



## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROJECT IDEAS FOR BTNEP'S FY 2028 WORK PLAN**

All submissions must be submitted not later than November 30, 2026 at 11:59 PM. Your Project Idea Submission, Attachment B – Fillable Budget, and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA; if applicable) must be submitted in one email to [proposals@btnep.org](mailto:proposals@btnep.org).

### **PROJECT IDEA SUBMISSIONS**

Submissions must be consistent with accomplishing the goals of one or more of the Action Plans listed in the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP; <https://ccmp.btnep.org/>) and fit within the funding requirements of the FY 2028 Clean Water Act, Section 320 Work Plan.

Project submissions must have a maximum cost of **\$99,999** and must be completed within **2 years**.

BTNEP does not fund basic scientific research. BTNEP funds applied scientific and environmental data collection/research and projects that implement the BTNEP CCMP.

### **PROJECT PROPOSAL PRIORITIES**

The following focus areas were developed by BTNEP's Action Plan Teams (APT). They are meant to encourage proposals that address specific areas of need as identified by the APTs. They are not intended to preclude proposals that address other issues affecting the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary (BTNE).

#### **Water Quality:**

- Repair or replace malfunctioning home sewage systems to reduce pathogenic bacteria in waterbodies
- Reduction of nutrient runoff /eutrophication of inshore waterbodies
- Reduction of the contamination of waterbodies from Toxic Substances
- Conduct investigations into wetland plant dieback in inland lakes and coastal areas
- Conduct investigations into the sources and causes of fish kills. Dissemination of information about fish kills to public and K-12 educators
- Improvement of water quality in coastal watersheds to maximize geographic oyster harvesting areas

#### Invasive Species:

- Early Detection of new invasive species, including the use of eDNA, better coordination among field personnel across various organizations, and more consistent utilization of citizen science projects such as iNaturalist
- Rapid Response to new observations, maximizing interagency coordination, with resources applied quickly to control efforts and eradication if possible (e.g., the Pasture Mealybug and the Brazilian peppertree)
- Prevention of new invasive species coming into the region
- Outreach and engagement with decision-makers and the general public with current information on resource needs, economic impact, and perhaps an updated catalog and map of invasive species currently present in the state

#### Biological Resources:

- Small-scale habitat creation/restoration
- Pollinator census/ bumblebee atlas
- Mammal monitoring/tracking
  - GPS telemetry examining mammal use of coastal environments, especially restoration projects, would be helpful. We have done a little work on coyotes, but almost nothing is known about predator movements on coastal islands. A study of raccoons and coyotes on the barrier islands would inform managers.
- Fisheries – telemetry work, eDNA as a sampling technique, non-game species, and juvenile studies
  - An updated survey on juvenile Tarpon in the estuarine marshes and freshwater ditches of western Plaquemines Parish to bring attention to the value of these habitats to this important game fish species. It may be possible to team up with the LDWF electrofishing crew, which samples these habitats and locations regularly.
  - Conduct a preliminary assessment of microplastics in estuarine fishes of Plaquemines Parish. Some of the hydrological models developed by LSU New Orleans graduate students suggest that much of the water coming out of the Southwest Pass travels fairly far north into Barataria Bay.
  - A study on the possible impacts of dredging small storm drainage canals on both fishes and benthic invertebrates
- Amphibian habitat use, presence, and population trends
- Ecotourism
- Citizen Science projects that engage the general public through libraries, schools, civic organizations, and other community partners to increase public engagement with ecosystem health while also building broader support for conservation with other programming both within and outside of the BTE
- The BTNEP area likely supports the highest density of wintering hummingbirds in the eastern U.S., which includes conservation priority species, including Rufous (Orange



Alert) and Allen's (Red Alert). Perhaps this could more broadly be embedded within a pollinator or urban ecology heading.

- Continued floodplain restoration efforts to organizations working to improve riparian or floodplain habitat that both aquatic and terrestrial species will benefit from
- Biological monitoring tied directly to restoration effectiveness (Examples: Fish and nekton use of restored marsh, Juvenile fish recruitment, Bird, mammal, amphibian, or reptile response, Pollinator response to habitat restoration, Pre-/post-restoration comparisons, Long-term monitoring of restored sites).
- Coastal bird surveys accompanied by public outreach to protect beach nesting birds.

#### Community Engagement and Education:

- Cross-Disciplinary Curriculum Tie-in: Standards-based curricula and activities that draw connections between science and social studies, providing a deeper understanding of the connections between culture, lifeways, and ecosystems.
- Lower-Grade Curriculum Gaps: Address curriculum and testing gaps for lower grade students, especially 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 8th graders who will not be tested in science.
- Teacher Preparation and Science Content Training: Address the significant need for certified and science-prepared teachers by providing ongoing targeted teacher professional development, beginning with teacher preparation in college.
- Green Infrastructure Education for Engineering and other STEM Majors: Provide greater opportunities for college students in engineering and other STEM majors to experience green infrastructure at work.
- Cultural Preservation and Community Education: There is always a need for projects that work to preserve the unique cultures that call our estuary home while also educating and engaging the estuary community.
- Career Pathways and Workforce Development: Provide greater opportunities for high school and college students to recognize and explore various career pathways that benefit the estuary and coastal Louisiana.

*\*Because we recognize a need to engage our entire estuary, projects that impact a large or underserved portion of our estuary may be given priority.*

## PROJECT AWARD PROCESS

Applications for projects submitted to BTNEP no later than November 30, 2026 at 11:59 PM will go through a six-step process before projects are selected and funding awards are finalized:

**Step 1: APT Evaluation** – APT members review, evaluate, and rank project ideas according to the criteria listed in Attachment C “ACTION PLAN TEAM INFORMATION.”



**Step 2: BTNEP Staff Evaluation and Project Selection** – BTNEP staff reviews and compiles the APT-ranked projects, based on expected funding availability and CCMP, Program, and EPA priorities for each work plan.

**Step 3: BTNEP Management Conference (MC) Evaluation** – BTNEP MC reviews the draft work plan and considers it for approval at the May MC meeting.

**Step 4: EPA Evaluation** – EPA reviews and considers the work plan for approval.

**Step 5: EPA Decision of Award** – EPA gives final approval of the draft work plan and awards funds to BTNEP for program and project implementation (generally in October).

**Step 6: Execution of Agreements** – BTNEP/LUMCON and successful project proposers negotiate contracts or sub-award agreements to fund projects.

No more than three (3) project idea submissions should be made from any agency, organization, or individual for this funding opportunity.

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## ATTACHMENT A: BTNEP PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORM INSTRUCTIONS

### **PART 1: PROJECT NARRATIVE**

**PROJECT NAME:**

**BUDGET:**

**PERFORMING ORGANIZATION:**

**PARTNERS:** *List organizations you plan to work with on your proposed project, if any.*

**PROJECT PERIOD:** *# of months of project.*

**POINT OF CONTACT:** *name, phone number, email address*

**PROJECT LOCATION:** *List the latitude and longitude and describe the location(s) [city and parish] where your project will be implemented*

**PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** *List or describe the general, overarching goals of the project. This should include what the project hopes to achieve in the form of measurable objectives and a detailed list of major steps to be taken to achieve the objectives. Some examples of measurable objectives are “increase biodiversity and resiliency of coastal ridge habitats by planting 15 different species of native woody plants to total 1,000 plants.” Or “Enhance high school teachers’ ability to provide coastal Louisiana science instruction by providing a hands-on, multi day teacher training workshop attracting 50 teachers.”*

**PROJECT BACKGROUND** (3,000 Character Maximum)

*General background information explaining the problem(s) being addressed by the project, the need for the project, and why it is important. Also include mention of any previous projects that might have led to this one.*

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION** (3,000 Characters Maximum)

*Detailed narrative of specific project methodology, explaining how the objectives will be met. What exactly is the submitter planning to do? It should include locations, equipment, personnel, methods, etc. It’s the who-what-when-where-why-how of the project. Use information from this section in the Tasks and Deliverables section to determine separate tasks that will be used to achieve the objectives of the project.*

**OUTCOMES/FINAL DELIVERABLES:** *Describe the final outcome/deliverable of the proposed project (e.g., # of trees planted to restore a wetland; # of students/teachers engaged*



during a workshop and what the take-away will be; data collection of  $x$  species to improve management of  $x$  species and habit, etc.)

## HOW DOES THE PROJECT SUPPORT THE CLEAN WATER ACT?

<https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-water-act>

## HOW DOES THIS PROJECT SUPPORT EPA’S “POWERING THE GREAT AMERICAN COMEBACK INITIATIVE?”

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-administrator-lee-zeldin-announces-epas-powering-great-american-comeback>

**WHICH BTNEP CCMP ACTION PLAN(S) DOES THIS PROJECT FULFILL:** *List the top three CCMP Action Plans that are addressed in the project. The list of BTNEP CCMP Action Plans can be found at <https://btnep.org/about-btnep/ccmp-action-plan-list/>.*

**DESCRIPTION OF TASKS:** *Include a description of the work to be completed and the deliverables for each task, with timelines (# of months) and a cost for each. **The maximum number of tasks you can include is ten.** Use the format provided in the examples below.*

### NOTES:

- *Any project involving scientific data collection must have an EPA-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). This should be the FIRST TASK. NO DATA COLLECTION MAY BEGIN UNTIL EPA HAS APPROVED THE QAPP.*
- *Any project involving collection of water quality data must include a task to upload those data to the EPA’s Water Quality Exchange Systems.*
- *Quarterly monitoring reports must be included as a task for all projects.*
- *The final task and deliverable must be a final project report, and the funding for that task should be 10% of the total BTNEP requested funding.*

### Examples:

**Task 1. Completion of EPA-approved QAPP.** *Only include if project collects scientific data. This Task is written for you below and may be cut-and-pasted into your submittal. (Provided task narrative) Develop a QAPP and receive EPA approval of the plan. BTNEP staff will assist by providing guidance and feedback on the QAPP as it is developed by the contractor.*

**Timeline:** *(provide the range of time for completion of work – i.e., Months 1-2)*

**Deliverable:** 1. A draft QAPP submitted to BTNEP and EPA for review. 2. An EPA-approved QAPP

**Cost:** \$

**Task #. Quarterly monitoring reports.** *Monitoring reports are how contractors submit a record of completed work and invoices to BTNEP Project Managers. Work completed on all tasks will be reported as part of a quarterly report Please provide your cost for completing the reporting requirements listed in this Task. (Provided task narrative) Complete quarterly reports using the monitoring report form provided by LUMCON as part of the fully executed contract or sub-award agreement according to the following schedule:*

| Quarterly Report Covers Period | Report Due |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| January 1 – March 31           | April 10   |
| April 1 – June 30              | July 10    |
| July 1 – September 30          | October 10 |
| October 1 – December 31        | January 10 |

**Timeline:** *(provide the range of time for completion of work – i.e., Months 0-24)*

**Deliverables:**

1. Submit completed quarterly monitoring reports by the due date listed in the table above for each quarterly period.
2. Quarterly reports must include invoice amounts by percentage of task completed in addition to the total amount being invoiced.
3. Quarterly monitoring reports must include narrative summaries by task, costs by percent task completion, photo-documentation that support implementation by task, meeting notes that support implementation by task, and other evidences that support implementation of the project during the quarterly reporting period.
4. Invoices and monitoring reports must be consistent for the invoice number, reporting time period, and for the amounts being invoiced.
5. Payments will be made upon receipt of an invoice from the contracting agency on that agency's letterhead accompanied by the task deliverables and a Monitoring Report (form



provided by LUMCON). Contractor may submit invoices for payment of partial completion of tasks, or for payment of multiple tasks completed.

**Cost:** \$

**Task #: Final Report.** *This task is written for you below and may be cut-and-pasted into your submittal.* (Provided task narrative) Complete final report using a compilation of quarterly reports and the Final Report form provided by BTNEP Project Manager. The Final Report can be submitted for final payment after all edits have been completed to the approval of the BTNEP Project officer. Successful submitters will provide a final project report to include a narrative of challenges and accomplishments, an analysis and summary of results. Contractor will present results to a meeting of the BTNEP Management Conference, if requested, and submit results to journals for publication as appropriate.

**Timeline:** *(provide the range of time for completion of work – i.e., Months 23-24)*

**Deliverables:** 1. Submit completed Draft Final Report one month before the end date of the project. The Final Report must use a Final Report format provided by BTNEP Project Officer. The Draft Final Report must be submitted to the BTNEP Project Manager for review, edits, and approval prior to submission of final invoice. 2. Draft Final Report must be submitted in MS Word for review. 3. Accepted Final Report must be submitted in MS Word and PDF versions.

**Cost: \$ (10% of the funds requested from BTNEP will be withheld in this Task before payment of the final report. For example: If your project is requesting \$100,000 from BTNEP, then the cost of the final report Task would be \$10,000.)**

**Task #. Title of Task.**  
*Narrative describing task.*

**Timeline:** *(provide the range of time for completion of work – i.e., Months 3-4)*

**Deliverable:** *(list of deliverables such as photo documentation, meeting notes, monitoring reports, invoices, etc...)*

**Cost:** \$



## **PART 2: MILESTONES**

**ESTIMATED TIMELINE/MILESTONES TABLE:** *Complete the table(s) in the submission form with months as columns (Year 1, Month 1 will be when the project subaward/subaward is executed and the project can begin) and Milestones as rows. Place “X” in the months when tasks will be worked on. **Do not use your own milestone table format or Gantt charts.***

## **PART 3: BUDGET**

**BTNEP FUNDING REQUEST:** *List **ONLY** the amount requested from BTNEP*

**OTHER PROBABLE CONTRIBUTIONS:** *This is the amount of money that may be used to complete the project from non-BTNEP sources of money. Do not include this cost in your total BTNEP funding request. Include this amount in the Estimated Total Budget of the project.*

**ESTIMATED TOTAL BUDGET:** *This is the total amount needed for successful completion of the project. BTNEP funds + Other Probable Contributions*

**BUDGET BY CATEGORY TABLE:** *For BTNEP requested funds only. Total of all Categories should equal the BTNEP requested funds only. **You must include the Indirect Cost Rate used.***

*Fill out your budget according to the following list of categories provided:*

| Category      | Cost |
|---------------|------|
| Personnel     |      |
| Fringe        |      |
| Travel        |      |
| Equipment     |      |
| Supplies      |      |
| Contractual   |      |
| Indirect (#%) |      |
| Other         |      |
| <b>Total</b>  |      |



**BUDGET WORKBOOK: Attachment B: Fillable Budget must be completed and submitted along with your written application.**

- In the Workbook, please add rows to budget categories as needed.
- Complete each tab of the Workbook.
  - If your project is 12 months or less, you only need to complete the tab labeled “Detail Budget Year 1” and if requesting travel funds, “Travel Worksheet.”

**Budget Category Descriptions:**

**Personnel:** Include titles of each individual who will work on your project, their hourly rate, and number of hours per year they will work on the project.

**Fringe:** Include the rate (%) of fringe you provide to your employees who are included in the Personnel category. Fringe is defined as the allowances and services that you provide to your employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Examples of fringe costs include employee leave, employee insurance, pensions and unemployment, and holiday benefits.

**Travel:** A separate “Travel” tab is included in the Fillable Budget Workbook. If requesting travel, fill in the travel tab as well as the total requested per year in the Detailed Budget tabs. Per diem rates must be based on the U.S. General Services Administration (GS) rates, which can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.

**Equipment:** Include the item, cost per item, and number of items needed. Equipment is defined as a tangible item with a cost of \$10,000 or more that has a useful life of one year or more.

**Supplies:** List all supplies included in your budget, cost per item/unit, and number of items needed. General descriptions such as “office supplies” or “field supplies” will not be acceptable.

**Contractual:** List any subcontract and type of service that will be rendered

**Other:**

- a. **Operating Costs:** List all operational expenses required for your project (i.e., rental fees, software subscriptions, etc.), cost per unit, and number of units required.
- b. **Participant Support Costs:** List all participant support expenses individually, cost per unit, and number of units required. Participant support costs are direct costs that support participants and their involvement in a federal award, such as stipends, subsistence allowances, travel allowances, registration fees, temporary dependent care and per diem paid directly to or on behalf of participants. Costs on behalf of your employee(s) are NOT Participant Support costs and should be accounted for in other budget categories.
- c. **Subawards:** List all subawards and the subawardee.



**Total Direct Costs:** Sum of Personnel, Fringe, Equipment, Contractual, and Other. The Fillable Budget Workbook is designed to auto-calculate your total direct costs.

**Indirect Cost:** Indirect cost rate (IDC) must be based on a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) if you request more than the de minimis rate (15%). If requesting above 15% IDC you must submit your NICRA with your Project Idea Submission package. You can request less than 15% IDC.

You must calculate IDC using the Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) base. The MTDC base includes all personnel, fringe benefits, supplies, other (with exclusions listed below), travel, and up to the first \$50,000 of each subaward and/or contract.

Certain expenses must be excluded from this base before applying your indirect cost rate. These exclusions include equipment, participant support costs, and rental costs for off-site facilities.

The Fillable Budget Workbook is designed to auto-calculate your IDC based on these parameters, but you will need to input your IDC rate.

**Total Cost:** Sum of direct and indirect costs (total project budget requested from BTNEP).



## ATTACHMENT C: ACTION PLAN TEAM INFORMATION

There are four APTs organized to implement the Action Plans included in the CCMP. They are the Biological Resources, Invasive Species, Water Quality, and Community Engagement and Education Teams. Anyone may serve as an APT member whether they propose a project or not. Anyone wishing to become a member of an action plan team may email that request to Bren Haase and Michelle Felterman at [proposals@btnep.org](mailto:proposals@btnep.org).

Project proposals will be assigned to an APT and proposers will be asked to make a presentation to that team. Members of the APT will review and rank projects during the APT meetings according to the criteria listed below.

The results of these rankings represent the recommendations of a particular APT. These recommendations alone neither ensure nor preclude a project's inclusion in the draft work plans produced by the BTNEP staff.

### ACTION PLAN TEAM CRITERIA FOR RANKING PROJECT IDEAS

Members of the Action Plan Teams will be asked to consider the following when ranking project submissions:

#### 1. Compatibility with BTNEP Action Plans and EPA Strategic Framework

Does the project align with the goals and objectives of one or more of the CCMP Action Plans? To what extent does the project align with the mission, principles, strategies, and goals of EPA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan Framework? (link found in **BTNEP PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORM**)

#### 2. Location/Positive Impact to the BTNE

Will the project have a positive impact on natural resources or human populations within the BTNE? Does it run counter to or conflict with other ongoing efforts?

#### 3. Community Support

Is there community support and a need for this project? How will the general public be involved or impacted before, during, or after the project?

#### 4. Timeframe, Methods, and Technical Feasibility

Does the timeline for tasks, deliverables, and project completion seem reasonable? How sound are the methods of project implementation and how capable and effective is the performing organization in executing the project tasks?



**5. Evaluation Methods/Outcomes**

Does the project have clear methods and metrics for evaluating impacts or effectiveness? How certain are we that the project can meet its goals and objectives?

**6. Qualification of Principal Investigator**

Is the Principal Investigator qualified to do the work that is being proposed? Will the Principal Investigator be able to complete the work that is being proposed?

**7. Qualification of Performing Organization**

Will the financial institution be able to successfully complete the work that is being proposed?

**8. Proposed Budget**

Is the budget appropriate for the work being proposed?

**9. Other Partners/Matching Funds**

Has the proposer secured matching funds, in-kind donations, or partner participation which indicate a level of outside support of the proposal?

**10. Cost Benefit**

Does this project seem like a cost-effective investment for BTNEP's limited resources? Could funding more appropriately come from some other source?

**11. Overall Impression**

How strongly do you recommend that BTNEP should select this project for funding?