writing before any promotional or commercial use of project imagery outside of agency reporting, scientific publication, and routine education and outreach;
- H. Compile and provide research findings for DAR, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC), NOAA's False Killer Whale Take Reduction Team, and the Pacific Scientific Review Group;

- I. Provide sightings data to the Ocean Biodiversity Information System – Spatial Ecology Analysis of Megavertebrate Populations (SEAMAP) program;
- J. Provide satellite tag data to DAR, the Animal Telemetry Network Data Assembly Center and/or the Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS);
- K. Provide complete, processed satellite tag data to PIFSC at the close of the contract term, and at any other time during the contract term upon request; and
- L. Annotate all documents completed as part of this Contract, other than annual reports, data collection sheets, and those exclusively for internal use by the Contractor, with a notation referencing the contract with DAR as the primary funding source.

IV. OUTREACH

The Contractor will:

- A. Develop or continue partnerships with commercial operators (e.g., whale watch companies) to quickly find groups of false killer whales and provide educational information to operators and their guests;
- B. Present research information to target audiences, the public, journalists, and educators;
- C. Post regular updates on encounters during field projects to media sites; and

V. MATCH FUNDS

- A. The Contractor agrees to obtain matching funds in the amount of \$45,000 for the term of this contract through in-kind staff or volunteer hours and vessel support and will document these hours.
- B. The Contractor will provide DAR with a letter documenting the fiscal match at the end of the contract term, together with the final report. The letter shall certify that the match is accurate, is not claimed against any other grant, and may be applied to NOAA Award No. NA25NMF472G0017.

VI. DELIVERABLES

The scope of work shall be performed so that the contract term concludes with complete, independently usable products. The Contractor shall propose a schedule for the tasks in Sections I through IV, and shall deliver the following no later than the end of the contract term:

- A. An updated contribution to the long-term MHI FKW photo-identification catalog, with all identifications obtained during the contract term archived and matched;
- B. Complete, processed satellite tag data for all tags deployed or transmitting during the contract term, filtered and uploaded to the Animal Telemetry Network Data Assembly Center;
- C. All biological samples collected during the contract term, catalogued, stored, and transferred to the appropriate research partners;
- D. A written final report summarizing field effort, results, and analyses completed during the contract term; and
- E. The fiscal match letter required under Section V.

The scope of work includes meeting all the detailed requirements as set forth in this RFP.

2.3 OFFEROR'S QUALIFICATIONS

The following are minimum qualifications the Offeror must meet for their proposal submittal to be eligible for evaluation. The Offerors submittal should be sufficiently detailed to clearly show how you meet the minimum qualifications without looking at any other material. Those that are not clearly responsive to these minimum qualifications shall be rejected by the State without further consideration.

Offeror must meet the minimum requirements to be considered responsive. Failure to meet these minimum requirements will cause the Offeror to be rejected from further evaluation. The Contractor shall have the following qualifications:

- 1) Previous experience researching False Killer whales and other ESA-listed species in Hawaiian waters, capability and proficiency in field work, data analysis and outreach and communication. Previous experience and capacity to fulfill the research requirements listed in the scope of work.
 - a. A minimum of (5) FIVE years in the business and performing services specified in this RFP.
 - b. Current NMFS scientific research permit(s) authorizing the species and activities described in the scope of work, valid for the term of the contract or with a documented renewal plan. Offeror shall state permit number(s) and expiration date(s).
 - c. A minimum of three (3) references preferably from government and private sectors for whom comparable services have been performed prior to the date of bid submittal. "Comparable" shall mean performance of a similar type of services

as specified here in relation to the size and scope of work determined by an authorized state representative.

- 2) Documented history of successfully meeting project requirements and deadlines while working collaboratively with state and/or federal agencies.
- 3) Knowledge and proficiency with False Killer Whale and other ESA listed species research.
- 4) Vendor is Compliant with Hawaii Compliance Express.

2.4 OFFEROR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Perform all tasks in the Scope of Work.
2. Issues brought to the Offeror's attention must be addressed within forty-eight (48) hours.
3. Selected Offeror must provide periodic project update briefings to the DAR Project Team; semi-annual performance reports aligned to the federal award reporting periods (January 1 – June 30 and July 1 – December 31), submitted to DAR no later than fifteen (15) days after the close of each reporting period; quarterly invoices reviewed and accepted by DAR; a fiscal match letter; a draft final report no later than sixty (60) days before the contract end date; and a final report no later than the contract end date.

2.5 DAR RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Manage the federal grant funding for this contract.
- B. Communicate with the Contractor and other research partners regarding project scheduling, public outreach regarding the project, and any changes to project dates (e.g. no-cost extension with funder).
- C. Collect performance progress reports from Contractor and research partner UHHSL, compile and submit semi-annual and final reports to the funder.
- D. Monitor project progress through status meetings, status reports and project schedules.
- E. Review and approve contract deliverables
- F. Issue payment to HCE Compliant Contractor upon receiving acceptable deliverables and appropriate invoices and progress reports

2.6 TERM OF CONTRACT

Successful Offeror shall be required to enter into a formal written contract or purchase order to commence work on this project. The term shall begin on the official commencement date of the Notice to Proceed and shall end approximately

September 30, 2027, a period not to exceed twelve (12) months. This is not a multi-term procurement, and no option or extension term is contemplated. This procurement is funded entirely by NOAA Award No. NA25NMF472G0017, the period of performance of which ends December 31, 2027. The period of performance of the resulting contract or purchase order shall not extend beyond the period of performance of the federal award funding it. All work under this contract shall be completed no later than the contract end date. The Final invoice shall be submitted within 30 days after the end of the contract period.

2.7 AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

This procurement is funded entirely by federal funds under NOAA Award No. NA25NMF472G0017 (period of performance January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2027; federal funds fully obligated). Funds sufficient for the full term of the contract are available and will be encumbered upon issuance of the purchase order or execution of the contract.

Compensation under this contract is payable solely from federal funds received. Failure of the State to receive anticipated federal funds shall not be considered a breach by the State.

2.8 CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR

For the purpose of this contract, Laura Jackson, 808-640-1164, or authorized representative, is designated the Contract Administrator.

SECTION THREE

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

3.1 OFFEROR'S AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT AN OFFER

The state will not participate in determinations regarding an Offeror's authority to sell a product or service. If there is a question or doubt regarding an Offeror's right or ability to obtain and sell a product or service, the Offeror shall resolve that question prior to submitting an offer.

3.2 REQUIRED REVIEW

3.2.1 Before submitting a proposal, each Offeror must thoroughly and carefully examine this RFP, any attachment, addendum, and other relevant document, to ensure Offeror understands the requirements of the RFP. Offeror must also become familiar with State, local, and Federal laws,

statutes, ordinances, rules, and regulations that may in any manner affect cost, progress, or performance of the work required.

- 3.2.2** Should Offeror find defects and questionable or objectionable items in the RFP, Offeror shall notify the Division of Aquatic Resources in writing prior to the deadline for written questions as stated in the RFP *Schedule and Significant Dates*, as amended. This will allow the issuance of any necessary corrections and/or amendments to the RFP by addendum and mitigate reliance of a defective solicitation and exposure of preproposal(s) upon which award could not be made.

3.3 PROPOSAL PREPARATION COSTS

All costs incurred by the Offeror in preparing or submitting a proposal shall be the Offeror's sole responsibility whether or not any award results from this RFP. The State shall not reimburse such costs.

3.4 TAX LIABILITY

- 3.4.1** Work to be performed under this solicitation is a business activity taxable under HRS Chapter 237, and if applicable, taxable under HRS Chapter 238. Contractor is advised that they are liable for the Hawaii GET at the current 4.5% for sales made on Oahu. If, however, an Offeror is a person exempt by the HRS from paying the GET and therefore not liable for the taxes on this solicitation, Offeror shall state its tax-exempt status and cite the HRS chapter or section allowing the exemption.
- 3.4.2** Federal I.D. Number and Hawaii General Excise Tax License I.D. Offeror shall submit its current Federal I.D. No., and Hawaii General Excise Tax License I.D. number in the space provided on Offer Form, page OF-1, thereby attesting that the Offeror is doing business in the State and that Offeror will pay such taxes on all sales made to the State.

3.5 PROPERTY OF STATE

All proposals become the property of the State of Hawaii.

3.6 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- 3.6.1** If an Offeror believes that any portion of a proposal, offer, specification, protest, or correspondence contains information that should be withheld from disclosure as confidential, then the Offeror shall inform the Procurement Officer named on the cover of this RFP in writing and provided with justification to support the Offeror's confidentiality claim. Price is not considered confidential and will not be withheld.

- 3.6.2** An Offeror shall request in writing nondisclosure of information such as designated trade secrets or other proprietary data Offeror considers to be confidential. Such requests for nondisclosure shall accompany the proposal in order to facilitate eventual public inspection of the non-confidential portion of the proposal.

3.7 EXCEPTIONS

Should Offeror take any exception to the terms, conditions, specifications, or other requirements listed in the RFP, Offeror shall list such exceptions in this section of the Offeror's proposal. Offeror shall reference the RFP section where exception is taken, a description of the exception taken, and the proposed alternative, if any. The State reserves the right to accept or not accept any exceptions.

No exceptions to statutory requirements of the AG General Conditions shall be considered.

3.8 PROPOSAL OBJECTIVES

- 3.8.1** One of the objectives of this RFP is to make proposal preparation easy and efficient, while giving Offerors ample opportunity to highlight their proposals. The evaluation process must also be manageable and effective.
- 3.8.2** Proposals shall be prepared in a straightforward and concise manner, in a format that is reasonably consistent and appropriate for the purpose. Emphasis will be on completeness and clarity and content.
- 3.8.3** When an offeror submits a proposal, it shall be considered a complete plan for accomplishing the tasks described in the RFP and any supplemental tasks the Offeror has identified as necessary to successfully complete the obligations outlined in this RFP.
- 3.8.4** The proposal shall describe in detail the Offeror's ability and availability of services to meet the goals and objectives of this RFP as stated in Section 2.2 SCOPE OF WORK.
- 3.8.5** Offeror shall submit a proposal that includes an overall strategy, timeline and plan for the work proposed as well as expected results and possible shortfalls.

3.9 PROPOSAL FORMS

3.9.1 To be considered responsive, the Offeror's proposal shall respond to and include all items specified in this RFP and any subsequent addendum. Any proposal offering any other set of terms and conditions that conflict with the terms and conditions providing in the RFP or in any subsequent addendum may be rejected without further consideration.

3.9.2 Offer Form, Page OF-1. Offer Form, OF-1 is required to be completed using Offeror's exact legal name as registered with the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, if applicable, in the appropriate space on Offer Form, OF-1. Failure to do so may delay proper execution of the Contract.

The Offeror's authorized signature on the Offer Form, OF-1 shall be an original signature in ink, which shall be required before an award, if any, can be made. The submission of the proposal shall indicate Offeror's intent to be bound.

3.9.3 Offer Form, Page OF-2. Pricing shall be submitted on Offer Form OF-2. All prices shall be all-inclusive costs, including the GET, to the State. No other costs will be honored. Any unit prices shall be inclusive. Offerors shall state a single all-inclusive total price for the full term of the contract.

3.10 PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Proposals must:

3.10.1 Include a transmittal letter to confirm that the Offeror shall comply with the requirements, provisions, terms, and conditions in this RFP.

3.10.2 Include a signed Offer Form OF-1 with the complete name and address of Offeror's firm and name, mailing address, telephone number, and fax number of the person the State should contact regarding the Offeror's proposal.

3.10.3 If subcontractor(s) will be used, append a statement to the transmittal letter from each subcontractor, signed by an individual authorized to legally bind the subcontractor and stating:

a. The general scope of work to be performed by the subcontractor.

b. The subcontractor's willingness to perform for the period indicated.

3.10.4 Provide all the information requested in the RFP in the order specified.

3.10.5 Be organized into sections, following the exact format using all titles, subtitles, and numbering, with tabs separating each section below. Each section must be addressed individually, and pages must be numbered.

a. Transmittal Letter

See Attachment 1, Offer Form OF-1.

b. Experience and Capabilities:

- 1) A list of key personnel and associated resumes for those who will be dedicated to the project.
- 2) One or more letters of support from partner agencies that Offeror has worked with.
- 3) A summary listing of judgements or pending lawsuits or actions against, adverse contract actions, including termination(s), suspension, imposition of penalties, or other actions relating to failure to perform or deficiencies in fulfilling contractual obligations against your firm. If none, so state.
- 4) A list of sample projects and/or examples of written plans.

c. Pricing.

See Offer Form OF-2.

3.11 RECEIPT AND REGISTER OF PROPOSALS

Proposals will only be received within the State of Hawaii Electronic Procurement System (HlePRO). All offers are due through electronic submittal on HlePRO by September 11, 2026, by 2:00 PM (HST).

At the time of the Award, Offeror shall be compliant with the State Rules and Regulations through Hawai'i Compliance Express (HCE), if not compliant, award shall not be issued. Offeror shall submit the original signed OFFER FORMS for DAR RFP 2026 03 and all other proposal documents uploaded to HlePRO.

3.12 BEST AND FINAL OFFER (BAFO)

If the State determines a BAFO is necessary, it shall request one from the Offerors. The Offerors shall submit its BAFO and any BAFO received after the deadline or not received shall not be considered.

3.13 MODIFICATION PRIOR TO SUBMITTAL DEADLINE OR WITHDRAWAL OF OFFERS

3.13.1 The Offeror may modify or withdraw a proposal before the proposal due date and time.

3.13.2 Any change, addition, deletion of attachment(s) or data entry of an Offer may be made prior to the deadline for submittal of offers.

3.14 MISTAKES IN PROPOSALS

3.14.1 Mistakes shall not be corrected after award of contract.

3.14.2 When the Procurement Officer knows or has reason to conclude before award that a mistake has been made, the Procurement Officer may request the offeror to confirm the proposal. If the Offeror alleges mistake, the proposal may be corrected or withdrawn pursuant to this section.

3.14.3 Once discussions are commenced or after best and final offers are requested, any priority-listed Offeror may freely correct any mistake by modifying or withdrawing the proposal until the time and date set for receipt of best and final offers.

3.14.4 If discussions are not held, or if the best and final offers upon which award will be made have been received, mistakes shall be corrected to the intended correct offer whenever the mistake and the intended correct offer are clear on the face of the proposal, in which event the proposal may not be withdrawn.

3.14.5 If discussions are not held, or if the best and final offers upon which award will be made have been received, an Offeror alleging a material mistake of fact which makes a proposal non-responsive may be permitted to withdraw the proposal if: the mistake is clearly evident on the face of the proposal but the intended correct offer is not; or the Offeror submits evidence which clearly and convincingly demonstrates that a mistake was made.

Technical irregularities are matters of form rather than substance evident from the proposal document, or insignificant mistakes that can be waived or corrected

without prejudice to other Offerors; that is, when there is no effect on price, quality, or quantity. If discussions are not held or if best and final offers upon which award will be made have been received, the Procurement Officer may waive such irregularities or allow an Offeror to correct them if either is in the best interest of the State. Examples include the failure of an Offeror to: return the number of signed proposals required by the request for proposals; sign the proposal, but only if the unsigned proposal is accompanied by other material indicating the Offeror's intent to be bound; or to acknowledge receipt of an amendment to the request for proposal, but only if it is clear from the proposal that the Offeror received the amendment and intended to be bound by its terms; or the amendment involved had no effect on price, quality or quantity.

SECTION FOUR

EVALUATION CRITERIA

4.1 RECEIPT AND REGISTER OF PROPOSALS

Submission of a proposal shall not create rights, interest, or claims of entitlement in any proposer, including the best evaluated proposer. The State reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any and all proposals in accordance with applicable laws and regulations; including, but not limited to unreasonably high prices, failure of all proposals to meet technical specifications, error in the request for proposals, cessation of need, unavailability of funds, or a determination by the procurement agency that proceeding with the procurement would be detrimental to the best interests of the State.

4.2 WEIGHTING AND EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals will be ranked by an evaluation committee consisting of three or more government officials. Evaluation criteria and their associated points are listed below. The award will be made to the responsible provider(s) whose proposal is/are determined to be the most advantageous to the State based on the evaluation criteria listed in this section. Proposals will be reviewed for inclusion of necessary documents and proposal requirements; any proposals that do not contain the required documents may be deemed unacceptable. All acceptable proposals will be viewed by an evaluation committee as specified in this section. The State reserves the right to determine what is in the State's best interest in this evaluation process. The proposal with the most value for the State may not necessarily be the proposal offering the lowest cost. The State reserves the right to select portions of a proposal, or to reject any and all proposals.

Evaluation Criteria - Those proposals that are determined to be acceptable shall be evaluated based upon the criteria detailed below. The evaluation process will award

points for each criterion based on the total available points for that criterion (e.g., Total points = 100: high score = 100, low score = 0). The sum of all criteria will equal the total proposal score. Those proposals failing to receive a minimum qualifying score (65) shall be disqualified from further consideration. The total number of points used to score this proposal is 100.

Proposals submitted will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Evidence of Experience. Total points = 60

- Provider has professional qualifications and experience that will allow them to perform actions described in the RFP and submitted proposal
- Previous experience researching False Killer whales and other ESA-listed species in Hawaiian waters, capability and proficiency in field work, data analysis and outreach and communication.
- Number of years in the business and number of years performing services specified in this RFP
- A minimum of three (3) references preferably from government and private sectors for whom comparable services have been performed prior to the date of bid submittal. “Comparable” shall mean performance of a similar type of services as specified here in relation to the size and scope of work determined by an authorized state representative. Please list all governmental references (If any).
- Knowledge and proficiency with False Killer Whale and other ESA listed species research

2. Project Proposal, Program Objectives and Timeline. Total points = 20

- Project objectives, details, methodology, and relevant information adequately address the description of work and can be completed within the award period
- Objectives align with the deliverables and scope of work outlined in RFP
- Proposal is responsible and responsive. Vendor is HCE compliant.

3. Budget. Total points = 20

- The budget should be adequate to complete the scope of work and budget expenses should be relevant to project objectives
- Evidence of budgeting experience and detailed enough to show how funds will support deliverables
- Budget will be evaluated on the total price stated on Offer Form OF-2 and on the adequacy and realism of that price for the scope of work proposed.