



## Request for Qualifications

### Research to Fulfill the Renewable Energy Wildlife Research Fund's 2024 Research Priorities

**Deadline: Friday, September 8, 2023**

[Link to Application Portal](#)

The [Renewable Energy Wildlife Research Fund \(REWRF\)](#) is an industry-led initiative that advances scientific research on solutions to understand and minimize utility-scale solar and on-shore wind-wildlife impacts as accelerating renewable energy development meets clean energy demand. The Renewable Energy Wildlife Institute (REWI) manages the Fund on behalf of the 31 participating companies and 2 industry trade organizations. The Fund supports independent, peer-reviewed research to:

- Implement new, cutting-edge projects with tangible, high-impact results
- Apply science-based solutions to address top-priority solar and on-shore wind-wildlife challenges
- Leverage investment and reduce costs for expanding responsibly sited and operated solar and wind energy

### **2024 Project Solicitation Process**

#### **Phase 1: RFQ Process**

**Fri. Sept 8th, 2023**— RFQ response due (submittal instructions below)

REWRF has developed a set of priorities for research projects to be hosted at U.S. and/or Canada facilities beginning in 2024. This announcement is intended to identify qualified investigators interested in this program, and for REWRF to seek their interest, qualifications, labor rates, and a high-level summary of a potential study approach for each research priority your team wishes to be considered for.

#### **Phase 2: Full Proposals**

After the RFQ submissions are reviewed, 1-2 investigators will be selected for each research priority to submit full proposals. REWRF will provide more detailed information to selected entities. The investigator will present their proposal to REWRF on a webinar.

Note: The proposals will not go through a peer-review process prior to the fundraising stage. The first deliverable for successful proposals will be a study design suitable for peer review.

#### **Phase 3: Fundraising and Contracting**

REWRF will fundraise to support the proposals in late 2023. Contracting for proposals that are fully funded will begin in early 2024. Investigators will be under contract with REWI.

#### Phase 4: Research

The projects will involve working with REWI staff, wind and solar facility operators, and potentially other entities such as technology providers, field crews conducting post-construction fatality surveys, and regulatory agencies.

All REWRF-funded research projects are expected to;

- 1) Develop a peer-reviewed study design
- 2) Conduct research based on the peer-reviewed study design submitted and revised in the proposal phase
- 3) Prepare and submit a draft final report to REWI
- 4) Revise final report in response to reviewer comments
- 5) Submit the results for open-access publication in a peer-reviewed journal
- 6) Brief REWRF members on project results before they are shared with the public

#### Tentative Timeline (schedule subject to change)

**Friday, September 8: RFQ submissions are due**

**Late September** – REWRF notifies investigators selected for full proposal submittal

**Late October:** Full proposals due to REWRF

**Early November:** Investigator presents full proposal to REWRF

**November/December:** Fundraising

**January/February 2024:** Contracting for successful proposals, project launch

#### REWRF's Research Priorities for 2024 include:

##### Solar-Related Priorities:

1. **SRP24-1: Ecological Value of Standard Solar PV Projects:** What are the baseline ecological responses of a PV solar project compared to prior land use (controls), and how do these responses vary by region? Solar facilities are often assumed to have no value as habitat for wildlife, though a diverse array of species have been observed using land within solar facilities to forage and breed. REWRF seeks to establish a baseline dataset documenting wildlife occurrence within typical utility-scale solar facilities (i.e., no enhancements for wildlife such as vegetation management or fencing) across the United States. A study may begin with a small-scale pilot (1-3 sites in one region) to establish and test field protocols and expand to include additional sites and regions in subsequent years. These data will be useful for documenting the ecological value and impacts of utility-scale solar facilities, and serve as a baseline for future studies on management practices to enhance solar facilities for the benefit of wildlife and ecosystems.
2. **SRP24-2: Big Game Movement Interaction with Solar Facilities:** How are ungulate movement and behavior affected by utility-scale solar facilities? There is significant concern surrounding the potential for solar energy to disrupt ungulate movement and behavior, but there are few data to provide insight into the specifics of the effects and their extent. REWRF is interested in supporting research that will help to better understand impacts on ungulates from utility-scale solar facilities, and to inform conservation measures to minimize those impacts.

##### On-Shore Wind-Related Priorities:

1. **WRP24-1: Bat Collision Risk, Behavior around Turbines, Minimization Strategies:** REWRF is interested in studies that will inform the development and implementation of bat conservation measures at wind facilities. With the potential future listing of the hoary bat and other bat species, it is increasingly important to understand collision risk and to develop the most efficient strategies to minimize bat fatalities at wind energy facilities. Projects may investigate the patterns of bat behavior around wind turbines, including bat activity and spatial distribution within the rotor-swept zone, and the influence of environmental conditions upon these activity/distribution patterns. Projects may also evaluate strategies to reduce bat fatalities. This may include improving the understanding of bat attraction to wind turbines, and collection of data to improve smart curtailment strategies and deterrent systems. The specific research questions supported by REWRF in 2024 may be influenced by the upcoming funding decisions by the Department of Energy (DOE) related to this topic.

### **Submittal Instructions**

All organizations and companies (governmental, academic or non-governmental) are encouraged to respond to this Request.

All questions related to the RFQ must be submitted by email to [fund@rewi.org](mailto:fund@rewi.org). Questions to individual staff will not receive responses. The main page for the RFQ is on [REWI's website](#).

Responses should be submitted online via the [Application Portal](#):

Requested information includes:

- **Research Priorities:**
  - Indication of which Research Priorities your team would like to be considered for (check boxes)
- **Study Approach:**
  - Overview of how your team proposes to address each of the selected research priorities (1-2 paragraphs per priority, in one document)
- **Technical Qualifications:**
  - Overview of technical qualifications and experience developing and conducting similar studies (1-2 paragraphs)
  - List of key personnel available to conduct this study (list of names/affiliations); Resumes/CVs including a brief list of any relevant peer reviewed or technical publications)
- **Labor Rates:**
  - Table of labor categories and fully loaded rates. A specific cost estimate for the full study is not required at this time.<sup>1</sup>

**Submission Deadline: Responses are due by COB on Friday, September 8th, and should be submitted online via the [Application Portal](#). No late submissions will be accepted.**

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<sup>1</sup> REWI prefers budgets for research projects be developed using loaded rates that include fringe, overhead, profit/fee, etc. Overhead is not allowed on other direct costs. Alternative budgeting methods are allowable and if required by submitter should be explained in the submission, including details about labor costs by labor category of individual expected to engage in the project.

**Additional Information**

This RFQ does not commit REWI to pay any of the costs associated with the preparation and submission of any responses to this RFQ or the subsequent proposal and study design development process.

REWRF funding for selected and funded research projects is administered via work-for-hire contracts between REWI (secretariat of the Fund) and the primary investigator for the project. REWRF strives for full ownership of any intellectual property that results from projects that it funds. If full ownership is not possible for a given investigator, the Fund will consider, on a case-by-case basis, opportunities for shared ownership, free licensure, or other reasonable terms.

There will be limited funds available for selected investigators and research projects, and funding will be raised after proposal development. Cost effective projects focused on directly addressing the identified priorities are more likely to be funded.