

This Request for Proposals is issued by the Management Entity (ME) of the AquaFish Innovation Lab, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, USA, under Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement No. EPP-A-00-06-00012-00. The ME will contact Lead Principal Investigators (PIs) on or before late-August 2013, requesting revisions. Lead Project PIs will be notified if the selection decision will be delayed. The ME reserves the right to modify this schedule as necessary to ensure that standards of fairness and accuracy are met. Actual awards are contingent on funding received by the ME. Proponents must demonstrate a commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity.

Disclaimer: Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of AquaFish or Oregon State University, nor does it commit AquaFish or the University to pay for costs incurred in the preparation or submission of an application. In addition, final award of any resultant sub-awards will not be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal OSU procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. Should circumstances prevent award of a project, all preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

GLOBAL THEMES

The four global themes of AquaFish are cross-cutting and address several specific USAID policy documents and guidelines, including the [Feed the Future \(FTF\) Initiative and FTF Research Strategy](#). Within the Food Security Innovation Center at USAID, AquaFish is part of the *Program for Research on Nutritious and Safe Foods*. This Program “addresses undernutrition, especially in women and children, by increasing the availability and access to nutrient dense foods through research on horticulture crops, livestock, fish and dairy, food safety threats such as mycotoxins and other contaminants and on household nutrition and food utilization” (R. Bertram 12/07/12). The overall research context for this RFP is poverty alleviation and food security improvement through sustainable aquaculture development and aquatic resources management. Proposals must address all four themes in an integrated systems approach, but focus on Theme A as it relates to producing positive development outcomes:

Global AquaFish Themes (Goals)

- A. Improved Health and Nutrition, Food Quality, and Food Safety
- B. Income Generation for Small-Scale Fish Farmers
- C. Environmental Management for Sustainable Aquatic Resources Use
- D. Enhanced Trade and Investment for Global Fishery Markets

AquaFish is managed in a manner that achieves maximum program impacts, particularly for small-scale farmers and fishers, in Host Countries and more broadly. AquaFish program objectives address the need for world-class research, capacity building, and information dissemination. Specifically, AquaFish strives to:

- Develop sustainable end-user level aquaculture and fisheries systems to increase productivity, enhance international trade opportunities, and contribute to responsible aquatic resource management;
- Enhance local capacity in aquaculture and aquatic resource management to ensure long-term program impacts at the community and national level;
- Foster wide dissemination of research results and technologies to local stakeholders at all levels, including end users, researchers, and government officials; and
- Increase Host Country capacity and productivity to contribute to food security, income generation, and market access.

Thematic proposals will be organized around a number of specific areas of inquiry (called Topic Areas). Proponents will identify one topic area for each investigation in the proposal. Proposals will ideally contain seven investigations (see p. 9), with most investigations being experiments or studies. At least one investigation must be an *activity* that focuses on outreach to women. Other required investigations will focus on value chains and on a shared Global Experiment, the latter which will be funded and developed separately after award notification. The maximum number of investigations is ten.

Proposals will focus on more than one topic area in describing aquaculture research that will improve diets, generate income for small-holders, manage environments for future generations, and enhance trade opportunities. Proposals should be formed around *core program components*, as identified by USAID:

- a systems approach
- social, economic, and environmental sustainability
- capacity building and institution strengthening
- gender integration
- high quality research with a pathway for outreach, dissemination, and adoption
- food security with a focus on the poor
- climate change

A systems approach requires that each AquaFish project integrate topic areas from both *Integrated Production Systems*, and *People, Livelihoods and Ecosystem Interrelationships* (see below).* USAID also encourages the AquaFish portfolio (the sum of all funded projects) to address biodiversity conservation and non-GMO biotechnology in its solutions to critical issues in aquaculture. While not every investigation will individually address all elements recommended by USAID, overall the proposal must describe a comprehensive development approach to a problem.

AQUAFISH TOPIC AREAS FOR RESEARCH, OUTREACH AND CAPACITY BUILDING INVESTIGATIONS

Topic Areas pertain to aquaculture AND the nexus between aquaculture and fisheries. Some of the following topic areas overlap and are interconnected. Select each topic area so that it best describes each individual investigation. Select a range of topic areas so that together they address the broader theme (goal). The text under each topic area is provided for illustrative purposes and is not prescriptive.

RESEARCH AND OUTREACH TOPIC AREAS: INTEGRATED PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

• **Production System Design and Best Management Alternatives**

Aquaculture is an agricultural activity with specific input demands. Systems need to be designed to improve efficiency and/or integrate aquaculture inputs and outputs with other agricultural and non-agricultural production systems. AquaFish research must benefit smallholder or low- to semi-intensive producers, and should focus on low-trophic species for aquaculture development. Design systems to limit negative environmental impacts, to improve overall fish health, and optimize carrying capacity. Interventions for disease and predation prevention must adopt an integrated pest management (IPM) approach and be careful to consider consumer acceptance and environmental risk of selected treatments. Innovative research is encouraged on: recirculating and aquaponics systems for supplying aquatic products to denser marketplaces in urban and peri-urban areas; integrated systems using shellfish, seaweeds, or other plants and animals; and new solutions for aeration, cold storage, and pond operations involving solar or other novel energy sources. (BMA)

• **Sustainable Feed Technology and Nutrient Input Systems**

Methods of increasing the range of available ingredients and improving the technology available to manufacture and deliver feeds are a critical research theme. Better information about fish nutrition can lead to the development of less expensive and more efficient feeds. Investigations on successful adoption, extension, and best practices for efficient feed strategies that reduce the “ecological footprint” of a species under cultivation are encouraged. Research on soil-water dynamics and natural productivity to lessen feed needs were fundamental to the PD/A and ACRSPs; critical new areas of research may be continued, along with outreach to poor farmers using low-cost, no/low-feed technologies. Feed research that lessens reliance on fishmeal/proteins/oils and lowers feed conversion ratios is desired, as is research on feeds (ingredients, sources, regimes, formulations) that result in high quality and safe aquaculture products with healthy nutrition profiles. Complex pond dynamics technologies need to be simplified for use by new farmers; improved applications of pond dynamics technologies for driving non-fed plankton-driven systems is applicable where access to feeds is expensive or unreliable. (SFT)

• **Climate Change Adaptation: Indigenous Species Development** (Aquaculture-Fisheries Nexus Topic Area)

Aquaculture, like agriculture and other human activities, will feel the effects of long-term climate change. Among the myriad challenges, ocean acidification and sea level rise will affect the world’s coastal aquaculture operations, much of which occurs in poorer countries. Temperature changes will test the resiliency of domesticated varieties. Research challenges involve understanding the adaptive range of these species, and developing cultivation techniques for new species, such as air-breathing fishes. The shifting distribution of global freshwater supplies will pose challenges for the aquaculture industry, small farmers, and the marketplace. Genomics tools may be used to characterize candidate air-breathing species already being evaluated through previous CRSP research. Domestication of indigenous species may contribute positively to the development of local communities as well as protect ecosystems. At the same time, the development of new native species for aquaculture must be approached in a responsible manner that diminishes the chance for negative environmental, economic, and social impacts. Research that investigates relevant policies and practices is encouraged while exotic species development and transfer of non-native fishes are not encouraged. A focus on biodiversity conservation and biodiversity hotspots, as related to the development of native species for aquaculture is of great interest. Aquaculture, done sensitively, can be a means to enhance and restock small-scale capture and wild fisheries resources. (IND)

• **Quality Seedstock Development**

Procuring reliable supplies of high quality seed for stocking local and remote sites is critical to continued development of the industry, and especially of small-holder private farms. A better understanding of the factors that contribute to stable seedstock quality, availability, and quantity for aquaculture enterprises is essential. Genetic improvement (e.g., selective breeding) that does not involve GMOs may be needed for certain species that are internationally traded. All genetic improvement strategies need to be cognizant of marketplace pressures and trends, including consumer acceptance and environmental impacts. Augmentation of bait fisheries through aquaculture to support capture fisheries is an area of interest, provided there are no net negative environmental effects. (QSD)

* USAID requires researchers to adopt a systems approach for understanding how their research relates to three elements: Livelihoods, Production Landscapes, and Market Forces. The correspondence of these three USAID elements to the Topic Areas above is: Livelihoods and Market Forces = *People, Livelihoods and Ecosystem Interrelationships*; Production Landscapes = *Integrated Production Systems*.

RESEARCH AND OUTREACH TOPIC AREAS: PEOPLE, LIVELIHOODS, AND ECOSYSTEM INTERRELATIONSHIPS

• **Human Nutrition and Human Health Impacts of Aquaculture** (Aquaculture-Fisheries Nexus Topic Area)

Aquaculture can be a crucial source of protein and micronutrients for improved human health, growth, and development. Research on the intrinsic food quality of various farmed fish for human consumption is needed—this might include science-based studies of positive and negative effects of consuming certain farmed fishes. Patterns of fish consumption are not well understood for many subpopulations. Human health can be negatively impacted by aquaculture if it serves as a direct or indirect vector for human diseases. There is interest in better understanding the interconnectedness of aquaculture production and water/vector-borne illnesses such as malaria, schistosomiasis, and Buruli ulcer and human health crises such as HIV/AIDS and avian flu. Focus on vulnerable populations, women and children, and underserved populations, and assess how any given technology will affect or improve the welfare of these groups. Research or field-testing with schools and nutrition centers is encouraged. (HHI)

• **Food Safety, Post Harvest, and Value-Added Product Development** (Aquaculture-Fisheries Nexus Topic Area)

Ensuring high quality, safe, and nutritious fish products for local consumers and the competitive international marketplace is a primary research goal. Efforts that focus on reducing microbial contamination, HACCP controls and hazards associated with seafood processing, value-added processing, post-processing, and by-product/waste development are of interest. Consumers and producers alike will benefit from research that contributes to the development of standards and practices that protect fish products from spoilage, adulteration, mishandling, and off-flavors. Processing waste can claim up to 70% by weight of finfish depending on the species and manner processed, and post harvest losses can claim around 30%. Partnering with other groups and co-developing outreach techniques to reduce post harvest losses can significantly contribute to the amount of fish available for consumption; thus, contributing to the nutrition goals of USAID's Feed the Future Initiative. Certification, traceability, product integrity, and other efforts to improve fish products for consumer acceptance and international markets are desired. Gender integration is important to consider as women are strongly represented in the processing and marketing sectors, and throughout much of the value chains. (FSV)

• **Policy Development**

Policy initiatives that link aquaculture to various water uses to improve human health are needed. Areas of inquiry can include institutional efforts to improve extension related to aquaculture and aquatic resources management; science-based policy recommendations targeting poor subpopulations within a project area, or more broadly (for example, national aquaculture strategies); methods of improving access to fish of vulnerable populations including children (e.g., school-based aquaculture programs); science-based strategies for integrating aquaculture with other water uses to improve wellbeing, such as linkages with clean drinking water and improved sanitation. Additionally, social and cultural analyses regarding the impacts of fish farming may yield critical information for informing policy development. (PDV)

• **Marketing, Economic Risk Assessment, and Trade** (Aquaculture-Fisheries Nexus Topic Area)

Aquaculture is a rapidly growing industry and its risks and impacts on livelihoods need to be assessed. Significant researchable issues in this arena include cost, price, and risk relationships; domestic market and distribution needs and trends; the relationships between aquaculture and women/underrepresented groups; the availability of financial resources for small farms; and the effects of subsidies, taxes, and other regulations. Understanding constraints across value chains in local, regional, and international markets is of interest, especially as constraints affect competitiveness, market demand, and how to link producers to specific markets. (MER)

• **Watershed and Integrated Coastal Zone Management**

(Aquaculture-Fisheries Nexus Topic Area)

Aquaculture development that makes wise use of natural resources is at the core of the AquaFish program. Research that yields a better understanding of aquaculture as one competing part of an integrated water use system is of great interest. The range of research possibilities is broad—from investigations that quantify water availability and quality to those that look into the social context of water and aquaculture, including land and water rights, national and regional policies (or the lack thereof), traditional versus industrial uses, and the like. Water quality issues are of increasing concern as multiple resource use conflicts increase under trends toward scarcity or uneven supply and access, especially for freshwater. Ecoregional analysis is also of interest to explore spatial differences in the capacities and potentials of ecosystems in response to disturbances. Innovative research on maximizing water and soil quality and productivity of overall watersheds is of interest. Pollution is a huge concern, as over 50% of people in developing countries are exposed to polluted water sources. Additionally, aquatic organisms cannot adequately grow and reproduce in polluted waters, and aquaculture may not only be receiving polluted waters, but adding to the burden. Rapid urbanization has further harmed coastal ecosystems, and with small-scale fisheries and aquaculture operations in the nearshore, integrated management strategies for coastal areas are also important. (WIZ)

• **Mitigating Negative Environmental Impacts**

(Aquaculture-Fisheries Nexus Topic Area)

With the rapid growth in aquaculture production, environmental externalities are of increasing concern. Determining the scope and mitigating or eliminating negative environmental impacts of aquaculture—such as poor management practices and the effects of industrial aquaculture—is a primary research goal of this program. A focus on biodiversity conservation, especially in biodiversity “hotspot” areas, as related to emerging or existing fish farms is of great interest. Therefore, research on the impacts of farmed fish on wild fish populations, and research on other potential negative impacts of farmed fish or aquaculture operations is needed, along with scenarios and options for mitigation. (MNE)

PROGRAM REGIONS

Proposals will be evaluated based on the strength of linkages in Burma, among other criteria. **Supportive activities are possible in nearby countries within the same region, and as appropriate, across regions, provided justification is adequate.** Additional work can build on foundational work laid by the Aquaculture CRSP. USAID missions will review of proposals for Burma, and other countries where AquaFish does not currently have an active presence. The project will be required to have a full site description on file prior to award.

Please refer to the RFP website for countries included under USAID's *FTF Focus Countries*. Continuing AquaFish projects have already identified their countries of operation, and had them approved by the AquaFish Director and USAID.

<http://www.usaid.gov/>

<http://www.feedthefuture.gov/countries>

List of AquaFish Continuing Presence Countries in Asia: Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Philippines



OTHER SITE CONSIDERATIONS

USAID-Eligible Countries:

If you are interested in a country not in the existing AquaFish portfolio, please contact the AquaFish Director for additional information. Cautionary note: Proposed activities in new countries including Burma will require USAID country-level concurrence prior to award. Non-concurrence can mean that a project or investigation is not approved for funding.

Memoranda of Understanding:

Within 3 months of award notification, the Lead Partner Institution will be required to enter into Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and/or subcontracts, with institutions at Host Country sites. **MOUs with existing institutions will need to be renewed and filed with the Management Office (MO).** Subcontracting US institutions may also enter into MOUs with HC partners to strengthen institutional relationships and streamline administrative processes. MOUs between Host Country institutions are not discouraged but will not take the place of MOUs between US and Host Country institutions. MOUs must provide the opportunity for other AquaFish projects to function under the authority of the agreement, must provide for joint authorship of reports, and must allow site visits at the discretion of the AquaFish Management Office. **Draft MOUs with new institutions must be submitted to the MO for review prior to execution** (RFP website: *MOUs*).

New Host Country Collaborating Institutions:

Proposals that add a new Host Country research location (i.e. Burma) must submit a response to the Host Country Research Location Considerations (RFP website: *HC Research Location Considerations*). Successful proponents will be required to prepare and submit full characterizations of all Host Country research locations during project negotiation. Descriptions of previous and current AquaFish research sites are available from the AquaFish website.

Fostering Respectful Partnerships: Proposals that foster linkages with organizations including US minority-serving institutions, CGIAR, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national agricultural research institutions, other USAID Food Security Innovation Labs, international centers, private businesses, and others are desired. Proposals that link Host Country researchers from one AquaFish site to another site are encouraged. US and Host Country PIs will share in budgetary decisions and overall priority setting for the project, as well as in other collaborative activities related to AquaFish. Proposals, work plans, and project budgets must be developed collaboratively between HC and US researchers.

US PIs must actively establish an effective working relationship with the Director and Management Team, and other AquaFish US and Host Country project PIs and program participants.

Please note that specific fisheries issues will be addressed through subsequent Associate Awards involving USAID Missions, and not in the current RFP.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR AWARD OF AN AQUAFISH PROJECT

Research that generates new information will form the core of proposals. Proposals must also include institutional strengthening, outreach, gender integration, and capacity building activities such as training, formal education, workshops, extension, and conference organizing to support the scientific research being proposed.

1. Proposals must be innovative, feasible, and demonstrate technical merit as assessed via peer review.
2. Investigations that generate new information will form the core of proposals. Each investigation must be clearly identified as an experiment, study, or activity, based on the following definitions:

Experiment A scientifically sound investigation that addresses a testable hypothesis. An experiment implies collection of new data by controlled manipulation and observation.

Study A study may or may not be less technical or rigorous than an experiment and may state a hypothesis if appropriate. Studies include surveys, focus groups, database examinations, most modeling work, and collection of technical data that do not involve controlled manipulation (e.g., collection and analysis of soil samples from sites without having experiments of hypothesized effect before collection).

Activity An activity requires staff time and possibly materials but does not generate new information like an experiment or a study. Conference organization, training sessions, workshops, outreach, and transformation and dissemination of information are examples of activities.

Investigations provide a transparent means for evaluating different types of work under AquaFish, be it quantitative, empirical, biologically-based, qualitative, policy-based, or informal.
3. Proposals must include at least one *experiment* or *study*. Proposals must also include at least one outreach *activity* that focuses on women and/or girls (see AquaFish M&E plan).
4. Investigations must identify intended beneficiaries, stakeholders, and end-users. To this end, each investigation must include a “Monitoring & Evaluation and Impact Assessment Plan” (RFP website: *Project-level M&E and IA Plan; Outreach & Dissemination Plan*). Proponents must also provide FTFMS indicator targets for 2013, 2014, and 2015 (RFP website: *FTFMS Form: USAID Target (2013-2015)*).
5. Investigations must integrate gender. Overall, proposals will include a gender strategy (RFP website: *Gender Inclusivity Strategy*).
6. Proposals must include a response to Host Country Research Location Considerations. (RFP website: *HC Research Location Considerations*). Proponents will be required to prepare and submit full characterizations (*Site Descriptions*) of Host Country research locations before award.
7. PI(s) will be responsible for fulfilling all ME and USAID reporting requirements (AquaFish website: *Reporting Guidelines*).
8. Proposals must contain a plan for outreach and dissemination (RFP website: *Outreach and Dissemination Plan*). AquaFish seeks to build capacity of HC researchers, farmers, and other stakeholders through improved understanding of aquacultural technologies, including soft technologies such as best practices and knowledge-based systems, as well as hard technologies.
9. Within the proposal narrative (Introduction), proponents must describe future plans over a 5- and 10-year horizon for additional work in critical need areas, whether funded by AquaFish or a different source; an exit strategy is also requested. (RFP website: *Project Vision*)
10. Successful proposals will address the following general *research priorities*:

Priority Ecosystems Inland and coastal ecosystems for aquaculture and aquaculture-fishery nexus topic areas.

Priority Species Low-trophic level fishes; domesticated freshwater fishes; non-finfishes (e.g., bivalves, seaweeds); aquatic organisms used in polycultures and integrated systems; native species. Food fishes are a priority but species used for non-food purposes (e.g., ornamental, pharmaceutical) may also be included as a priority if they are a vital part of an integrated approach towards food security and poverty alleviation.

Target Groups Aquaculture farms (small- to medium-scale, subsistence and commercial) and aquaculture intermediaries, policy makers, and others in host countries.

Key Partners Universities, HC and US government, NGOs, private sector, CGIAR, and USAID.
11. Successful proposals will consider the following USAID *environmental restrictions*:
 - Biotechnical investigations will be conducted primarily on research stations in Host Countries;
 - Research protocols, policies and practices will be established prior to implementation to ensure that potential environmental impacts are strictly controlled;
 - All training programs and outreach materials intended to promote the adoption of AquaFish-generated research findings will incorporate the appropriate environmental recommendations;
 - All sub-awards must comply with environmental standards;
 - AquaFish Projects will not procure, use or recommend the use pesticides of any kind. This includes but is not limited to algicides, herbicides, fungicides, piscicides, parasiticides, and protozoacides.
 - AquaFish Projects will not use or procure genetically modified organisms (GMO); and
 - AquaFish Projects will not use or recommend for use any species that are non-endemic to a country or not already well established in its local waters, or that are

non-endemic and well established but are the subject of an invasive species control effort.

12. Successful proponents will be responsible for interactions with and participation on AquaFish internal technical advisory groups. Each project will continue its service as Lead Coordinator on one *Regional Center of Excellence* (RCE) and/or one *Development Theme Advisory Panel* (DTAP). Upon petition to the Director, a Lead Coordinator may rotate off during this next cycle, provided that a replacement can be found. AquaFish advisory groups perform critical analysis and synthesis work for meeting USAIDs goals. The roles and responsibilities of these technical panels is described on the AquaFish website.
13. Collectively the projects along with activities supported through the Management Office must address USAID objectives within the Feed the Future Initiative. Not every project will need to address all objectives, but overall the AquaFish portfolio selection will be based on meeting USAID needs, as well as the needs of host countries and others.
14. Proposals must describe how the proposed new work builds on current work. Include this information in the *Introduction* and more specifically within each Investigation, under Significance.
15. Proposals will include at least one investigation (Topic Area: MER) that focuses on a value chain describing a fishery product of importance in the project's FTF Focus Country/ies.
16. Each project is required to engage in one investigation called a Global Experiment (GE), which will be performed across all projects, and possibly all main countries of operation. After award notification, a standardized protocol will be developed by the project PIs and Director, and separate funds will be made available for this additional investigation. Projects should anticipate being involved in this GE. The envisioned GE will focus on fed, non-fed, and alternate feeding systems, and build on the GE from 2012.
17. Proposals must clearly state how they will align with USAID and program goals.

PROGRAMMATIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR AWARD OF AN AQUAFISH PROJECT

1. Proposals will ideally present a multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional approach to aquaculture research, development, and outreach in eligible Host Countries. Lead Partner Institutions and Lead PIs may submit only one proposal. Preference will be given to proposals from new LPs—LPIs not leading continuing AquaFish projects.
2. At least 50% of funds must be expended in or on behalf of the Host Country or region. (RFP website: *Budget Information*)
3. Proposals must be consistent with USAIDs strategic objectives, goals, and requirements. (RFP websites: *USAID and FTF*)
4. Applicants will focus on Burma for their base operations. They may involve strategic countries to broaden the potential impact of their results. Information regarding USAID-eligible and FTF Focus Countries can be accessed via the USAID and FTF websites.
5. Each applying US institution must provide US *non-federal* cost sharing as per 22 CFR 226.23. Proponents should target a 20% matching contribution as US non-federal cost share from the participating US entities (RFP website: *Budget Information*), and 20% from participating HC institutions.
6. Proposals must contain metrics and following the USAID-approved AquaFish M&E Plan. These include DTAP indicators and USAID Performance Indicators under FTFMS.
7. A key consideration for award of AquaFish funding is that each applying US institution provide strong institutional support through cost-sharing US PI effort. Salary support for US PIs will be limited (RFP website: *Budget Information*). US PIs charging any portion of salary to the AquaFish award must also be serving in the capacity of major advisor to a graduate student working under an approved AquaFish investigation.
8. Collaborative efforts that involve undergraduate students, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows are encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to be thoughtful about allocating resources for student support -- only 1 HC student per project per year studying in the US may count towards the 50% HC/regional spending requirement. AquaFish funds will not be used to support US expatriate personnel or consultants, as the AquaFish model is intended to build core institutional networks and capacities.
9. Proposals that leverage support from other sources in furthering the broad goals of AquaFish are desired. Leveraged support is support in addition to US non-federal cost sharing funds required for award of an AquaFish project and in addition to the HC match. Provide a statement indicating the support your existing project has leveraged to date, and expects to leverage in the future. The leveraging statement is part of the pending funds form.
10. Familiarity with institutions in the proposed HC and region as indicated by past relationships is desirable, as is a successful institutional track record of work in a host country. A short statement describing institutional capacity and track record in the proposed host country or countries must be included in the introduction.
11. Proponents from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply. US minority-serving institutions are encouraged to apply.
12. Proposals must demonstrate return benefits to the US in furtherance of the program's responsibility to provide mutual benefits and discoveries that can apply to the HC region and US and that will support future development of sustainable aquaculture. Within the investigations, include outputs and anticipated benefits that meet this goal.
13. Funding is typically allocated on an annual basis. All allocations are contingent on the annual funding level obtained from USAID and on performance under subcontract provisions.
14. The MO will obtain concurrence of the USAID Mission in Burma on behalf of highly ranked applicants, via USAID/Washington. Applicants may include letters of support from USAID Missions in their proposals, but these will not take the place of USAID concurrence to the MO.
15. USAID certifications and assurances are required for this next Implementation Plan. Approvals for Animal Use (IACUC) and Human Subjects (IRB) must be approved by time of award, but may be pending at time of application.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROPOSAL REVIEW

Prior to undergoing review, proposals will be checked for eligibility, completeness, and receipt date. Eligible proposals will undergo external technical peer review, which will be followed by programmatic review. Technical review will focus on scientific and intellectual merit, collaboration, and broader impact. Programmatic reviews will focus on overall portfolio balance among regions and themes; adherence to the RFP including the programmatic and budget sections; and adherence to the goals of USAID and needs of the host countries. (RFP website: *Proposal Review Criteria*)

EVALUATION GUIDELINES (excerpted). Please refer to the RFP Website for the complete review criteria.

INITIAL SCREENING

- Eligibility (institutional; RFP theme and topic area; country)
- Completeness
- Submission deadline

Eligible proposals will proceed to the review phase. Ineligible or late proposals may not qualify for review and/or funding consideration.

I. TECHNICAL PEER-REVIEW

INTELLECTUAL MERIT (50%)

1. Soundness
2. Innovation
3. Qualification of Researchers
4. Application of Research

COLLABORATION, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND BROADER IMPACTS (50%)

1. Education and Training
2. Inclusiveness
3. Human Health and Welfare
4. Networking and Institutional Development

I. PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW

Part 1. RFP Adherence

- Adherence to all Programmatic Criteria listed in the RFP
- Adherence to Budget Criteria
- Adherence to Requested information for compliance and institutional support

Part 2. Portfolio Balance

- Regional Balance Assessment
- Thematic Balance Assessment
- Area of Inquiry (Topic Area) Representation
- Technical Ranking within Region and Theme
- Identify if New/Continuing Lead Project Institutions (Preference is for new Lead Project Institutions)

Part 3. USAID Compliance

USAID Eligibility for new countries

- Does the proposal have Mission concurrence?
- Is work proposed for a USAID-eligible country?
- Does the proposal address key USAID goals and interests as defined in the RFP materials?

Initial Environmental Examination Screening (problems may delay projects, or decline projects)

- Assessment of whether there are any obvious environmental issues not raised by the technical review
- Screening process and findings
- Examination and review as necessary

Gender Integration Screening

- A gender evaluation of the highest ranked proposals is conducted, using gender specialists as external reviewers.

PROPOSAL ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT

Format:

- Paper Size: Standard (8.5" x 11")
- Line Spacing: Single space
- Minimum Page Margin: 1 inch on all sides

- Minimum Font Size: 10 point (9 point for header or footer)
- Each page of the proposal subsequent to the cover page must identify the Lead PI and proposal title (abbreviated as necessary) and the page number.

CHECKLIST FOR PROPOSALS

A checklist is provided for assembling the proposal packet (RFP website: *Checklist for Proposals*). The Research Proposal Narrative, item 3 below, **must not exceed 38 pages**.

Proposals must contain the following elements:

- 1. Cover Sheet Form (Institutional signatures are required at time of application)
- 2. Summary Page Form
- 3. Research Proposal Narrative (38pages maximum)
 - a. Executive Summary and Introduction: include information on future directions, alignment with USAID, linkages with other AquaFish Projects; needs assessment; concept or problem statement; exit strategy, and previous CRSP work (4-page limit) (See RFP website: *Project Vision*; and the criteria in this RFP)
 - b. Investigations (5-pg limit for each investigation; 7 investigations recommended, limit is 10 investigations total; 30 pp maximum for (b) regardless of the number of investigations)
 - 1: One investigation must address gender
 - 2: One investigation must focus on a value chain describing a fishery product of importance in the host country.
 - c. Outreach and Dissemination Plan (1-page limit)
 - d. Gender Inclusiveness Strategy (1-page limit)
 - e. Project Level M&E plan. 2 parts:
 - 1: FTFMS targets (1-page) (RFP website: *FTFMS Form*) and;
 - 2: Narrative (1-page) (RFP website: *Project Level M&E and IA Plan*)
- 4. HC Research Location Considerations (5-page limit)
- 5. Budget
 - (3) single-year budgets for Lead. Include budgets for subcontractors and HC institutions.
 - (1) combined-year budget for Lead. Include the combined-year budget for subcontractors and HC institutions.
- 6. Budget Justification for Lead, Subcontractors, and HC for each year in #5 above.
- 7. Leveraging Statement and Pending Funds Form
- 8. Letters of Commitment from **all** HC PIs and US and HC partners; and letters of interest from named collaborators and collaborating institutions.
- 9. Lead Institution supporting information:
 - Animal Use Approval (or written waivers) [required at time of award]
 - Human Subjects Approval (or written waivers) [required at time of award]
 - NICRA for Lead Institution (Negotiated indirect cost rate agreement) [required at time of application]
 - Institutional & Agency Certifications and Assurances. [required at time of application]
- 10. CVs of **all** US and HC Investigators listed in the Proposal Narrative (2-page limit per CV)
- 11. Conflict of Interest Statement (RFP website: *Conflict of Interest*)
- 12. List of Five Reviewers (name, contact info, and area of expertise)
- 13. Literature Cited in investigations and overall proposal

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE DESCRIPTIONS OF INVESTIGATIONS ~ see Checklist: 3b ~

1. Individual investigation descriptions must not exceed five pages. All investigation descriptions within one proposal must not exceed 30 pages. Proposals may contain up to 10 investigations, but 7 is considered ideal for this RFP. Note: One investigation must address gender (see page 6) and one on value chains (see p. 7)
2. Each investigation must be described separately and include the following elements:
 - a. Title: below the title include the topic area (p. 3-4) to which the proposed investigation applies and specify whether the investigation is an experiment, study, or activity (p. 6, item 2).
 - b. Lead PI and institutional affiliation; subcontracting co-PIs and institutional affiliations; HC PIs and institutional affiliation
 - c. Objective(s) [and null hypotheses for experiments]
 - d. Significance: Provide justification for conducting the proposed work, review similar and related work funded by CRSP or reported in the literature (include citations below under h.), and describe how the work relates to the priorities described in this RFP.
 - e. Quantified Anticipated Benefits: Identify target groups and direct and indirect benefits accruing from the research and outreach work. Benefits must be quantifiable.
 - f. Research Design or Activity Plan
 - (1) Location of work
 - (2) Methods
 - g. Schedule, indicating the start date and completion date (not later than 30 September 2015) for the proposed work.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

1. Submit your full proposal via email to AquaFish@oregonstate.edu by 5pm Pacific Time on Monday, 8 July 2013.
2. The ME will acknowledge timely receipt of proposals via email to the Lead PI from the US Lead Partner Institution.
3. Proposal packets for LPIs need institutional signatures; however, at the time of submission, IRB and IACUC approvals can be pending.
4. Proposed work that will be carried out under subcontract from the Lead Partner Institution to another US institution must be affirmed by the formal signed approval of the subcontracting US institution at the time of proposal submission. Institutional approval can be provided as an attached signed letter of commitment or as signed budget forms.
5. Mail one paper copy to:
Dr. Hillary S. Egna, AquaFish Director
Oregon State University
216 Strand Ag Hall
Corvallis, OR 97331-1643 USA

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND FUTURE WORK

The goal of AquaFish is to conduct research that contributes significantly to the removal of major constraints to sustainable aquaculture development and responsible small-scale fisheries management, thereby promoting economic growth, enhancing food security, and conserving natural resources in developing countries. AquaFish is funded by USAID under authority of the International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1975 (PL 94-161), and by participating institutions through matching contributions. Oregon State University was awarded a 5-year Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement (No. EPP-A-00-06-00012-00) for the Aquaculture & Fisheries CRSP (AquaFish CRSP) on 30 September 2006. On 31 March 2013, the program was extended for another 5 years. USAID refers to this second 5 years as Phase II of AquaFish. Two major work plans (each with defined annual implementation plans) will describe the specific research to be carried out under AquaFish Phase II. This RFP is a call for the 2013-15 Implementation Plan. Projects will be evaluated in 2015 and successful and relevant projects will be invited to apply for continuation via an RFP in 2015/16. For the second directed RFP, AquaFish researchers with incomplete Implementation Plan investigations will not be eligible to receive funding until all previous obligations are satisfactorily met. Previous AquaFish Implementation Plans are available from the AquaFish website.

Eligibility for Lead Partner Institution - *Based on Section 269(d) of Title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, an eligible university or college is defined as: "... those colleges or universities in each State, territory, or possession of the United States, or the District of Columbia, now receiving, or which may hereafter receive, benefits under the Act of July 2, 1862 (known as the First Morrill Act) or the Act of August 30, 1890 (known as the Second Morrill Act), which are commonly known as 'land-grant' universities; institutions now designated or which may hereafter be designated as sea-grant colleges under the Act of October 5, 1966 (known as the National Sea Grant College and Program Act), which are commonly known as sea-grant colleges; Native American land-grant colleges as authorized under the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note); and other United States colleges and universities which – (1) have demonstrable capacity in teaching, research, and extension (including outreach) activities in the agricultural sciences; and (2) can contribute effectively to the attainment of the objectives of this title."*

Eligibility for Additional Partners under the Lead: *Public and private entities such as other universities, colleges, minority-serving institutions, companies, international non-government organizations (NGOs), and others with resources and relevant experience for conducting research, training and outreach activities, and implementing research projects, are eligible to apply. For-profit firms may participate as sub-awardees but, pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments such as cooperative agreements. All reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organization, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be paid under AquaFish. US Minority-Serving Institutions include those mandated as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Tribal Colleges and Universities, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Serving Institutions, and Hispanic Serving Institutions.*

~[AquaFish website \(link\)](#)~

~ [AquaFish Innovation Lab RFP Website \(link\)](#) ~

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE AquaFish RFP?

Consult the AquaFish RFP website <AquaFishcrsp.oregonstate.edu/rfpburma> for answers to
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS. Send an email to <AquaFish@oregonstate.edu> or call ~ 541.737.6426