

Division of Aquatic Resources

REQUEST FOR QUOTES
No. DAR RFQ 2026 26

OFFERS
FOR

Hawai'i Island Water Quality Monitoring Project

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND & NATURAL RESOURCES

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

September 22, 2026, at 2:00pm

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

Laura Jackson

Laura Jackson,
DAR Procurement Officer

Statement of Need:

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), is seeking a vendor to complete a Hawai'i Island Citizen Science Quality-Assured Coastal Water Quality Monitoring Project. Following is the project overview, scope of work, deliverables, etc.

DAR Principal Investigator:

Christopher Teague, Aquatic Biologist VI, christopher.h.teague@hawaii.gov

Overview:

Land-based pollution inputs to nearshore waters are directly linked to the health of aquatic ecosystems and to the safety of the coastal waters our communities depend on. Hawai'i Island carries the largest concentration of cesspools in the State, along with aging and undersized wastewater treatment infrastructure and substantial submarine groundwater discharge along its coastline. Together, these create persistent, and in places poorly characterized, pathways for human wastewater to reach nearshore waters. It is therefore critical that DAR have visibility over the location, magnitude, and trends of fecal contamination in coastal Hawai'i Island waters. This can be accomplished through regularly generated, high-quality nearshore water quality data.

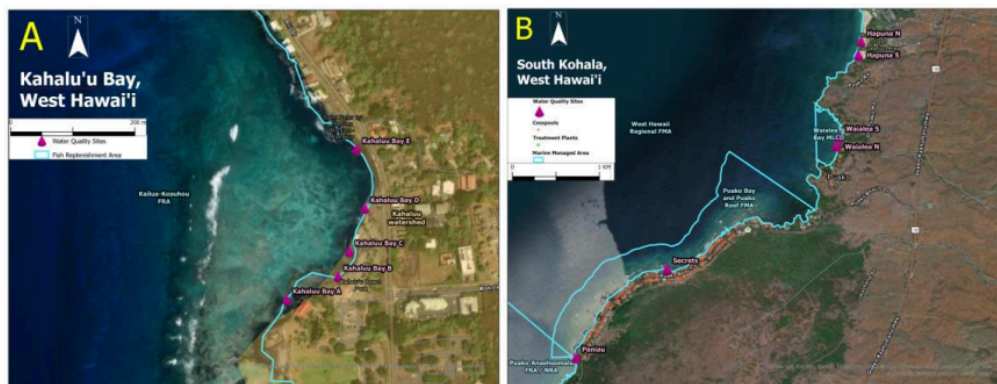
The primary parameter of interest for this project is enterococci, the fecal indicator bacterium used by the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) to assess the sanitary quality of marine recreational waters. Enterococci concentrations are the most direct routinely measurable signal of wastewater reaching the nearshore environment, whether by groundwater transport from cesspools and onsite disposal systems, by discharge or seepage from wastewater treatment facilities, or by surface runoff. Samples shall be analyzed and results reported as colony-forming units (CFU) or most probable number (MPN) per 100 mL, using an analytical method approved under 40 CFR 136 for the detection and enumeration of enterococci, so that results are directly comparable to the water quality criteria in Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR) Chapter 11-54. Those criteria establish a statistical threshold value (STV) of 130 CFU/MPN per 100 mL, not to be exceeded in more than ten percent of samples, and a geometric mean not to exceed 35 CFU/MPN per 100 mL calculated over a 30-day interval. Because this project samples at a monthly frequency, individual results will be evaluated against the STV and analyzed for site-level and seasonal trends; the 30-day geometric mean criterion is provided here as regulatory context and is not a compliance determination this project is designed to make.

In addition to enterococci, the vendor shall measure and report the following supporting parameters at each site during each sampling event. Field parameters, measured in situ using calibrated field instrumentation: water temperature (°C), salinity (ppt), pH, dissolved oxygen (mg/L), and turbidity (NTU). Laboratory parameters, analyzed by a qualified laboratory using EPA-approved or Standard Methods procedures: total nitrogen (µg/L) and total phosphorus (µg/L). These parameters are not incidental to the project's purpose. Salinity is

what allows an elevated enterococci result to be interpreted as submarine groundwater discharge rather than surface runoff or an animal source, and total nitrogen and total phosphorus provide a second, independent line of evidence for wastewater influence – one that is not subject to the short holding time of enterococci and does not carry the same ambiguity between human and animal sources. Read together, these lines of evidence support source identification in a way that no single parameter can alone.

Samples shall be collected approximately once per month at each site, at a consistent time of day and tidal stage where practicable, so that results remain comparable among sites and over time. Sampling locations shall remain consistent with those established during previous monitoring efforts, maintaining continuity and extending the existing baseline dataset.

Sixteen sites have been selected across three areas (Figure 1). Five lie within Kahalu'u Bay in Kona, spaced across approximately 300 m of shoreline; Kahalu'u Beach Park is among the most heavily used nearshore recreational sites on the island, which makes fecal indicator data there directly relevant to both aquatic ecosystem and public health management. Six lie along the South Kohala coast, spanning approximately 5 km from Paniau at Puakō north to Hapuna Beach – Paniau, Secrets, Waialea South, Waialea North, Hapuna South, and Hapuna North – where a continuous band of shorefront cesspools sits directly upslope of the sampled reef. The remaining five lie along the Hilo coast, spanning approximately 5.8 km from Moku Ola east to Richardson Beach Park – Moku Ola, Reeds Bay, Puhi Bay, Carlsmith, and Richardson – downstream of the Wailuku and Wailoa river mouths and the densest onsite sewage in the study.



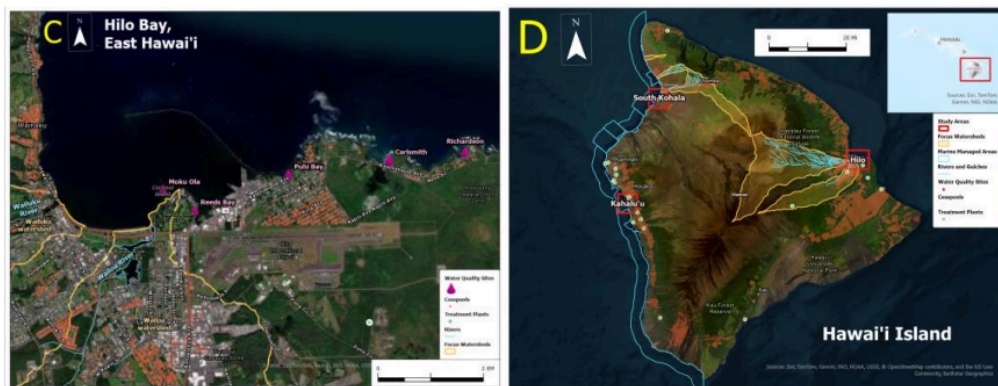


Figure 1. Potential water quality monitoring study areas for DAR, Hawai'i Island. (A) Kahalu'u Bay, West Hawai'i: five proposed sampling stations along approximately 300 m of shoreline, with the seaward boundary of the Kailua-Keauhou Fish Replenishment Area. (B) South Kohala, West Hawai'i, showing six stations (Paniau, Secrets, Waialea S, Waialea N, Hapuna S, Hapuna N), 115 registered cesspools – concentrated in a continuous shorefront band along Puakō Beach Drive – one wastewater treatment plant, and four marine managed areas. (C) Hilo Bay, East Hawai'i, showing five stations, the lower Wailuku and Wailoa Rivers with their watershed boundaries, one treatment plant, and 1,261 cesspools across Hilo town – roughly four times the area density recorded in panel B. (D) Hawai'i Island overview locating the three study areas (red boxes) within the island-wide monitoring network.

The parameters in this project carry different sample handling requirements. Enterococci samples are subject to a short holding time between collection and analysis; nutrient samples require appropriate filtration, preservation, and chilled or frozen storage under longer but still bounded holding times; and field parameters must be measured in situ at the time of collection using instruments calibrated according to the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). The vendor's proposed sampling routes, courier arrangements, and laboratory relationships must demonstrate that every sample can be delivered to the appropriate analyzing laboratory within the holding time and temperature requirements specified by the approved method and the Quality Assured Project Plan (QAPP). Proposals shall describe how this will be achieved for each geographic cluster of sites.

Since the data is used for decision-making and to inform watershed, wastewater, and pollution management efforts by DAR and many partners, quality-assured standards must be met. Sampling work must be guided by a QAPP that has been reviewed by the Hawai'i DOH. In addition, all outside laboratories used for enterococci analysis must be certified or otherwise approved by DOH and must meet the standards and methods set out by DOH.

Community inclusion in coastal monitoring efforts helps with engagement and creating champions for actions prioritized in response to data insights. As such, DAR requires that coastal monitoring be inclusive of trained volunteers working under staff to meet this objective while ensuring that collection methods meet quality standards. Bacteriological sampling requires strict aseptic technique, sterile pre-preserved containers, and careful chain of custody; volunteer training, competency verification, and ongoing oversight must be described in the QAPP and carried out accordingly. As a means to ensure data standards are being met

and field questions are addressed in a timely manner, DAR staff will chair a Technical Team meeting on a monthly basis. This regular convening also supports further analysis of coastal water quality data for use in informing management priorities and detecting anomalies requiring action.

Scope of Work and Objectives

1. Complete coastal water quality sampling for enterococci at a minimum of 16 sites on a monthly basis at established sampling locations along the South Kohala, Kona, and Hilo coasts of Hawai'i Island. Coordinates will be provided by the State to the awarded bidder at the start of the project period. At each site during each sampling event, the vendor shall collect and report:
 - a. **Enterococci** (CFU or MPN per 100 mL), analyzed by a method approved under 40 CFR 136.
 - b. **Field parameters**, measured in situ with calibrated instrumentation: water temperature (°C), salinity (ppt), pH, dissolved oxygen (mg/L), and turbidity (NTU).
 - c. **Nutrients**, analyzed by a qualified laboratory using EPA-approved or Standard Methods procedures: total nitrogen (µg/L) and total phosphorus (µg/L).
2. Deliver all samples to a DOH-certified or DOH-approved analyzing laboratory for enterococci, and to a qualified nutrient analysis laboratory, within the holding time and temperature requirements specified by the approved analytical method for each parameter and the project QAPP. Maintain a complete chain of custody documentation for every sample.
3. Complete equipment calibrations for all field instrumentation before and after each sampling event, pre- and post-field verifications, field quality control samples (including field blanks and field duplicates at the frequency specified in the QAPP), post-sampling QA checks, and all associated paperwork to maintain record-keeping and standards outlined in a DOH-reviewed QAPP.
4. Utilize a trained volunteer base to support sample collection to engage community in meaningful actions to steward ocean health, with training and competency verification sufficient to ensure aseptic collection technique, correct field instrument operation, and valid chain of custody for bacteriological samples and nutrient samples.
5. Notify DAR, and the DOH Clean Water Branch as appropriate, of any result exceeding the HAR 11-54 statistical threshold value of 130 CFU/MPN per 100 mL within five (5) business days of the vendor's receipt of the laboratory result.
6. QA, collate and publicly publish a biannual dataset including all historic data for each site.
7. Support development of key messages and actions in response to data insights in cooperation with NGO and state partners working to address land-based pollution, including wastewater and cesspool conversion efforts.

8. Participate in DAR-led Technical Team meetings for one hour on a monthly basis to troubleshoot issues in the field and create focused time for analysis and insights.

Deliverables

1. Biannual quality-assured dataset covering the six-monthly sampling rounds from the preceding quarter, for a minimum of 16 sites.
2. Data shall be provided as an Excel spreadsheet including site name and coordinates, sampling date and time, tidal stage, analytical method used, laboratory name, and, for each parameter, the reported result with units, detection and quantitation limits, and applicable data qualifiers. Parameters reported shall include enterococci (CFU or MPN per 100 mL), water temperature (°C), salinity (ppt), pH, dissolved oxygen (mg/L), turbidity (NTU), total nitrogen (µg/L), and total phosphorus (µg/L). Field sheets, instrument calibration logs, chain of custody forms, and QA logs will be provided on request.
3. Participation in DAR-led Technical Team review meetings on a monthly basis.
4. Timely notification of exceedances as described in Scope of Work item 5, in the format specified by DAR.
5. Publicly post data in a minimum of three online locations, with at least two sites providing data visualization in the form of graphs showing parameter values over time by site. Enterococci graphs shall display the HAR 11-54 statistical threshold value as a reference line. All public postings shall carry the project disclaimer language provided by the State.
6. Final comprehensive report using template provided by the State by the end of the period of performance.

Offer / Bid

Please submit offer uploaded to HlePRO using the attached OFFER FORMS for DAR RFQ 2026 26. Offers shall include:

1. Organization name, site office address, project title, principal investigator/staff, phone number, email contact.
2. Work Plan/Schedule.
3. Anticipated deliverables.
4. Project management and personnel duties and responsibilities.
5. Sample transport plan, identifying the analyzing laboratories, their locations, and the routes, timing, and courier or transport arrangements demonstrating that every sample can reach the appropriate laboratory within the required holding time for each parameter from each geographic cluster of sites.
6. Name and certification or approval documentation for the analyzing laboratory, and the analytical method proposed for each parameter.
7. Budget and budget narrative
8. Copy of Hawai'i DOH reviewed QAPP.

9. Volunteer training, SOPs or guiding documents detailing protocols for volunteer sampling teams, including aseptic collection technique, field instrument operation, sample handling, and chain of custody.
10. Certificate of Vendor Compliance through the Hawai'i Compliance Express.

Qualifications

1. Site office on Hawai'i Island
2. Has a Quality Assurance Project Plan for a coastal water quality monitoring program covering bacteriological, nutrient, and field parameters, following state-recommended methods, that has been reviewed by the Hawai'i Department of Health.
3. Minimum of five (5) years' experience managing all aspects of a community-based quality-assured water quality monitoring program working with state and county agencies, non-government groups, and individual volunteers.
4. Demonstrated capacity to meet holding time requirements for bacteriological and nutrient samples across a dispersed coastal sampling network.
5. Established training protocols for active community volunteer sampling teams, including field instrument operation and calibration.
6. Demonstrated success partnering with State or county resource management agencies on coastal water quality monitoring.
7. Compliant with the State's Rules and Regulations through the Hawai'i Compliance Express.

Period of Performance:

The Period of Performance for this project is for a 12-month period beginning approximately October 13, 2026.

Funding and compensation:

Funding is limited to Aloha I Ke Kai funds for FY2027. Funding for the project shall be subject to availability.

Payment Schedule:

Payment shall be made progressively upon submission of signed invoices and/or progress reports as requested and approved by the State. At the time of invoicing, the applicant shall be compliant with the State's Rules and Regulations through the Hawai'i Compliance Express. If not compliant, a payment shall not be issued.

Award:

Successful applicant shall be notified by email. Work may not begin until the issuance of the Purchase Order (PO) Agreement and Notice to Proceed (NTP). At the time of the Award, the applicant shall be compliant with the State's Rules and Regulations through the Hawai'i Compliance Express. If not compliant, an award shall not be issued.

Cancellation:

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