

Mississippi State University Notice of Proposed Sole Source Purchase

Mississippi State University anticipates purchasing the item(s) listed below as a sole source purchase. Anyone objecting to this purchase shall follow the procedures outlined below.

1. Commodity or commodities to be purchased (make, model, description):

Innovasea NexTrak AR Transponding Acoustic Release Receivers (24 units) with integrated underwater acoustic release capability, battery packs, activation probes, and associated accessories required for deployment as stationary acoustic telemetry receivers within the Gulf-wide Cobia and Tripletail Acoustic Telemetry Network.

2. Explanation of the need to be fulfilled by this item(s), how is it unique from all other options, and why it is the only one that can meet the specific needs of the department:

The requested equipment is being purchased to complete the stationary receiver component of a Gulf-wide acoustic telemetry network investigating the movement ecology of cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*) and tripletail (*Lobotes surinamensis*). This project includes multiple collaborating universities and state agencies throughout the Gulf of Mexico that are deploying a common acoustic telemetry platform.

The project has procured 800 Innovasea 69 kHz acoustic transmitters for deployment on study animals as part of this project. These transmitters have been programmed and standardized for use across all collaborating institutions. The requested receiver systems must therefore be fully compatible with this existing transmitter infrastructure. The requested receivers serve a dual purpose. They function both as long-term stationary acoustic telemetry receivers and as integrated underwater acoustic release systems that allow receivers to be remotely interrogated, acoustically released, retrieved, serviced, and repeatedly redeployed throughout the duration of this multi-year study.

Selection of an alternative receiver platform would compromise interoperability with the existing Gulf-wide telemetry network and would substantially reduce the scientific objectives of the project. The inability to reliably detect, decode, communicate with, and manage the transmitters already purchased would prevent seamless detection of tagged fish moving among participating states and significantly diminish the value of the existing public investment.

Because this purchase is intended to expand an already established telemetry system rather than establish a new one, compatibility with the existing transmitter infrastructure is an essential functional requirement rather than a preference for a particular manufacturer.

3. Name of company/individual selling the item and why that source is the only possible source that can provide the required item(s):

Innovasea is the only manufacturer capable of providing receiver systems that are fully compatible with the acoustic telemetry infrastructure already established for this project. The Gulf-wide project has standardized on Innovasea acoustic transmitters, software, and receiver communication protocols across all collaborating institutions. The requested receiver systems must maintain complete interoperability with these existing project components to ensure seamless data collection and network-wide detection of tagged animals.

Alternative manufacturers produce acoustic telemetry equipment; however, those systems utilize different hardware, communication protocols, software platforms, and telemetry architectures that would not provide the level of compatibility required to integrate with the existing Gulf-wide telemetry network. Procuring a different receiver platform would fragment the network and significantly impair the scientific objectives of the project.

4. Estimated cost of item(s) and an explanation why the amount to be expended is considered reasonable:

Estimated Cost: \$122,641.00 (including shipping).

The proposed cost is considered reasonable based on current market pricing for specialized scientific acoustic telemetry instrumentation. Mississippi State University obtained quotations from multiple manufacturers of comparable acoustic telemetry equipment during the procurement planning process. Although alternative systems were evaluated, none met the project's interoperability requirements with the existing Gulf-wide telemetry infrastructure. The quoted price is consistent with the complexity of the equipment and includes integrated acoustic receivers, underwater acoustic release capability, associated accessories, manufacturer support, and warranty.

5. Explanation of the efforts taken by the department to determine this is the only source and the efforts used to obtain the best possible price:

Prior to requesting this sole source purchase, Mississippi State University evaluated commercially available acoustic telemetry receiver systems from multiple manufacturers capable of producing marine acoustic telemetry equipment, including Innovasea and Lotek. Quotes were obtained from both companies to evaluate functionality, compatibility, and cost. Following this evaluation, it was determined that only Innovasea could provide equipment that fully integrates with the acoustic telemetry infrastructure already established for the Gulf-wide Cobia and Tripletail Acoustic Telemetry Project. Because approximately 800 Innovasea acoustic transmitters have already been procured and standardized across collaborating institutions, interoperability with these existing project components is essential to achieving the scientific objectives of the project. The quoted pricing also reflects Innovasea's iTAG member discount, representing the best available pricing offered to the project.

Any person or entity that objects and proposes that the commodity listed is not sole source and can be provided by another person or entity shall submit a written notice to:

Jennifer Mayfield, CPPO

Director of Procurement Services, Chief Procurement Officer

jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu

Subject Line must read "Sole Source Objection"

The notice shall contain a detailed explanation of why the commodity is not a sole source procurement. Appropriate documentation shall also be submitted if applicable.

If after a review of the submitted notice and documents, MSU determines that the commodity in the proposed sole source request can be provided by another person or entity, then MSU will withdraw the sole source request publication from the procurement portal website and submit the procurement of the commodity to an advertised competitive bid or selection process.

If MSU determines after review that there is only one (1) source for the required commodity, then MSU will appeal to the Public Procurement Review Board. MSU will have the burden of proving that the commodity is only provided by one (1) source.

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