



Working Across Boundaries:

Establishing the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council and Developing a Watershed Restoration Plan for Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Below Falcon Reservoir

Submitted by:

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Technical Proposal and Evaluation Criteria

Executive Summary

The Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin (UT-LBJ) will establish the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council (the Council), a permanent binational forum for information exchange and collaboration among local and institutional stakeholders of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo below Falcon International Reservoir, including municipal and rural utilities, irrigation districts, local non-governmental organizations, local municipal and county governments, and state, federal and binational agencies. The Council will develop a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the Rio Grande/Río Bravo downstream of Falcon International Reservoir, a segment impaired due to elevated levels of fecal bacteria and concerns for non-attainment of Texas' criteria for dissolved oxygen, nutrients, and ammonia. Building on an existing group of binational stakeholders formed as part of the International Boundary and Water Commission's Lower Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Water Quality Initiative (LRGWQI), the UT-LBJ project team will (1) conduct stakeholder outreach, (2) establish the Council's mission, bylaws, and operating procedures, (3) facilitate Council steering committee and work group meetings, (4) provide technical support for decision making, including data analysis, and modeling, (5) provide support for council publications, and (6) establish a mechanism to sustain the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council into the future.

Project Duration

The duration of the project will be approximately 2 years, from the grant award date, anticipated to be January 2023, to January 2025.

Statement Regarding Federal Facilities or Federal Land

The planning efforts described in this proposal are not focused on either Federal facilities or Federal land.

Project Location

The project will be conducted in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo (LRG/RB) watershed, a portion of the Rio Grande/Río Bravo Basin (Basin). Delineated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in 2015, the LRG/RG watershed encompasses the portion of the Basin downstream of the three southern-most reservoirs in the basin (Falcon International Reservoir located on the Rio Grande/Río Bravo, Las Blancas Reservoir located on the Río Alamo, one of two major local tributaries to the Rio Grande/Río Bravo, and Marte R. Gomez Reservoir located on the second major local tributary to the Rio Grande/Río Bravo, the Río San Juan). The watershed encompasses two segments of the Rio Grande, as described in the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards (TSWQS), Segments 2301 and 2302 (Figure 1).

The Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed has an area of 7,316 Km² roughly defined by portions of 8-digit HUC codes 13090001 and 13090002 but better defined by 10-digit HUC codes 1309000110-1309000117 and 1309000201-1309000205.

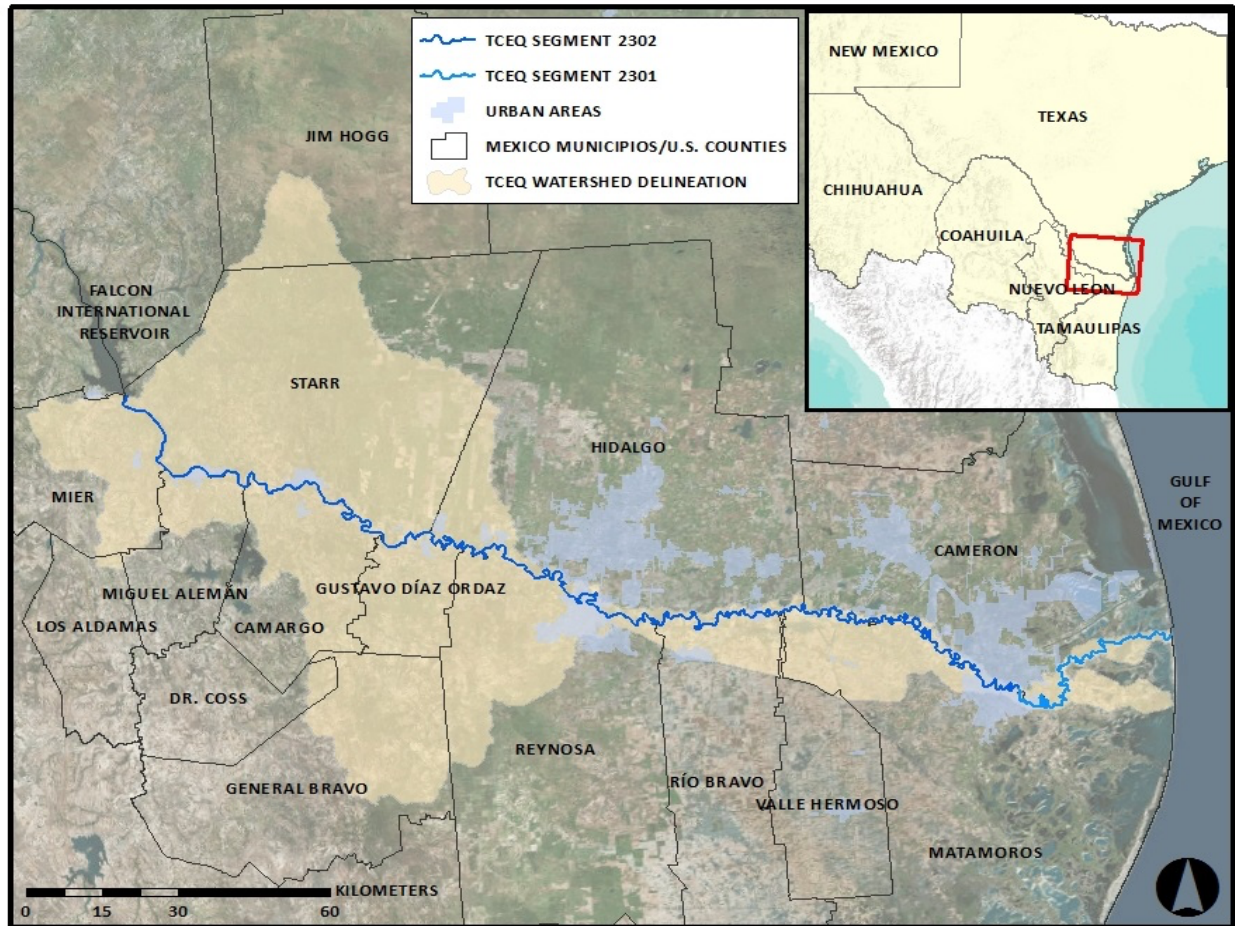


Figure 1. The Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed.

This area is commonly known as the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas and northern Tamaulipas. It includes three counties in Texas: Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr. US cities located within the watershed include: Brownsville, Hidalgo, Mission, Rio Grande City, and Roma. Texas 2020 Core Based Metropolitan Statistical Areas within the watershed include the Brownsville-Harlingen, McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, and Rio Grande City-Roma Statistical Areas. US Zip Codes include the following: 78516, 78537, 78547, 78548, 78557, 78559, 78560, 78565, 78567, 78570, 78572, 78575, 78576, 78577, 78578, 78579, 78582, 78584, 78586, 78589, 78592, 78595, 78596. The project counties and cities mentioned above are included within US Congressional Districts 15, 28, and 34. The project watershed includes eleven Mexican municipios and two major cities, Reynosa and Matamoros. All expenditures associated with this project are designed to, and will, benefit US stakeholders. Any benefits to Mexican stakeholders derived from this project will be incidental.

Technical Project Description

Applicant Category

This project continues the work of the LRGWQI to develop a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the LRG/RB downstream of Falcon International Reservoir by enhancing cooperation among local binational stakeholders and by reducing/preventing pollution

in the watershed, and the best strategies for mitigating sources. As sponsor of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council, UT-LBJ is applying under the category of “New Watershed Group” because the Council does not yet exist. What exists, at the moment, can best be described as a binational group of stakeholders that agree with the goals of the LRGWQI.

Between 2013 and 2018, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA Region 6), the US and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC and CILA), Mexico’s Comisión Nacional del Agua (CONAGUA), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Comisión Estatal del Agua de Tamaulipas (CEAT) worked cooperatively to collect and analyze environmental data as part of the LRGWQI, producing a watershed characterization report and a decision support system for use by state and federal participants in the initiative. The LRGWQI was formally authorized under the US-Mexico Water Treaty of 1944 through a formal exchange of letters between the two nations ([LRGWQI Terms Of Reference](#)). The initiative is also included in the EPA’s Border 2025 Program Framework (Goal 2, Objective 6d [[EPA’s Border 2025 Framework](#)]) and in the Texas Water Development Board’s (TWDB’s) Region M 2020 Regional Water Plan ([TWDB Region M Water Plan](#)).

In Fall 2020, the TCEQ initiated binational outreach to build support for the LRGWQI among local stakeholders. This has created a binational coalition of local municipal utilities, agricultural stakeholders, and non-profit organizations that share the goals of the LRGWQI, including development of a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect LRG/RB water quality.

Applicant Eligibility

Since September 2020, UT-LBJ has been assisting the TCEQ in promoting the LRGWQI among local watershed stakeholders. UT-LBJ has also provided technical support for the effort, presenting data analyses and water quality modeling results funded by TCEQ and presented to stakeholders as part of EPA’s US-Mexico Border program ([EPA US-Mexico Border Program](#)), which TCEQ implements along Texas’ border with Mexico. Neither the EPA nor TCEQ have committed funds to continue these efforts beyond FY2022, although TCEQ’s Border Affairs program has committed in-kind support in FY2023.

As of March 2022, there is visible local binational support for the LRGWQI initiative. However, to achieve the LRGWQI’s goals, a local stakeholder group must be established as a sustainable institution, and expanded and organized. UT-LBJ is in a unique position to make this happen due its expertise and experience in facilitation and international conflict resolution, and its long association with the LRGWQI.

Section C.1.4 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (No. R22AS00163) states that higher education institutes are ineligible to receive this grant “...except for those institutes of higher education sponsoring watershed groups.” UT-LBJ will sponsor the Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council. Local watershed stakeholders have shown their support for UT-LBJ’s efforts to accomplish the goals of the LRGWQI (see the attached letters of support).

Preliminary Goals

The preliminary goals proposed for the LRG/RB Watershed Council are to:

- Establish the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council as a permanent binational forum for information exchange, cooperation, and collaboration, among Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo stakeholders, and focus efforts on protecting water quality in the river
- Develop a binational, stakeholder-driven, watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.
- Develop mechanisms designed to sustain the Council, implement the binational watershed-based plan, and address the current and future health of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

UT-LBJ has identified four major activities necessary to accomplish these goals:

1. Partnership Building
2. Research, Data Analysis, and Technical Communication
3. Binational Watershed Restoration Plan Development and Adoption
4. Sustainability Planning

Approach

Activity No. 1: Partnership Building

Under contract with the TCEQ's Border Affairs program, UT-LBJ has been conducting preliminary stakeholder outreach efforts in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo watershed since the fall of 2020. Between October 2020 and December 2021, UT-LBJ conducted over 30 individual meetings with watershed stakeholders from either side of the US-Mexico border. UT-LBJ has also conducted three public binational meetings focused on the LRGWQI and its goal of developing a binational watershed-based plan for the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo. These public binational meetings were conducted as part of EPA's Border 2025 program.

Virtually all local binational stakeholders approached by UT-LBJ have pledged participation in the LRGWQI and many stakeholders have written letters of support for this project (see Attachment A). Current participants in the LRGWQI include representatives of local public utilities, agricultural interests, government (municipal, state, federal), the non-profit sector, and academia (Table 1). Stakeholders that have pledged LRGWQI participation are not yet part of a cohesive partnership of binational stakeholders. Also, the number and affiliation of LRGWQI participants needs to be expanded to achieve a more complete representation of local binational stakeholders.

This project will build a representative binational coalition of local stakeholders with a mission statement, organizational structure, bylaws, and operating procedures (e.g., rules of order or other method), and a visible public presence. The four tasks associated with the general activity of partnership building include:

- Conducting additional individual outreach meetings with local binational watershed stakeholders to broaden participation in the LRGWQI and to recruit participants into the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council
- Facilitating binational stakeholder meetings to establish the LRG/RB Watershed Council, including development of a mission statement, bylaws, and an organizational structure.

- Enhancing the existing project website and developing targeted outreach and education materials, such as informational flyers and monthly newsletters, to help recruit participants and keep members of the Council and the public informed of the progress of the LRGWQI. (<https://www.BajoBravoLowerRioGrandeWQ.org>)
- Provide information to Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council members and the general public on water quality, riparian habitat, pollutant sources, potential pollutant mitigation strategies, efforts of other watershed groups, and any data and information useful to the Council in their planning efforts. In addition to presentation of information at Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council and work group meetings, the information provided by UT-LBJ will be disseminated through the existing LRGWQI website, the LRGWQI web page of the IBWC's website, a monthly email newsletter, and social media accounts.

Activity No. 2: Research, Data Analysis, Technical Communication

As part of the LRGWQI, a full watershed characterization was completed in 2017. The LRGWQI Watershed Characterization Report (WRC) can be downloaded from the LRGWQI Project website ([Lower Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Watershed Characterization Report](#)). The report contains detailed physical, biological, biochemical, geological, pedological, climactic, economic, and demographic information about the LRG/RB watershed. An analysis of historical water quality data, including parametric and nonparametric statistical trend analyses is also included. The report also presents the results of a survey of sanitary sewer service areas in the watershed, including all current wastewater treatment facilities, and an analysis of areas lacking centralized sanitary sewer services. The Watershed Characterization Report also estimates daily point source and steady-state nonpoint source loadings of pollutants affecting water quality in the LRG/RB, including fecal indicator bacteria.

Although the 2017 WCR will provide information for developing a binational watershed-based plan, some of the information in the WCR must be updated. There are also gaps in information needed to develop a binational plan. Most importantly, the activities, management practices, and pollution mitigation strategies normally described in watershed-based plans have not yet been identified for the Lower RG/RB. These elements of a watershed-based plan must be arrived at through consensus building among local binational stakeholders.

Uncertainty can present obstacles that prevent stakeholders from agreeing on pollution mitigation strategies; the availability of data and information from multiple sources, including the watershed stakeholders themselves, reduces uncertainty, helps focus pollution mitigation efforts, and fosters consensus-building among stakeholders. UT-LBJ has identified five major tasks associated with Activity No. 2, Research, Data Analysis, Technical Communication.

- Drafting, completing, revising, and updating Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) for acquiring and/or analyzing environmental data (if needed)
- Acquiring environmental data from well documented and nationally-vetted sources, including any quality assurance and metadata associated with the acquired data

- Updating the watershed characterization completed in 2017, including confirming all potential pollutant sources and updating all data analyses
- Performing additional analyses of historical environmental data and/or water quality modeling as needed or as requested by stakeholders
- Communicating technical information to watershed stakeholders by way of the LRGWQI website, social media and through presentations at Council and work group meetings

Activity No. 3: Binational Watershed Restoration Plan Development and Adoption

Watershed-based plans are holistic community-based planning efforts that consider all potential factors affecting the health of watersheds and their residents ([Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters](#)). Watershed planning efforts of the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council will address water quality impairments and concerns documented by the TCEQ and EPA as well as other water quality issues that affect the health of the watershed and its citizens. UT-LBJ investigators have identified nine major tasks associated with Activity No. 3, Watershed Plan Development and Adoption:

- Identifying and reaching stakeholder consensus on point and non-point source pollution mitigation strategies to be included in a binational watershed-based plan
- Performing a pollutant load analysis (estimating current pollutant loads and pollutant load reductions expected from the plan)
- Estimating the amount of technical and financial assistance needed to implement the pollution mitigation strategies included in the plan
- Developing a schedule for implementing each pollution mitigation strategy included the plan
- Developing interim measurable milestones for determining the degree to which pollution mitigation measures are being implemented
- Developing a set of criteria that can be used to determine whether pollutant loading reductions are being achieved over time and water quality is improving
- Developing a monitoring component to evaluate the effectiveness of the binational watershed-based plan's implementation efforts over time
- Developing a continuing outreach and education component as part of the plan
- Writing, editing, and publishing a final watershed-based plan report

UT-LBJ investigators will update information and data analyses in the WCR as soon as a grant agreement is signed with USBR. The need for additional information, data, data analyses, and/or modeling will be determined by the deliberations of the Council or its work groups. UT-LBJ investigators will focus on known watershed pollution sources, providing information about those sources, and potential strategies to mitigate them. UT-LBJ investigators will begin building stakeholder consensus around those pollution mitigation strategies with the highest probability

of implementation and significant impact on LRG/RB water quality. UT-LBJ investigators will also estimate the potential impact of pollution mitigation strategies on the Lower RG/RB. UT-LBJ will develop estimates of the of technical and financial assistance needed to implement the plan. Based on advice from watershed stakeholders, UT-LBJ will develop a schedule for implementing each pollution mitigation strategy, including interim measurable implementation milestones. UT-LBJ investigators will develop a monitoring component and a set of criteria to determine whether pollutant loading reductions are achieved over time and water quality is improving. UT-LBJ investigators will propose a continuing outreach and education component as part of the plan to perpetuate and enhance stakeholder outreach and the public presence of the LRG/RB Council. Finally, UT-LBJ investigators will provide writing and editing support to the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Council to develop and publish a binational watershed-based plan.

Activity No. 4: Sustainability Planning

Several factors associated with the LRGWQI already contribute to the project's sustainability. The IBWC/CILA created the LRGWQI under the US-Mexico Water Treaty of 1944 through an official exchange of letters between the US and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission (<https://www.ibwc.gov/lrgwqi.html>). The Terms of Reference signed by both sections in 2013 offer options for a binational plan, including a Joint Engineering Report or a Treaty Minute, which constitute implementation and sustainability commitments from both countries. The LRGWQI is included as a goal of the EPA's Border 2025 Framework ([EPA's Border 2025 Framework](#)) and is also included in the 2021 Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB's) Region M Regional Water Plan ([TWDB Region M Water Plan](#)). TCEQ's Border Affairs program has committed to providing stakeholder participation and public outreach support as part of its participation in EPA's Border 2025 program. The incorporation of the LRGWQI into these federal and state programs constitutes a commitment to supporting the LRGWQI in the future. Although UT-LBJ has received no commitment for funding in FY2022 or FY2023 from these agencies, future in-kind support from EPA, TWDB, and TCEQ is consistent with their previous commitments.

Stakeholder participation and public outreach efforts funded by the TCEQ's Border Affairs program in 2020 and 2021 indicated support among local stakeholders for addressing water quality problems in the Lower RG/RB watershed and for the LRGWQI project (see Attachment A – Letters of Support and Commitment). This level of support and participation in the initiative indicates interest in the project and is a predictor of future participation in the LRGWQI. UT-LBJ investigators envision leveraging this support to create a non-profit organization that will support the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council.

UT-LBJ investigators are looking towards the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership as a potential model for sustainability of the Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council ([Arroyo Colorado website](#)). The Arroyo Colorado is a distributary channel of the Lower RG/RB. Many participants in the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership are also stakeholders of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo. Currently, the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership has a dedicated full-time watershed coordinator funded by state and federal grants. The partnership also created a non-profit organization with fund-raising capabilities to help sustain the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership.

UT-LBJ investigators will engage stakeholders in discussions about the sustainability of the LRG/RB Watershed Council. Based on this input, and information obtained from other watershed groups such as the Arroyo Colorado, UT-LBJ investigators will develop a sustainability plan for the LRG/RB Watershed Council, conducting research to gather information on the sustainability efforts of other transboundary watershed-based groups. UT-LBJ Investigators will:

- Present options for sustainability of the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council to participating stakeholders
- Document stakeholder preferences for sustaining the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council
- Prepare a plan for sustaining and the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council based on research and stakeholder input
- Implement the sustainability plan for Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council in year two of the project

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criterion A. - Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope

Sub Criterion A1. - Watershed Group Diversity

Table 1 lists potential partners in the LRGWQI, their roles, and the roles of other organizations participating in the LRGWQI. Table 1 contains individuals and organizations representing diverse sectors, including municipal and rural utilities, irrigation districts, local non-governmental organizations, local municipal and county governments, and state, federal and binational agencies. Some sectors are underrepresented (e.g., rural utilities) or not represented (e.g., private interests, including industry and tourism groups). Stakeholders in Table 1 are not currently part of a binational watershed group. The efforts described in the “Approach” section of the Technical Description of this proposal are designed, among other things, to achieve one of the most important goals of the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council, Partnership Building. Activity No. 1 describes how, through targeted outreach, UT-LBJ investigators will expand and organize a diverse group binational stakeholders and develop a binational watershed restoration plan for the Lower RG/RB.

Table 1. Current LRWQI Partners and Participating Organizations and Their Roles

Project Partners and Participating Organizations	Current Roles
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)	An agency of the State of Texas, the TCEQ provides state-funded support for outreach, education, and public participation activities, including providing and disseminating information to watershed stakeholders, providing meeting venues (quarterly), providing meeting facilitation assistance.
International Boundary and Water Commission – US Section (IBWC)	The US Section of the IBWC provides the LRGWQI the official medium for high level communication between US state/federal stakeholders and Key Mexican agencies and institutions. The IBWC also provides a mechanism for institutionalizing binational aspects of the LRGWQI watershed-based plan under the US-Mexico Water Treaty of 1944. A Letter of Commitment from the US Section of the IBWC is included with this proposal.

Project Partners and Participating Organizations	Current Roles
Comisión Internacional de Límites y Agua (CILA)	CILA is the Mexican section of the IBWC. Along with the US Section, CILA provides the official medium for high level communication between Mexican state and federal stakeholders and Key US agencies/institutions. Together with the US Section, CILA provides a mechanism for institutionalizing binational aspects of the LRGWQI watershed-based plan under the US-Mexico Water Treaty of 1944.
US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Region 6	A US federal stakeholder in the LRGWQI, USEPA will provide technical and non-technical assistance and information as well as guidance on developing EPA-accepted watershed-based plans. USEPA will also provide assistance with meeting facilitation and stakeholder participation under its Border 2025 Program.
Comisión Nacional del Agua (CONAGUA)	A Mexican federal stakeholder in the LRGWQI, CONAGUA will provide technical and non-technical assistance and information as well as guidance on Mexican institutional and regulatory requirements associated with pollution control and surface water quality.
Comision Estatal del Agua de Tamaulipas (CEAT)	CEAT is a state-level Mexican stakeholder in the LRGWQI. As a participant in the initiative, CEAT will provide technical and non-technical assistance and information as well as guidance on infrastructure needs and on state-level Mexican institutional procedures associated with pollution control and surface water quality in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas.
Brownsville Public Utility Board (BPUB)	BPUB is a local US municipal stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. A letter of support from BPUB is included with this proposal.
East Rio Hondo Water Supply Corporation (ERWSC)	ERWSC is a local rural utility on the US side of the border and an active participant in the LRGWQI.
City of Alamo	The City of Alamo is a local US municipal stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. A letter of support from the City of Alamo is included with this proposal.
Hidalgo County Irrigation District Number 2 (HCID#2)	HCID#2 is a local US stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI.
Harlingen Irrigation District (CCID#1)	The Harlingen Irrigation District is a local US stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. A letter of support from the Harlingen Irrigation District is included with this proposal.
Cameron County Irrigation District Number 2 (CCID#2)	CCID#2 is a local US stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI.
Delta Lake Irrigation District (DLID)	DLID is a local US stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. A letter of support from DLID is included with this proposal.
Junta de Agua y Drenaje de Matamoros (JAD Matamoros)	JAD Matamoros is a local municipal Mexican stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. JAD Matamoros has pledged long-term participation in the LRGWQI.
City of Harlingen	The City of Harlingen is a local municipal US stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI.
City of McAllen and the McAllen Public Utility Board (McAllen PUB)	McAllen PUB is a local municipal US stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. A letter of support from McAllen PUB is included with this proposal.
Hidalgo County	Hidalgo County is a US local governmental stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. Hidalgo County has pledged long-term participation in the LRGWQI.
City of Pharr	The City of Pharr is a local municipal US stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. The City of Pharr has pledged long-term participation in the LRGWQI.
AGUA Special Utility District (AGUA SUD)	AGUA SUD is a US rural utility stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. AGUA SUD has pledged long-term participation in the LRGWQI.

Project Partners and Participating Organizations	Current Roles
Union Water Supply Corporation (WSC)	Union WSC is a US rural utility stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. Union WSC has pledged long-term participation in the LRGWQI. A letter of support from the Harlingen Irrigation District is included with this proposal.
City of Rio Grande City	The City of Rio Grande City is a US municipal stakeholder and an active participant in the LRGWQI. The city has pledged long-term participation in the LRGWQI. A letter of support from the Harlingen Irrigation District is included with this proposal.
Mid-Valley Agriculture LLC	Mid-Valley Agriculture LLC is a local US agricultural producer and an active participant in the LRGWQI.
Comisión Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado de Miguel Alemán (COMAPA Miguel Alemán)	COMAPA Miguel Alemán is a local Mexican utility and an active participant in the LRGWQI. COMAPA Miguel Alemán has pledged long-term participation in the LRGWQI.
Comisión Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado de Reynosa (COMAPA Reynosa)	COMAPA Reynosa is a local Mexican utility and an active participant in the LRGWQI. A letter of support from COMAPA Reynosa is included with this proposal.
Comisión Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado de Río Bravo (COMAPA Río Bravo)	COMAPA Río Bravo is a local Mexican utility and an active participant in the LRGWQI. COMAPA Río Bravo has pledged long-term participation in the LRGWQI.
Asociación Agrícola Local de Matamoros	The Asociación Agrícola Local de Matamoros is a local association of Mexican agricultural producers in the Matamoros area of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo watershed. A letter of support from the Asociación Agrícola Local de Matamoros is included with this proposal.
Agricultores Unidos de Matamoros, S.C.L.	Agricultores Unidos de Matamoros, S.C.L. is a local Mexican agricultural trade association in the Matamoros region of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. A letter of support from Agricultores Unidos de Matamoros, S.C.L. is included with this proposal.
Comisión Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado de Ciudad Camargo (COMAPA Camargo)	COMAPA Camargo is a local Mexican utility and an active participant in the LRGWQI. COMAPA Río Bravo has pledged long-term participation in the LRGWQI.
Comisión Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado del Municipio De Guerrero (COMAPA Guerrero)	COMAPA Guerrero is a local Mexican utility and an active participant in the LRGWQI. COMAPA Guerrero has pledged long-term participation in the LRGWQI.
Sociedad Amistad Falcón	The Sociedad Amistad Falcón is a local association of nine irrigation district “modules” within CONAGUA Irrigation District 025 (which encompasses the area of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo watershed south and east of Anzalduas Dam). The association is an active participant in the LRGWQI.
Módulo de Usuarios Hidráulica Los Angeles del Distrito de Riego 025, Tamaulipas (Modulo Los Angeles DR025)	The módulo Los Angeles DR025 is a “module” within CONAGUA Irrigation District 025. Mexican agricultural producers within the portion of the irrigation district encompassed by this module are active participant in the LRGWQI through their representative, Ing. Reblo Treviño. Ing. Treviño has pledged long-term participation of the módulo Los Angeles DR025 in the LRGWQI.
Proyecto Azteca	Proyecto Azteca is a US non-profit organization that provides housing and other services to low-income communities in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. A Letter of Support from Proyecto Azteca is included with this proposal.

Project Partners and Participating Organizations	Current Roles
Asociación de Medio Ambientalistas del Noreste, A. C. (AMAN)	AMAN is a Mexican non-profit organization that documents environmental degradation in the northeastern portion of Mexico and advocates for the implementation of sustainable industrial methods and best management practices. A Letter of Support from Proyecto AMAN is included with this proposal.

Sub Criterion A2. - Geographic Scope

Figure 1 shows a map of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo watershed. The watershed area in Figure 1 is the study area for this project. Land use in the watershed is mainly rural on both sides of the international boundary, with agricultural production occurring mainly on the Mexican side of the watershed ([LRGWQI Watershed Characterization Report, 2017](#)). The geometry of the Lower RG/RB watershed relegates the inclusion of high population urban areas to slender strips of urban land, much of it separated from the river by high levees. However, the impact of high population centers on water quality in the river is largely due to discharges of treated and untreated wastewater.

Despite substantial investments in wastewater infrastructure over the past 30 years, the Lower RG/RB continues to suffer from poor water quality, most notably from high levels of fecal indicator bacteria. This fact, and evidence included in the 2017 WCR ([LRGWQI Watershed Characterization Report, 2017](#)), suggest the sanitation problem in the Lower RG/RB watershed, and probably across the US-Mexico Border area, may be more complex than generally recognized. For example, the sanitary survey conducted as part of WRC identified a small wastewater treatment facility built within the last thirteen years, but not operational for the last ten years because the city's collection system was not operational. Other examples of discharges to the river from faulty infrastructure were also identified in the 2017 WCR. In addition to troubled financial conditions, these situations suggest a lack of planning at multiple levels.

It is important to note that most utilities that discharge wastewater to the Lower RG/RB also obtain their raw drinking water from the river, so there is a strong interest in protecting water quality in the river throughout the local public utility sector. Stakeholder meetings conducted in 2020 and 2021 by UT-LBJ investigators, under the TCEQ's Border Affairs Program, resulted in pledges of participation from ten of the 14 dischargers to the Lower RG/RB. In addition to the 14 municipal utilities that discharge to the river an additional 20 municipalities obtain their drinking water from the river but do not discharge to it. Only two of these municipalities have pledged support for the LRGWQI, the other 18 have not yet been approached.

During UT-LBJ's and TCEQ's stakeholder outreach efforts in 2020 and 2021, agricultural interests were largely represented by US irrigation districts and Mexican irrigation district "modules" within CONAGUA Irrigation District 025. Representatives of four of the 28 US irrigation districts in the Lower Rio Grande watershed and representatives of two of the nine modules of CONAGUA Irrigation District 025 have pledged participation and support for the LRGWQI. The managers of 24 US irrigation districts and seven irrigation modules of CONAGUA Irrigation District 025 have not yet been approached.

In 2021 and 2022, UT-LBJ investigators conducted meetings with members of the two non-profit organizations which provide services to underserved communities and advocate for

environmental justice. Both organizations have pledged support and participation in the LRGWQI. So far, only one representative from the private sector, an agricultural producer, has pledged participation in the LRGWQI. With additional funding, UT-LBJ investigators will broaden the participation of individuals and organizations in these and other sectors through targeted outreach efforts as part of broader partnership building efforts described under Activity 1 of UT-LBJ's Approach.

Evaluation Criterion B. - Addressing Critical Watershed Needs

Sub Criterion B1. - Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

Water quality problems documented in Texas' Integrated Report include high fecal indicator bacteria, low levels of dissolved oxygen, and high levels of ammonia and nutrients. Data collected at TCEQ Continuous Water Quality Monitoring Network (CWQMN) stations located on Segment 2302, have consistently shown large seasonal surges in the concentration of total dissolved solids (TDS) in the river lasting several weeks and, on occasions, lasting months. Analysis of TDS data downloaded from the TCEQ's Surface Water Quality Monitoring Information System (SWQMIS) indicates increasing TDS in Segment 2302 ([LRGWQI Watershed Characterization Report, 2017](#)).

High levels of fecal indicator bacteria (*E. coli* and Enterococcus) and increasing levels of dissolved solids concern local stakeholders, especially agricultural water users, who have complained often to the IBWC, USEPA and TCEQ about increasing salinity in irrigation water diverted from the Lower RG/RB. Among these producers are vegetable growers whose products are at risk of contamination by human pathogens. Representatives of municipal utilities and water supply corporations are concerned about the rising costs of drinking water treatment and treatment system maintenance related to rising levels of fecal indicator bacteria and dissolved solids. Recreational activities, such as swimming and fishing, have also been affected by high levels of indicator bacteria and high nutrient concentrations. In addition to being valued contributions to the local quality of life, these activities contribute significantly to the local economy. Potential beach closures and more frequent algal blooms put these activities at risk. Water quality assessments conducted by Mexico's National Water Commission (CONAGUA) agree that elevated levels of fecal indicator bacteria and increasing salinity in the Lower RG/RB are water quality problems that constitute noncompliance with Mexican surface water quality standards. It is important to consider that regardless of sovereignty, poor water quality in the Lower RG/RB affects watershed residents living on either side of the US-Mexico Border. In many respects the issues affecting water quality in the river are more about the interaction between upstream and downstream water users and less about sovereignty.

To address the water quality impairments and concerns described above, a detailed and accurate quantitative assessment of pollutant sources in the Lower RG/RB watershed is essential. To design a viable binational plan to prevent or mitigate pollutant sources, an accurate estimate is needed of the pollutant reductions necessary to achieve the water quality goals included in a binational watershed protection plan. As sustainable watershed-based plans are developed and implemented by local stakeholders, the conveyance of data and technical information to these individuals is an important part of watershed protection plan development ([Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans](#)).

Sub Criterion B2. - Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs or Issues***Task A Watershed Group Development***

Establishing the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council will build on the binational watershed stakeholder outreach efforts conducted by UT-LBJ and TCEQ in 2020-2022. By conducting additional individual outreach meetings with local binational watershed stakeholders, UT-LBJ investigators will broaden participation in the LRGWQI and will recruit participants to the LRG/RB Watershed Council. UT-LBJ investigators will continue partnership building efforts by conducting and facilitating binational stakeholder meetings to establish the LRG/RB Watershed Council, including development of a consensus-based mission statement, bylaws, and an organizational structure. Watershed groups that incorporate specialized subgroups into their organizational structures have the ability to focus expertise on critical watershed needs or issues. UT-LBJ will suggest potential organizational structures and guide the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council through other organizational choices.

The LRG/RB Watershed Council will seek to restore and protect water quality in Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo by developing a binational watershed-based plan. Decisions regarding pollutant mitigation or habitat restoration strategies will be based on best available data on water quality, riparian habitat, pollutant sources, potential pollutant mitigation strategies, efforts of other watershed groups, or other information useful to the Council. UT/LBJ investigators will present all information at LRG/RB Watershed Council and work group meetings and via an existing LRGWQI website, a monthly newsletter, and through social media accounts. Enhancing the existing project website and developing targeted outreach and education materials, such as informational flyers, will help recruit additional participants and keep members of the Council and the public informed of the progress of the LRGWQI.

Task B Watershed Restoration Planning

In addition to pollution mitigation and riparian habitat restoration strategies, successful watershed-based plans contain elements that evaluate plan effectiveness and estimate the amount of technical and financial assistance needed to implement the pollution mitigation strategies. These options will allow the LRG/RB Watershed Council to identify priorities and focus resources to implement the plan and to sustain future efforts, schedule pollution mitigation measures, and quantify the degree to which pollution mitigation or habitat restoration measures have been implemented and accomplished. This includes (a) developing a set of criteria that can be used to determine whether pollutant loading reductions are being achieved over time and (b) monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the watershed-based plan's implementation efforts. Developing a continuing outreach and education component as part of the plan will help to perpetuate the efforts of the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council by attracting new participants.

UT-LBJ investigators will provide the means by which the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council will gather information critical to developing a binational watershed plan, including special requests for information by individual stakeholder or groups of stakeholders. UT-LBJ personnel will also apply their expertise in facilitation and conflict resolution to ensure LRG/RB Watershed Council deliberations are not unduly delayed by unstructured disagreements within the Council and that all Council decisions are consensus-based. The LRG/RB Watershed Council will deliberate using the organizational structure and operating procedures established during the partnership

building phase. UT-LBJ personnel will provide writing, editing, support to the council to produce a final binational watershed-based plan.

Task C Watershed Management Project Design

The project described in this proposal is limited to outreach and planning activities and will not include project-specific watershed management design activities.

Evaluation Criterion C. - Implementation and Results

Sub Criterion C1. - Project Implementation

The Technical Project Description section of this proposal describes the four major activities proposed for the project (Partnership Building; Research, Data Analysis, and Modeling; Binational Watershed Restoration Plan Development and Adoption; Sustainability Planning). The activities are designed to be completed in a semi-sequential manner. For example, partnership building tasks will advance to the point to which organized stakeholder deliberations and consensus building are adequate for decision-making on issues associated with watershed restoration plan development and adoption. UT-LBJ investigators will begin working on sustainability planning activities in the first year of the project. Stakeholder deliberations associated with sustainability planning are not expected to occur until year two of the project. Other tasks (such as research, data analysis, modeling or updating and enhancing the project website) are considered ongoing activities that will begin shortly after the grant award and will continue until the end of the project and beyond. Table 2 shows a schedule of when the major activities, milestones and deliverables of the project along with the estimated cost of each activity.

Sub Criterion C2. - Building on Relevant Federal, State, or Regional Planning Efforts

As previously mentioned, the LRGWQI has been institutionalized under the US-Mexico Water Treaty of 1944 through an official exchange of letters between the US and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission. The Terms of Reference for the project, signed by both sections in 2013, calls for transboundary cooperation in the development binational strategies for mitigating point and steady-state non-point source pollution in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo. The LRGWQI is also included as a goal of the EPA's Border 2025 Framework ([EPA's Border 2025 Framework](#)) and the 2021 Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB's) Region M Regional Water Plan ([TWDB Region M Water Plan](#)). Additionally, as an implementing partner in the EPA's Border 2025 program, the TCEQ's Border Affairs program is invested in the success of the LRGWQI.

Evaluation Criterion D. – Presidential and Department of Interior Priorities

Sub Criterion D1. – Climate Change

With more frequent droughts and an associated reduction in available surface water resulting from the effects of climate change, the implementation of measures that protect water quality, such as wastewater reuse and agricultural management practices that reduce saline irrigation return flows currently entering the river, have the effect of increasing water availability. In recent years water users in the Lower Rio Grande Valley have resorted to releasing water from Falcon Reservoir to dilute the high concentrations of TDS in the river. Reduction of high salinity irrigation return flows would reduce the need for these releases, contributing to water conservation efforts. Similarly, widespread implementation of wastewater reuse, which will likely be included in the binational plan as a pollution mitigation measure, would reduce overall water demand in the region.

Table 2. Schedule of Activities, Milestones and Deliverables and Estimated Costs

Activity	Milestones and Deliverables	Estimated Costs	Schedule																																	
			FY2023-24												FY2024-25																					
			F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J										
1 Partnership Building																																				
1A	Individual Outreach Meetings	*10 initial meetings \$7,175	█	█																																
1B	Binational stakeholder meetings	*12 meetings *10 work group meetings \$23,704			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█																								
1C	Updating and Enhancing the Project Website	*New graphics *Updated WCR *Binational meeting documentation *Promotional materials \$7,149			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█																								
1D	Provide information to LRGW Council and subgroups	*Revised Pollutant source analysis *Requested Data analyses/ modeling \$23,775			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█																								
Total Activity 1 Cost		\$61,803																																		
2 Research, Data Analysis, and Technical Communications																																				
2A	QAPP (if needed)	QAPP for data acquisition and/or modeling \$8,000	█	█																																
2B	Data Acquisition	*All data sets included in the WCR updated *Data requests from Stakeholders completed \$6,000			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█																								
2C	Revising and updating the WCR	WCR revised updated \$21,000			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█																								
2D	Perform additional data analyses	Additional data analyses completed \$6,523			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█																								
2E	Technical Communication	Technical information communicated to Stakeholders \$6,000			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█																								
Total Activity 2 Cost		\$47,523																																		
3 Watershed Plan Development and Adoption																																				
3A	Consensus-building	Stakeholder consensus reached on pollutant mitigation strategies \$8,000																																		

Activity		Milestones and Deliverables	Estimated Costs	Schedule																											
				FY2023-24														FY2024-25													
				F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J				
3B	Pollutant Load Analysis	Current pollutant loads and load reductions expected from the plan	\$10,000																												
3C	Estimating technical and financial support needed	Estimates of the technical and financial support needed to implement the plan	\$2,000																												
3D	Schedule for plan implementation	Schedule for implementing the watershed restoration plan completed	\$2,000																												
3E	Milestones for implementation	Milestones developed for implementation of pollution mitigation measures	\$2,000																												
3F	Criteria for measuring degree of plan implementation	Criteria developed for determining implementation of pollution mitigation measures	\$2,000																												
3G	Monitoring component of the watershed restoration plan	Monitoring component to evaluate plan effectiveness developed	\$2,000																												
3H	Outreach and Education component of the watershed restoration plan	Outreach and Education component of the watershed restoration plan developed	\$4,000																												
3I	Writing and editing	Writing and editing services to stakeholders provided	\$6,000																												
Total Activity 3 Cost			\$38,000																												
4	Sustainability Planning																														
4A	Research on sustainability of watershed Groups	Research on sustainability efforts of watershed groups completed	\$2,000																												
4B	Present options to stakeholders for sustainability	Presentation of options for sustainability of the LRG Watershed	\$1,000																												

Activity	Milestones and Deliverables	Estimated Costs	Schedule																																								
			FY2023-24												FY2024-25																												
			F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J																	
	ty of the LRG Watershed Council	Council made to Stakeholders																																									
4C	Stakeholder sustainability preferences	Stakeholder sustainability preferences documented	\$1,000																																								
4D	Sustainability Plan	The Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council Sustainability Plan completed	\$2,000																																								
4E	Implement sustainability Plan	The Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council Sustainability Plan implemented	\$2,000																																								
Total Activity 4 Cost			\$8,000																																								
Total Project Costs				\$155,326																																							

Sub Criterion D2. – Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities

An unusually high number of households in the three-county area of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas lack basic water and sewer services. Many of these households are located in unincorporated suburban areas known as “colonias.” The Texas Secretary of State lists 942 colonias in Hidalgo County, 257 in Starr County and 195 in Cameron County, amounting to approximately 52 percent of all recognized borderland colonias in Texas ([LRGWQI Watershed Characterization Report, 2017](#)). Information acquired using the EPA’s online EJSCREEN tool, for the three-counties comprising the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr), shows the Environmental Justice Index for Wastewater Discharge Indicator is well above the 70th percentile for block groups in these counties compared to US block groups (95th percentile for Cameron County). US colonias have been shown to be sources of fecal contamination in the Lower RG/RB. Mitigation of these fecal bacteria is a necessary part of the Lower RG/RB Council’s watershed-based planning efforts. These efforts have the potential to improve the quality of life of the residents of these communities by providing better sanitation, as well as education and outreach associated with wastewater and waste disposal practices and options.

Sub Criterion D3. – Tribal Benefits

The project area does not include any registered Native American tribes, therefore no tribal benefits are associated with this project.

Statement Addressing Duplication of Effort

Neither of the UT-LBJ Co-Project Managers (David Eaton nor Roger Miranda) associated with this proposal are aware of any other effort to establish a binational forum for information exchange and cooperation among stakeholders of the Lower RG/RB or to develop a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in this portion of this portion of the Rio Grande/Río Bravo. UT-LBJ has no federal or state grant applications pending for this project and will not receive funding from TCEQ or EPA for this project in FY2023 and FY2024.

Project Budget

Funding Plan and Letters of Funding Commitment

The TCEQ will provide in-kind services associated with Partnership Building activities of the project in FY2022 and FY2023. Under the agency’s Border Affairs Program, the TCEQ will assist UT-LBJ investigators in reaching out to individual stakeholders to gain their support for the LRGWQI and participation in the LRG/RB Council. TCEQ’s outreach support will include close collaboration with TCEQ’s counterparts in Mexico and other institutional partners (i.e., IBWC/CILA, CONAGUA, EPA, and CEAT). The TCEQ will maintain the LRGWQI project website and will help disseminate data, data analyses, and other information produced as part of this project through postings on the LRGWQI website, direct email communications with agency stakeholders, and through binational meetings on the topic led by TCEQ’s Border Affairs program. The TCEQ estimates the value of the in-kind services it will provided to the LRWQI effort in FY23 and part of FY 2024 to be approximately \$7,600. A Letter of Commitment from TCEQ is included in the section of this proposal titled “Letters of Support and Commitment.”

The IBWC will also provide in-kind services to the project, assisting UT-LBJ investigators with Partnership Building, Data Analysis, and (if needed) Modeling Assistance. The IBWC will support the effort by providing historical data for analysis and modeling efforts, coordinating activities with agencies in Mexico, and other similar activities. The USIBWC will also maintain the LRGWQI web page (<https://www.ibwc.gov/lrgwqi.html>) as part of USIBWC’s website and will assist in the dissemination of information produced as part of this project through postings on the website and through agenda items presented at USIBWC Citizen’s Forum meetings. The USIBWC will continue its water quality monitoring efforts through its participation in the Texas Clean Rivers Program. A Letter of Commitment from IBWC is included in the section of this proposal titled “Letters of Support and Commitment.” Table 3 summarizes the non-federal and federal funding sources and the amounts associated with each funding source. Table 4 summarizes the total project costs.

Table 3. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources

FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
Non-Federal Entities	
1. Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)	\$7,600

FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
2. International Boundary and Water Commission (US Section)	\$5,700
Non-Federal Sub-total	\$14,300
REQUESTED RECLAMATION FUNDING	\$141,026

Table 4. Total Project Cost

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Costs to be reimbursed with the requested Federal funding	\$141,026
Cost to be paid by applicant	\$0.00
Value of third-party contributions	\$14,300
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	\$155,326

Budget Proposal

Table 5. Summary of Budget Proposal

BUDGET ITEM DESCRIPTION	COMPUTATION		Quantity Type	TOTAL COST
	\$/Unit	Quantity		
Salaries and Wages				
Roger M. Miranda (Co-Project Manager)	30	1,052	Hours	\$31,560
David J. Eaton (Co-Project Manager)	92	217	Hours	\$19,960
Senior Student Associate	20	520	Hours	\$10,400
Fringe Benefits				
Roger M. Miranda (Co-Project Manager)	31.4%		Salary	\$9,910
David J. Eaton (Co-Project Manager)	31.4%		Salary	\$6,267
Senior Student Associate	4.7%		Salary	\$489
Travel				
Individual Stakeholder Outreach Meetings	583.5	12	Overnight Trip	\$7,002
LRG Watershed Council Meetings	586.5	10	Overnight Trip	\$5,865
Ad hoc LRGW Council Work Group Meetings	586.5	10	Overnight Trip	\$5,865
Equipment				
GIS Laptop Computer	5,679	1	Item	\$5,679
Supplies and Materials				
Printing	15.30	1,000	Restoration Plan	\$15,300
GIS Software	3,800	2	ESRI License/yr	\$7,600
Third-Party In-Kind Contributions				
Stakeholder Outreach and Technical Support from TCEQ and IBWC				\$14,300

BUDGET ITEM DESCRIPTION	COMPUTATION		Quantity Type	TOTAL COST
	\$/Unit	Quantity		
Other				
Simultaneous Translation Services				\$15,000
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS				\$155,326
Indirect Costs				
UT is waving all indirect costs for this grant application				\$0
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS				\$155,326

Budget Narrative

Salaries and Fringe

This project will be Co-managed and implemented by Roger M. Miranda, Ph.D., P.G., and David J. Eaton, Ph.D., both of the Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin (UT). Dr. Eaton will be the project lead investigator for technical activities and Dr. Miranda will be the lead investigator for stakeholder outreach and participation activities. In addition, the project will benefit from the services of a bilingual Senior Student Associate who will provide administrative and outreach support for the project.

As Co-PM, Dr. Miranda will manage all aspects of the project, ensuring all deliverables are of high quality, are completed efficiently, and are submitted to USBR in a timely fashion. Dr. Miranda will also manage available resources and will communicate, with the USBR point of contact (POC), informing the USBR POC of any potential unforeseen obstacles that may delay or jeopardize the submittal of deliverables to USBR. As Outreach Coordinator Dr. Miranda will also be the POC for both federal, state, and binational governmental stakeholders, as well as local/regional government participants, other local stakeholders, and the public. Dr. Miranda will work with the TCEQ’s Border Affairs Program, the IBWC, and the EPA’s Border 2025 Program representatives. Dr. Miranda will also be responsible for the scheduling and logistics associated with the formation and facilitation of the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council and its work groups. The principal goal of the outreach efforts spearheaded by Dr. Miranda will be to establish a sustainable local binational watershed stakeholder partnership.

As Lead Technical Investigator, Dr. Eaton will plan, conduct, and manage all technical efforts associated with the project, including preparing, submitting, and editing QAPPs and Corrective Action Reports (if needed); acquiring, compiling, analyzing and reporting water quality data and other relevant watershed and information; presenting or otherwise communicating the results of research, data analyses, modeling and/or other pertinent information to watershed stakeholders. Dr. Eaton will also be the lead investigator for coordinating report writing and editing.

A bilingual Senior Student Associate will be hired to provide administrative and outreach support for the project. The bilingual student associate will be responsible for ensuring all administrative requirements associated with the grant award are adhered to, including federal and USBR grant management and reporting requirements. The bilingual Senior Student Associate will also assist with outreach tasks, such as contacting and interacting with watershed stakeholders, preparing

meeting logistics, and maintaining a robust presence on social media. Total salaries and fringe benefits over the approximately two-year project will result in a cost of \$78,715 (\$61,920 in salaries and \$16,795 in fringe benefits).

Travel

To control costs, UT-LBJ will include a mix of virtual and in-person meetings with local and institutional stakeholders as part of this project. UT-LBJ investigators estimate the project will require as many as 32 overnight trips from Austin TX to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas for ad hoc outreach meetings with local stakeholders (10 meetings), Watershed Council meetings (12 meetings), and meetings of the watershed Council work groups (10 meetings). The number of UT-LBJ travelers may vary from one to three per trip (e.g., one or both of the Project Co-PMs or one Project Co-PM and the Senior Student Associate or all three UT-LBJ project personnel), however UT-LBJ personnel will travel together preferably by automobile. Table 6 shows a breakdown of the travel expenditures proposed and the resulting budget calculation. To account for the variation in the number of UT-LBJ personnel traveling to and from the Rio Grande Valley, UT-LBJ used 1.5 persons as the unit to estimate travel costs associated with meals and lodging. There will be least one traveler on each trip and two travelers in approximately one third of the trips. In rare situations (estimated to occur in less than one fifth of the trips) all three UT-LBJ project personnel will travel to the Rio Grande Valley from Austin.

Table 6. Breakdown of Travel Expenditures

Travel Expenditure	# of Trips	Units miles/persons	Mileage and Per Diem rates	Totals
Trips to Rio Grande Watershed Council meetings	12	600	\$0.59	\$4,212
Lodging for Council meetings	12	1.5	\$96.00	\$1,728
Meals for Council meetings	12	1.5	\$59.00	\$1,062
Total for Council trips				\$7,002
Trips to Council workgroup meetings	10	600	\$0.59	\$3,540
Lodging for Council workgroup meetings	10	1.5	\$96.00	\$1,440
Meals for Council work group meetings	10	1.5	\$59.00	\$885
Total for Council work group trips				\$5,865
Trips to Stakeholder outreach meetings	10	600	\$0.59	\$3,540
Lodging stakeholder outreach meetings	10	1.5	\$96.00	\$1,440
Meals for stakeholder outreach meetings	10	1.5	\$59.00	\$885
Total for stakeholder outreach trips				\$5,865
Total Travel				\$18,732

Equipment

UT-LBJ investigators will purchase a high-performance laptop computer (\$5,679) designed to run GIS software. Along with the GIS software itself, this equipment will enhance the project team's ability to provide the necessary technical support to the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council.

Materials and Supplies

Anticipating the completion of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Binational Watershed Restoration Plan by January or February of 2025, UT-LBJ investigators decided to set a portion of the budget aside for printing services. An average price for printing 1000 copies of a document the size of an average watershed-based plan, in four colors, is \$15.30 for a total of \$15,300. Although the final price for printing 1000 copies of the plan could change by the time the plan is completed, UT-LBJ investigators are confident the amount set aside in the budget will be sufficient. Geographic Information System (GIS) software is an important tool for the development of watershed-based plans. Along with capable computing capabilities, geospatial software, such as ESRI's ArcGIS Pro, can help watershed stakeholders visualize environmental information more easily. GIS software, such as ArcGIS Pro (licensed for \$3800/yr), can also be used to perform complex geospatial analyses that provide insight into the relationship between sources of pollution in the watershed and water quality in the river.

Third Party In-Kind Contributions

As discussed in the "Funding Plan and Letters of Funding Commitment" section of this proposal, the TCEQ will provide in-kind services associated with Partnership Building activities of the project in FY2022 and FY2023. The TCEQ will maintain the LRGWQI project website and will help disseminate data, data analyses, and other information produced as part of this project through postings on the project website, direct email communications with agency stakeholders, and through some of the binational meetings led by TCEQ's Border Affairs program. TCEQ estimates the value of the in-kind services it will provide to the LRWQI effort in FY2023 and FY2024 to be approximately \$7,600. A Letter of Commitment from TCEQ is included in the section of this proposal titled "Letters of Support and Commitment."

The IBWC will also provide in-kind services to the project, assisting UT-LBJ with Partnership Building, Data Analysis, and (if needed) Modeling assistance. The USIBWC will also maintain the LRGWQI web page (<https://www.ibwc.gov/lrgwqi.html>) as part of USIBWC's website and will assist in the dissemination of information produced as part of this project through postings on the IBWC website and through agenda items presented at USIBWC Citizen's Forum meetings. The IBWC estimates the value of the in-kind services it will provided to the LRWQI to be approximately \$5,700 over a two-year period. A Letter of Commitment from IBWC is included in the section of this proposal titled "Letters of Support and Commitment."

Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance Costs

UT-LBJ does not foresee any environmental or regulatory compliance costs associated with this project.

Other Expenses (Simultaneous Translation)

Ensuring clear communication is important for successful partnership building and for efficient stakeholder deliberations. In a transboundary watershed, such as the Lower RRG/RB, particular

consideration must be given to potential language barriers. Two of the three UT-LBJ project staff are bilingual in English and Spanish which is necessary for outreach recruitment and organizing activities. Binational meetings of the Lower RG/RB Watershed Council and some of the larger Council work group meetings will need simultaneous translation services. The cost of simultaneous translation services varies depending on the service requested. Some companies offer hourly rates while others charge by “event.” In UT-LBJ’s experience, budgeting approximately \$1,000 per binational meeting is usually adequate. UT-LBJ investigators estimated the budget necessary for simultaneous translation services using an average per event rate of \$1,000 and 15 for the number of meetings needing simultaneous translation.

Indirect Costs

UT-LBJ is waving all indirect costs for this grant application.

Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance

The activities and tasks associated with this project are limited to outreach, education, meeting facilitation, research, data analysis, technical communication, and writing/editing. Issues associated with NEPA, NHPA, and ESA are not relevant to the work described in this proposal

Required Permits and Approvals

The activities and tasks proposed in this application do not require any permits or approvals.

Letters of Support and Commitment

Attachment A contains 11 letters of support and two letters of commitment.

Letters of Support

- Brownsville Public Utility Board
- Comisión Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado de Reynosa (COMAPA Reynosa)
- City of Alamo
- Asociación Agricola Local de Matamoros
- Agricultores Unidos de Matamoros, S.C.L.
- City of Rio Grande City
- Asociación de Medio Ambientalistas del Noreste, A. C.
- Proyecto Azteca
- Union Water Supply Corporation
- Harlingen Irrigation District
- Delta Lake Irrigation District

Letters of Commitment

- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
- US Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)

Official Resolution

Attachment B contains a document officially authorizing to commit the applicant (UT) to the financial and legal obligations associated with receipt of a financial assistance award under this NOFO.

Attachment A

Letters of Support and Commitment



March 22, 2022

TO: United State Bureau of Reclamation

FROM: John S. Bruciak, P.E., General Manager & Chief Executive Officer, Brownsville Public Utilities Board

RE: Support for the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality Initiative (LRGWQI)

The Brownsville Public Utilities Board is pleased to support The University of Texas' efforts to broaden and sustain the binational watershed stakeholder group of the LRGWQI and the initiative's goal of developing a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

As the main source of freshwater in our area, a clean and healthy Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo is vital to the health and safety of our area's residents and to our regional economy.

We are committed to participating in the LRGWQI watershed stakeholder group and to the development of a binational plan to protect the vital local resource, that is the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Bruciak", is written over a horizontal line.

John S. Bruciak, P.E.
General Manager & CEO



Asociación de Medio Ambientistas
del Noreste, A. C.
Coalición de Asociaciones Ambientistas
en Tamaulipas

H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas.
A 17 de marzo de 2022

US Bureau of Reclamation

En la Asociación de Medio Ambientistas del Noreste, A. C., miembro fundador de la Coalición de Asociaciones Ambientistas en Tamaulipas, tenemos la visión de un planeta en armonía, para ello, ciudades sustentables y personas felices, son esenciales.

Con sede en Matamoros, Tamaulipas, conocemos bien la problemática que representa mantener la calidad del agua adecuada en nuestro Río Bravo y por ello damos nuestro total apoyo a la Universidad de Texas (University of Texas at Austin) en sus esfuerzos para promover la Iniciativa de Calidad del Agua del Bajo Río Bravo/Río Grande (LRGWQI siglas en inglés).

Como los últimos consumidores del agua de nuestro Río Bravo, nos preocupa en gran medida que la que llega a nuestro municipio y a nuestras lagunas sea de buena calidad, sin embargo, estamos en conocimiento de que, en un recorrido tan grande, es susceptible de acarrear microorganismos y otros contaminantes.

Estamos dispuestos a colaborar con los esfuerzos binacionales del proyecto LRGWQI, esperando que sea un proyecto exitoso.

Atentamente

Teresa de Jesús Treviño Rizo

Presidente de la Asociación de Medio Ambientistas del Noreste, A. C.

Móvil. 528681259836

teretrevinorizo@gmail.com

ama.delnoreste@gmail.com



AGRICULTORES UNIDOS DE MATAMOROS, S.C.L.

RFC: AUM-941114-QU0

ITURBIDE NO. 813 ENTRE 8A. Y 9A. ZONA CENTRO

H. MATAMOROS, TAMAULIPAS

TEL: (868) 816-6443 FAX: 812-2067

H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico, March 28, 2022.

To: **US Bureau of Reclamation.**

Subject: **Lower Rio Bravo/Rio Grande Water Quality Initiative Support**

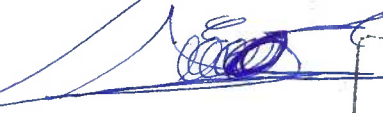
Dear Sirs:

It is very gratifying for our organization to give all our support The University of Texas at Austin in its efforts to expand and sustain the Lower Rio Grande/Lower Rio Grande Water Quality Initiative binational user group (ICABRB) and its goal of developing a binational plan to restore and protect water quality in the lower Rio Bravo/Rio Grande.

Keeping the lower Rio Bravo/Rio Grande clean and healthy is vital to the health and well-being of our citizens and to the regional economy of our area, as this river is the primary source of fresh water in our region.

We are committed to participating in the ICABRB user group and in binational efforts to develop a binational plan to restore and protect the quality of this critical water resource for our region.

Sincerely,


Heliodoro Lucio Castillo
General Manager



Diana Martinez

Mayor

Pete Morales

Mayor Pro-Tem

Oscar Salinas

Commissioner

J.R. Garza

Commissioner

Maria Del Pilar Garza

Commissioner

Robert L. Salinas

City Manager



DATE: March 21, 2022

TO: United State Bureau of Reclamation

FROM: Robert L. Salinas, City Manager

RE: Support for the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality Initiative (LRGWQI)

The City of Alamo is pleased to support The University of Texas' efforts to broaden and sustain the binational watershed stakeholder group of the LRGWQI and the initiative's goal of developing a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

As the main source of freshwater in our area, a clean and healthy Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo River is vital to the health and safety of our area's residents and to our regional economy.

We are committed to participating in the LRGWQI watershed stakeholder group and to the development of a binational plan to protect the vital local resource that is the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

If any further information is necessary please do not hesitate to contact me or Melisa Gonzales, Special Project Director at 956-787-0006 or via email at mgonzales@alamotexas.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Salinas", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Robert L. Salinas

City Manager



RIO GRANDE CITY

Hill Country of the Valley

Mayor Joel Villarreal
Commissioner Rey Ramirez
Commissioner Flor E. Flores
Commissioner Alberto Escobar
Commissioner Rogerio Olivarez

DATE: March 18, 2022
TO: United State Bureau of Reclamation
FROM: Elisa Y. Beas, Public Utility Director
City of Rio Grande City
RE: Support for the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality Initiative (LRGWQI)

The City of Rio Grande City is pleased to support The University of Texas' efforts to broaden and sustain the binational watershed stakeholder group of the LRGWQI and the initiative's goal of developing a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

As the main source of freshwater in our area, a clean and healthy Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo is vital to the health and safety of our area's residents and to our regional economy.

We are committed to participating in the LRGWQI watershed stakeholder group and to the development of a binational plan to protect the vital local resource that is the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

Sincerely,

Elisa Y. Beas
Public Utility Director



GOBIERNO MUNICIPAL 2021 - 2024
REYNOSA

COMAPA
COMISIÓN MUNICIPAL DE AGUA POTABLE Y
ALCANTARILLADO DEL MUNICIPIO DE REYNOSA

Reynosa, Tamaulipas; a 22 de marzo de 2022
Asunto: *Apoyo de la Iniciativa de Calidad del Agua
del bajo Río Bravo/Río Grande*

WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grants

Department of the Interior
US Bureau of Reclamation
Presente.-


Nos complace apoyar a la Universidad de Texas en Austin (The University of Texas at Austin) en sus esfuerzos de ampliar y sostener el grupo binacional de usuarios con la *Iniciativa de Calidad del Agua del bajo Río Bravo/Río Grande (ICABRB)* y su meta de desarrollar un plan binacional para restaurar y proteger la calidad del agua en el bajo Río Bravo/Río Grande.

La Comisión Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado del Mpio de Reynosa se une a la suma de esfuerzos transfronterizos a fin de coadyuvar con la mejora de la calidad química de las descargas de agua residual tratada efectuadas en el bajo Río Bravo/ Río Grande, a razón de preservar la salud pública y el bienestar de los ciudadanos reynosenses así como incentivar la economía regional de la ciudad y sus alrededores. Es importante destacar, que dicho cuerpo natural es nuestra principal fuente de abasto y captación de agua para el suministro público urbano.

Reiteramos el compromiso y la participación de este Organismo Operador a sumarse al grupo de usuarios de la ICABRB, así como, a los esfuerzos de desarrollar un *Plan Binacional* para restaurar y proteger la calidad de este recurso hídrico tan crítico para nuestra región.

Sin otro asunto en particular, agradecemos de antemano el apoyo y nos reiteramos a sus órdenes para cualquier duda y aclaración.

Atentamente:



Lic. Alfonso Javier Gómez Monroy
Gerente General

Comisión Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado del Mpio de Reynosa, Tam.

COMAPA
Río Pánuco esquina con José de Escandón Col. Longoria, Reynosa, Tamaulipas Tel. (899) 909-2200



Delta Lake Irrigation District

*10370 Charles Green Rd.
Edcouch, Texas 78538
Telephone 956-262-2101
Fax 956-262-5695*

DATE: March 31, 2022
TO: United State Bureau of Reclamation
FROM: Troy Allen, General Manager, Delta Lake Irrigation District
RE: Support for the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality Initiative (LRGWQI)

Delta Lake Irrigation District is pleased to support The University of Texas' efforts to broaden and sustain the binational watershed stakeholder group of the LRGWQI and the initiative's goal of developing a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

As the main source of freshwater in our area, a clean and healthy Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo is vital to the health and safety of our area's residents and to our regional economy.

We are committed to participating in the LRGWQI watershed stakeholder group and to the development of a binational plan to protect the vital local resource that is the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

Sincerely,

Troy Allen
General Manager
Delta Lake Irrigation District



301 E Pierce, Harlingen, TX 78550
956-423-7015
tmclemore@hidcc1.org

March 23, 2022

TO: United State Bureau of Reclamation

FROM: Harlingen Irrigation District

RE: Support for the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality Initiative (LRGWQI)

The Harlingen Irrigation District is pleased to support The University of Texas' efforts to broaden and sustain the binational watershed stakeholder group of the LRGWQI and the initiative's goal of developing a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

As the main source of freshwater in our area, a clean and healthy Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo is vital to the health and safety of our area's residents and to our regional economy.

We are committed to participating in the LRGWQI watershed stakeholder group and to the development of a binational plan to protect the vital local resource that is the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

Sincerely,

Thomas McLemore

General Manager
Harlingen Irrigation District



McALLEN

PUBLIC UTILITY

CHARLES E. AMOS, Chairman
ERNEST R. WILLIAMS, Vice-Chairman
ALBERT CARDENAS, Trustee
RICARDO R. GODINEZ, Trustee
JAVIER VILLALOBOS, Ex-Officio Member
MARCO A. VEGA, P.E., General Manager

March 18, 2022

United State Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225

RE: Support for the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality Initiative (LRGWQI)

Dear United State Bureau of Reclamation:

McAllen Public Utility is pleased to support The University of Texas' efforts to broaden and sustain the binational watershed stakeholder group of the LRGWQI and the initiative's goal of developing a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

As the main source of freshwater in our area, a clean and healthy Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo is vital to the health and safety of our area's residents and to our regional economy.

MPU is committed to participating in the LRGWQI watershed stakeholder group and to the development of a binational plan to protect the vital local resource that is the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

Sincerely,

Marco A Vega,
P.E. General
Manager

PROYECTO AZTECA



Building a better world.

DATE: 28th March 2022

TO: United State Bureau of Reclamation

FROM: Ann Williams Cass, Executive Director
Proyecto Azteca

RE: Support for the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality
Initiative (LRGWQI)

On behalf of the families and staff of Proyecto Azteca I am pleased to support The University of Texas' efforts to broaden and sustain the binational watershed stakeholder group of the LRGWQI and the initiative's goal of developing a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

As the main source of freshwater in our area, a clean and healthy Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo is vital to the health and safety of our area's residents and to our regional economy. By supporting this project we have an opportunity to educate our families in the colonias to do their best to keep the river water as clean and healthy as it can be.

We are committed to participating in the LRGWQI watershed stakeholder group and to the development of a binational plan to protect the vital local resource that is the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

Peace and all good things,

Ann Williams Cass
Executive Director

Building A Better World

Phone (956) 702-3307

P.O. Box 27
San Juan, TX 78589

fax (956) 702-3309

EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY

Proyecto Azteca is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider.

Board Of Directors

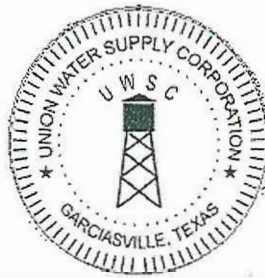
Arnaldo Zarate
President

Adrian Sandoval
Vice President

Marlen Mendoza De La Torre
Secretary/Treasurer

1965

Since



Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

Board of Directors

Alejandro Lee "Alex" Garza
Member

Francisco "Frank" Chapa, III
Member


Jorge Bazan
General Manager

DATE: 03/18/2022
TO: United State Bureau of Reclamation
FROM: UNION WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION
RE: Support for the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality Initiative (LRGWQI)

UNION WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION is pleased to support The University of Texas' efforts to broaden and sustain the binational watershed stakeholder group of the LRGWQI and the initiative's goal of developing a binational watershed-based plan to restore and protect water quality in the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

As the main source of freshwater in our area, a clean and healthy Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo is vital to the health and safety of our area's residents and to our regional economy.

We at UNION WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION are committed to participating in the LRGWQI watershed stakeholder group and to the development of a binational plan to protect the vital local resource that is the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

Sincerely,

JORGE BAZAN
GENERAL MANAGER

Jon Niermann, *Chairman*
Emily Lindley, *Commissioner*
Bobby Janecka, *Commissioner*
Toby Baker, *Executive Director*



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

March 29, 2022

Dr. Roger M. Miranda, Senior Research Fellow
The University of Texas at Austin, LBJ School of Public Affairs
2315 Red River St., Austin, TX 78712

Subject: Support of the Proposed USBR WaterSMART Phase I Project to Strengthen the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality Initiative (LRGWQI)

Dear Dr. Miranda:

I am pleased to support this application and your efforts at the University of Texas at Austin (UT) to advance the LRGWQI. The academic sector together with the state's environmental regulatory agency are two key stakeholders amongst many in this Initiative.

Elevated levels of fecal bacteria and episodes of high salinity are manifestations of several serious problems that affect the quality of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo and its tributaries. TCEQ is committed to supporting the LRGWQI's binational efforts to restore and protect the quality of these important resources by providing the following to UT:

The TCEQ will maintain the LRGWQI project website (BajoBravoLowerRioGrandeWQ.org) throughout the duration of the project and beyond (an unspecified time following completion of this project). Leveraging the binational strength of the U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program, Border 2025, UT should consider this website as a project resource. The TCEQ will also provide public/stakeholder outreach support by assisting in the dissemination of data and other information produced as part of this project through postings on the LRGWQI website, direct email communications with agency stakeholders, and through binational meetings on the topic led by TCEQ's Border Affairs program. TCEQ's support will include outreach and close collaboration with TCEQ's counterparts in Mexico and other partners (i.e. IBWC/CILA, CONAGUA, EPA, and Tamaulipas state counterparts), a crucial element in improving and protecting water quality of the Lower Rio Grande. The TCEQ's Border Affairs program will also help with stakeholder coordination by hosting and moderating specific LRGWQI Partnership meetings in support of UT-LBJ investigators. TCEQ will invite government subject matter experts to present and lead data sharing amongst a varied stakeholder group and diverse interests. I estimate TCEQ's in-kind support to total about 200 person-hours amounting to approximately \$7,600 USD over the 15-month project period.

The TCEQ looks forward to continued collaboration to protect the environmental resources of this binational region for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward R. Moderow".

Edward R. Moderow
Manager, U.S.-Mexico Border Affairs



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
UNITED STATES SECTION

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

March 30, 2021

Letter of Commitment

Subject: FY 2022 WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant Funding Opportunity Announcement No. R22AS00163: Support of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality Initiative (LRGWQI)

To whom it may concern:

The United States Section, International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) is pleased to learn of continued efforts by our partners such as the University of Texas (UT) in their efforts to advance the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Quality Initiative. It is vital that partners such as UT continue to play a role in this process.

Elevated levels of fecal bacteria and episodes of high salinity continue to be serious problems that affect the quality of the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo. The USIBWC, along with the Mexican Section of the IBWC (MxIBWC) agreed to provide the framework and work plan for the LRGWQI. The IBWC is committed to supporting the LRGWQI's binational efforts to restore and protect the quality of this important resource.

The USIBWC is the principal point of contact for interactions with representatives of MxIBWC, who in turn, are officially responsible for communications and interactions with other Mexican partner agencies, such as CONAGUA and CEAT. As such, the IBWC plays an important role in the LRGWQI by coordinating the participation of institutional stakeholders. The IBWC will support this effort through indirect costs such as staff time to provide historical data for analysis and modeling efforts, participation in meetings, coordination with agencies in Mexico, and other similar activities. The USIBWC will also maintain the LRGWQI web page (<https://www.ibwc.gov/lrgwqi.html>) as part of USIBWC's website and will assist in the dissemination of information produced as part of this project through postings on the website and through agenda items presented at USIBWC Citizen's Forum meetings.

Finally, the USIBWC will continue its water quality monitoring efforts through its participation in the Texas Clean Rivers Program. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (915) 832-4702 or to gilbert.anaya@ibwc.gov. The IBWC estimates the value of these in-kind contributions to be approximately \$5,700 over a two year period.

Sincerely,

Gilbert G. Anaya
Division Chief
Environmental Management Division

Letter sent via email to:
Roger Miranda, roger.miranda@utexas.edu

Attachment B

Official Resolution Letter



OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROJECTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

3925 West Braker Lane, Suite 3.340 • Mail Stop A9000 • Austin, TX 78759
(512)471-6424 • Fax (512)232-6649 • osp@austin.utexas.edu

Date: 3/31/2022

To whom it may concern:

The University of Texas at Austin is pleased to endorse the following proposal enclosed for your review.

Title of Application:	Establishing the Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Watershed Council and Developing a Watershed Restoration Plan for Lower Rio Grande/Río Bravo Below Falcon Reservoir	OSP Number:	202200839-001
Principal Investigator:	Danielle Clealand		
Project Total Costs:	\$141,026	Cost Share Amount:	\$13,300
DUNS:	170230239	Cage Code:	9B981
Project Dates:	2/1/2023 to 1/31/2025		

LEGAL IDENTITY

The University of Texas at Austin is an agency of the State of Texas and a component institution of The University of Texas System, governed by the Board of Regents. All awards and agreements must be executed by an authorized official of The University. Individuals, Departments, or Organized Research Units may not directly enter into sponsored research agreements or legally bind The University.

The Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) serves as the coordinating office for externally funded research projects submitted by The University of Texas at Austin. All proposals to external funding sources for sponsored projects must be submitted through OSP and all awards received for sponsored research must be processed by OSP.

Mailing Address: The University of Texas at Austin
Office of Sponsored Projects
3925 W. Braker Lane, Suite 3.340 (Mail Code A9000)
Austin, Texas 78759-5316

Telephone Number (512) 471-6424
FAX Number (512) 232-6649

AWARD NEGOTIATION

The University of Texas at Austin reserves the right to negotiate the terms and conditions of any awarded grant or contract. As an institution of higher education, The University of Texas at Austin intends to perform the work under any awarded grant or contract as fundamental research and reserves the right to: 1) require that the provider notify the University if it is to provide any export controlled information; 2) to deny receipt of any export controlled materials; and 3) to reject any restrictions on the University's right to publish or otherwise disseminate information relating to this research.

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL



Elena V. Mota, BA, CRA, Assistant Director, Office of Sponsored Projects
The University of Texas at Austin

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

Administrative and budgetary matters regarding the proposal:

Becky Jollay, Proposal Analyst
The University of Texas at Austin
Office of Sponsored Projects
Phone: (512) 471-6424
Email: becky.jollay@austin.utexas.edu

Negotiation and execution of agreement:

The University of Texas at Austin
Office of Sponsored Projects
3925 W. Braker Lane, Suite 3.340 (Mail Code A9000)
Austin, Texas 78759-5316
Phone: (512) 471-6424; FAX: (512) 232-6649
Email: osp@austin.utexas.edu