The Aquaculture Review Council, an advisory council to the Commissioner of Agriculture, is pleased to announce a call for Statements of Interest to perform applied aquaculture research and economic development projects during the State of Florida 2020-21 fiscal year (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021).

The Council is focused on stimulating the growth and development of aquaculture in Florida. As the solicitation for statements is intended to create a partnership between the public sector (universities, non-profits, State and Federal agencies) and the commercial aquaculture industry, projects must address applied research and economic development priorities and transfer all results directly to Florida aquaculturists. This package contains all necessary information and instructions for preparing a Statement of Interest.

**Submission**

Statements must address research and economic development priorities identified in the *Research and Development Priorities* section of this document. Each project must also be approved by an appropriate Council member prior to submission. **Applicants must submit their Statement of Interest to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Aquaculture, no later than 5:00 p.m. local time on Friday, January 18, 2019.** The document may be submitted via hand delivery, courier, mail, fax, or as an email attachment in a portable document format (.pdf).

Statements of Interest will be evaluated by the Council at an upcoming meeting. Late or incomplete Statements of Interest will not be accepted. Selected investigators will be invited to submit a full proposal during May 2019 and may be asked to attend a Council meeting to present and discuss their proposed project. Funding for projects selected by the Council is contingent upon a legislative appropriation. If funds become available, the start date for projects will be July 1, 2020.

**Statements of Interest from prior years will not be considered unless resubmitted.**

**Statements of Interest must be sent to:**

Charlie Culpepper  
Division of Aquaculture  
600 South Calhoun Street, Suite 217  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300  
Telephone: (850) 617-7600  
Fax: (850) 617-7601  
Email: Charlie.Culpepper@FreshFromFlorida.com
**Research and Development Priorities**

Statements of Interest are requested to conduct short-term projects that address the following applied research and economic development priorities identified by the Aquaculture Review Council. **Contact the appropriate Council member (see page 7) with any questions concerning these research topics and to verify the suitability of a project topic for submission.**

**Industry At-Large:**
- Create an outreach campaign to promote the environmental benefits provided by Florida’s aquaculture industry to community stakeholders, consumers and conservation organizations.
- Identify ways to consider the benefits of aquaculture production when analyzing risk of invasion and potential environmental harm.

**Food Fish:**
- Develop a genetic selection program for commercially important, food fish species.
- Develop and evaluate new husbandry technologies for food fish species, which increase productivity or reduce operating costs.
- Evaluate new or alternative feed ingredients and dietary formulations to reduce feed costs and increase growth and reproduction of commercially important species.

**Ornamental Fish:**
- Evaluate protocols to replace or reduce the use of live feeds during larval culture of commercially valuable ornamental fish species.
- Conduct research to support 24 (C), Special Local Need Labeling of Dylox 420L, including safety concerns, for the non-food aquaculture and aquatic plant industry.

**Aquatic Plants:**
- Investigate methods to control aquatic plant predators (i.e. *Physella* spp., *Marisa* spp., *Lepidoptera* and *Amphipoda*).

**Reptiles:**
- Develop a protocol to nest, incubate and hatch alligators to increase hatch rates and reduce or eliminate umbilical scarring.
- Develop a protocol for rearing alligators which increases growth rates and reduces scarring from bites through the manipulation of production techniques (stocking density, feed rate, water and air temperature, grading, filtration etc.).
Shellfish:
• Develop a genetic selection program for hard clams, including native species (*Mercenaria campechiensis*), which improves production characteristics (e.g. high temperature tolerance) in real-world farm conditions.
• Develop a public, polyploid oyster-broodstock line in Florida for the emergent oyster aquaculture industry.
• Evaluate the chemical and biological (i.e. phytoplankton species) characteristics of shellfish hatchery production waters which maximizes the survival and growth of commercially important bivalve species at early life stages.
• Establish a baseline of essential biological and chemical water conditions (i.e. chemical water parameters, phytoplankton food sources, positive or negative interactions of bacteria or other pathogens) necessary for the efficient production of bivalve (hard clams and oysters) larvae (< 4mm) utilizing Florida’s Atlantic and Gulf coast waters.
• Develop and obtain FDA approval of an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) and/or liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry (LC-MS) test for determination of brevetoxin concentrations in shellfish (oyster, clam or mussel) meats.

Eligibility
Applicants can be private sector or state, local or federal government organizations. Investigators outside the State of Florida are eligible, but the project MUST be directly applicable to the priorities listed in this announcement. **Only projects addressing the Research and Development Priorities with quantifiable, measurable objectives will be considered.** Projects should include a project-to-farming community technology transfer activity (e.g., workshop or hands-on demonstration) to ensure project results are directly communicated to Florida’s aquaculture industry.

Timeframe
Projects must be completed within the State of Florida fiscal year: July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. An option for applicants that envision a multi-year effort is to propose a Phase I and Phase II project (i.e., a two-year duration project). Applicants must clearly describe and delineate Phase I and Phase II objectives in their Statement of Interest.

Review and approval of funding for Phase I of a project is not a guarantee of approval and funding for Phase II. Phase II projects will be reviewed in the same manner as all other project submittals in the year in which it is submitted.

Funding and Administration
Project funding is subject to the State of Florida’s budget process. Full proposals will be evaluated by the Council and those proposals that are favorably reviewed will be recommended to the Commissioner of Agriculture for inclusion in the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ annual budget request. Investigators and/or their organizations are encouraged to create legislative support for the package of proposals that are included in the department’s budget request.
Project funds, if appropriated, will be administered by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services through a contractual services agreement and will include on-site progress visits. **Note:** Florida Statute mandates public-private partnerships, when appropriate, and a return of a percentage of the profit/revenue generated by projects for funding future projects (597.003(1)(f), F.S.). The Council encourages the identification of matching or cost share contributions to complete a project. Applicants that can identify a match or cost share are encouraged to do so and provide a description of that contribution in the budget description.

**Statement of Interest Format and Contents**

Statements of Interest should be no more than three pages in length, excluding the cover page, budget summary and letter(s) of support, written in 11-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins on letter sized (8.5” x 11”) paper, and should contain the following elements:

- **Date, Project Title and Contact Information** – Include the name(s) of the investigator(s) or applicant(s), the organizational affiliation, address, phone number and email.
- **Abstract** – Briefly summarize the project in 200 words or less.
- **Need for the Research** – Explicitly connect the proposed work to the Research and Development Priorities listed on page 2 and describe one or more specific objectives. Published literature references in the statement are not required but will be required for a full-proposal.
- **Impact to the Florida Aquaculture Industry** – Describe the impact(s) of the project on Florida’s aquaculture industry and the general public as a whole.
- **Methods** – Succinctly outline activities to accomplish the objective(s) and identify the roles of principal investigators.
- **Project Evaluation** – Identify specific performance measurements and criteria that will be used to monitor and evaluate the relative success or failure of the project objectives. Address the practicality of commercial implementation of the proposed project.
- **Deliverables** – Quarterly progress reports and a final report are required; simply acknowledge that they will be provided. The progress reports must describe progress toward the objectives and include any preliminary results. The final report should include discussion and analysis of results, summary of farmer outreach effort (number of attendees, participant satisfaction analysis) and recommendations for future work.
- **Work Schedule** – Provide a brief timeline of the tasks associated with project objectives.
- **Budget Summary** – Briefly summarize the estimated budget, and include categories such as personnel, equipment, materials and supplies, contractual services, match funding (if included) and indirect costs (IDC). Funds provided by the department to support Aquaculture Review Council recommended projects cannot be used for capital outlay, tuition or travel related expenses. IDC is limited to a single 5% charge (10% for the University of Florida). **IDC cannot be charged on top of IDC billed by a subcontractor to the contracted party.**
- **Letter(s) of Support** – At least one letter of support from a commercial farm or non-profit aquaculture association is required.
Aquaculture Review Council Members

**Reptiles**  
Allen Register  
Gatorama  
PO Box 248  
Palmdale, FL 33944-0248  
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**Aquatic Plants**  
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**Food Fish**  
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**Aquaculture Industry Member At-Large**  
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**Shellfish**  
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**Commercial Fishing**  
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**Tropical Fish**  
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If you have questions about the research and development priorities contained in this announcement, please contact the appropriate Council member. If you have questions about Statement of Interest formatting, funding or the submission and evaluation process, please contact the Charlie Culpepper at (850) 617-7600 or Charlie.Culpepper@FreshFromFlorida.com.
Florida Aquaculture Project
Statement of Interest – 2020-21

Cover Page

Title of Proposed Project:

Principal Investigator(s) (name and title):

Name, Address, Telephone, Fax, and Email of Submitting Organization:

Cooperating Investigators (name, title and organization)

ARC Council Member that Approved the Project:

Project Abstract (200 words or less):

Total Project Cost: ______________

State of Florida Cost: ____________