

September 14, 2022

## **NEx Request for Proposals Notice**

NEx encourages to submit proposals focused on the research topic described below:

**Project ID: RD23.01.**

**Project Title: Proposed Testing and Acceptance Criteria for GFRP Bar Couplers**

### **Background**

GFRP rebar is corrosion resistant and has been used on several projects as an alternative to metallic rebar. GFRP reinforcing bars meeting the requirements of ASTM D7957 are commercially available; however, the development of reliable couplers will help to support greater use and application for GFRP rebar. Several GFRP bar manufacturers have developed GFRP bar couplers, however, testing and acceptance criteria are not available. Thus, developing testing and acceptance criteria for GFRP bar couplers for reinforced concrete structures is critical and essential for the construction industry. Defining testing and acceptance criteria will help specifying agencies to confidently allow use of couplers from different manufacturers.

### **Proposal Request**

NEx invites proposals for developing testing and acceptance criteria for GFRP bar couplers for reinforced concrete structures that would be incorporated by SDO(s) in codes and specifications. Proposals shall include the following as a minimum and suggestions that include more information to support the objective of this project will be evaluated by NEx:

- Literature review of available GFRP couplers.
- Define common applications and benefits.
- Develop common testing and acceptance criteria, testing procedures, reference codes, test reports and interpretation, quality control, etc. ACI or ICC-ES acceptance criteria format can be used as a reference.
- Work with specifying agencies like AASHTO to review the draft and potential endorsement and adoption.

### **NEx Mission Statement**

Collaborate globally to expand and accelerate the use of nonmetallics in the built environment to drive innovation, research, education, awareness, adoption, and deployment.

Research and Development within NEx are among its core missions, and it supports and facilitates the development of new nonmetallic technologies to address challenges with effective solutions.

### **Funding Policy**

NEx will impose a limit of 15% on indirect costs (overhead) by research organizations for any research it funds. The organization must waive the remainder of the indirect costs.

### **Award Amount**

NEx does not impose any limit on the overall funding request; however, the anticipated budget for this project is \$50,000. Proposals with higher budget estimate will be accepted with information on budget spending relevant to the value added to the project scope. Co-funding and co-sponsoring proposals with other organizations are welcomed.

### **Proposal Evaluation**

NEx research proposals will be evaluated by the NEx Steering Committee. A winning proposal will be forwarded to the NEx Board of Directors with recommendations for funding.

Proposal evaluation criteria will include technical content, methodology, PI's relevant experience, potential impact/ industry adoption, cost and time, proposed deliverables, and outcome.

### **Awarded Proposals**

- The awarded proposal is expected to commence within the first quarter of 2023.
- NEx will enter into a contract with the researching entity. As part of the contract, it is mandated that the overhead or indirect return be set at no more than 15% of the direct cost of the research funding requested from NEx. Any overhead over the maximum allowed 15% that is waived by the researching entity shall be considered as cost sharing and shall be indicated on the budget table as waived overhead, separate from other co-funding. Non-compliant proposals in this regard shall be returned without review.
- The schedule of payments contingent upon milestone deliverables will be contained in the contract and will include, at a minimum, a final report deliverable to NEx. Progress reports, if required, will be identified in the final contract.
- If principal investigators (PI) from two organizations are collaborating on the research, the award must be to a single organization, which will then subcontract with the second organization.
- NEx will only consider funding research that involves the use of proprietary products if the goal of the research is to advance knowledge in a particular area of study and not solely on a proprietary product.
- In case of any co-funding arrangement with other organization(s), commitment letter(s) from co-funding organization(s) is required before funds are dispersed from NEx.
- The results of NEx-funded research will be owned by NEx, and possibly by other co-funding organization(s). PI should obtain approval from NEx before publishing any results.

### **Where and How to Submit Proposals**

Submitted proposals will be evaluated by the NEx Steering Committee and the NEx Staff. Anyone who evaluates a proposal is required to agree and abide by NEx policies on confidentiality and conflict of interest.

Please email the proposal and supporting information to [info@nonmetallic.org](mailto:info@nonmetallic.org), by end of the day, October 5, 2022. The subject line shall include project ID (see top of page 1) and the name of the proposing

organization (For example: "RD23.xx University of xyz").

If you have any questions regarding the proposal requirements or process, please contact NEx Technical Director, Aparna Deshmukh (aparna.deshmukh@nonmetallic.org).

### **Required Proposal Content**

Proposals submitted to the NEx shall be provided in one unprotected pdf file and shall contain:

- Contact information of the Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI (*if applicable*) and administrative persons that may submit on behalf of the PI;
- Proposal Title;
- Executive summary to be used for promotional purposes:
  - Total project budget amount including up to 15% overhead, if any;
  - Value of any co-funding, identified as monetary or in-kind (monetary value of donated materials, consulting or testing services);
  - Amount of waived institution overhead;
  - Description of objectives of the proposal (300 words or less);
  - Description of significance/impact of the project (300 words or less).

Main body of the proposal (*maximum of 5 pages in 12-point font*) must include:

- Objectives;
- Significance/Impact;
- Project description to include enough detail to understand how the research will be performed;
- Matrix of tasks and schedule of completion, including progress and final reports;
- List of anticipated products, such as new material specifications, new documents, published papers, presentations, or conference proceedings;
- Table of funding that includes all support such as:
  - Total budget;
  - Any co-funding from organizations other than NEx;
  - Net value of waived institution overhead or planned co-funding (if not in place yet).

Supporting information should include:

- References cited;
- Qualifications of the investigator(s) and/or institution(s). Biographical sketches are limited to two pages per investigator.