COMBINED SYNOPSIS / SOLICITATION (COMPETITIVE)

Title: PEER REVIEW SUPPORT AND ADVISORY SERVICES – *JOURNAL OF REPLICATION AND REPRODUCIBILITY*

(i) This is a combined synopsis/solicitation for commercial items prepared in accordance with FAR Subpart 12.6, as supplemented with additional information included in this notice. This announcement constitutes the only solicitation; proposals are being requested, and a separate written solicitation will not be issued.

(ii) The solicitation number is RFP 1823593 This solicitation is issued as a competitive combined synopsis/solicitation for commercial products or commercial services. The Government intends to award a contract or purchase order resulting from this solicitation using full and open competition.

This acquisition is conducted under the authority of FAR 12.603, *Streamlined Solicitation for Commercial Products or Commercial Services*, and is not expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (if applicable).

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), Office of the Director, Office of Acquisitions, seeks to award a firm fixed price purchase order to the responsible offeror whose proposal represents the best value to the Government.

(iii) The solicitation document and incorporated provisions and clauses are those in effect through Federal Acquisition Circular 2026-01 dated 03/13/2026.

(iv) The associated NAICS code is 513120 Periodical Publishers, and the small business size standard is 1,000 employees

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(Select one, if applicable:)

- This requirement is unrestricted.

(v) **Description of Requirement:**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is preparing to launch a new scholarly journal and publishing platform focused on the reproducibility space. The *Journal of Replication and Reproducibility* (*JRR*) will address a major gap in scientific publishing: the lack of incentives, visibility, and infrastructure for replication research. By sponsoring replication studies as well as publishing studies from outside groups and authors, and combining full-service publication with an integrated open and interactive repository for data, methods, software, and materials for both internal and external studies, *JRR* will become a trusted global platform for transparent and verifiable science.

JRR will be an online only, diamond open-access scientific journal and platform dedicated to publishing direct replication studies, conceptual replication studies, reproducibility analyses, null results and negative findings, and registered replication reports. Each paper will be accompanied by a mandatory, permanent repository hosted by *JRR* that includes all supporting materials necessary to replicate and validate the claims made in the paper.

As a diamond open-access journal, *JRR* will have no author publication charges, no pay-per-view purchases, and no subscriptions. All content will be freely available to anyone visiting the website, as all costs will be covered by the NIH.

1.1. Current Processes and Specifications: As a new endeavor, there are no existing workflows or procedures attached to this program. All materials will be newly created for *JRR*.

2. OBJECTIVES: The basic service objective is to provide strategic, operational, and advisory services to support the development of a high-quality scholarly publishing program with an emphasis on research integrity, transparency, innovation in peer review, and scientific reproducibility.

As a new endeavor, *JRR* does not have the benefit of an established editorial board, peer review frameworks and procedures, or a recognized presence in the scholarly publishing industry. This requirement will address those gaps to allow for a successful building and launch of the program over the next year.

The objectives of this contract are to:

- Establish a world-class editorial leadership structure.
- Design and validate an open peer-review framework.
- Develop innovative publishing products focused on replication studies and research reproducibility.
- Support the marketing and launch of the journal and associated programs.
- Develop rigorous, ethical, and transparent peer-review policies and workflows.

3. TASKS & DELIVERABLES: The Government will not exercise any supervision or control over the contract service providers performing the services herein. Such contract service providers shall be accountable solely to the contractor who, in turn is responsible to the Government. The contractor, in turn, shall be accountable to the Government for contractor personnel, subcontractors, or contract service providers.

3.1. TASKS: The contractor shall provide the following services:

Task 1 – Editorial Leadership Recruitment and Governance Development: The contractor shall recommend and recruit a qualified Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editors, and Advisory Committee members capable of guiding the journal's scientific direction and ensuring editorial excellence:

Task 1.1 Editorial Structure Development

- Assess journal scope and strategic objectives.
- Define editorial governance structure.
- Develop role descriptions and qualification criteria for:
    - Editor-in-Chief
    - Associate Editors
    - Advisory Committee Members

Task 1.2 Recruitment Strategy Development

- Develop recruitment plan and timeline for approval by JRR leadership.
- Identify institutions, professional societies, and scientific networks to target for viable candidates.
- Create candidate evaluation criteria and scoring framework.

Task 1.3 Candidate Sourcing and Outreach

- Conduct candidate mapping and market research.
- Alongside JRR Communications Team, execute outreach campaigns to prospective candidates.
- Assist in managing inquiries and candidate communications.

Task 1.4 Candidate Evaluation and Selection Support

- Screen applicants and nominees.
- Conduct preliminary interviews.
- Facilitate stakeholder review sessions.
- Prepare shortlists and recommendation reports.
- Support appointment negotiations and onboarding.

Task 2 - Open Peer-Review Focus Groups and Best-Practice Development: The contractor shall develop evidence-based principles and recommendations for implementing an effective open peer-review system:

Task 2.1 Research and Environmental Scan

- Review existing open peer-review models.
- Analyze publisher and society best practices.
- Identify opportunities and risks.

Task 2.2 Focus Group Design

- Develop research objectives.
- Create participant recruitment criteria.
- Prepare discussion guides and survey instruments.

Task 2.3 Focus Group Recruitment and Management

Recruit representatives from:

- Researchers/prospective authors
- Reviewers
- Editors
- Research institutions
- Research integrity specialists
- Funders and policymakers

Task 2.4 Focus Group Execution

- Conduct virtual focus groups or surveys.
- Moderate discussions.
- Collect qualitative and quantitative feedback.

Task 2.5 Analysis and Recommendations

- Analyze findings.
- Identify consensus principles.
- Develop implementation recommendations.

Task 3 – Replication Studies Product Development: The contractor shall develop innovative publishing products and services focused on replication studies, reproducibility, and research verification:

Task 3.1 Market and Opportunity Assessment

- Evaluate demand for replication-focused publishing products.
- Assess competing initiatives and market gaps.
- Identify stakeholder needs.

Task 3.2 Product Concept Development

Develop product concepts and preliminary product roadmaps, including:

- Dedicated replication study article types.
- Registered replication reports.
- Reproducibility validation services.
- Research verification badges and recognition programs.

Task 3.3 Business Model Design

- Assess cost and sustainability options.
- Define operational requirements.
- Develop partnership opportunities.

Task 3.4 Pilot Program Design

- Conceive and design pilot replication-study initiatives.
- Establish submission, review, and publication workflows.
- Develop evaluation metrics.

Task 4 – Marketing Launch Support: In support of the JRR Communications Team, the contractor shall support successful market introduction and adoption of the journal and associated initiatives:

Task 4.1 Positioning and Messaging

- Define journal value proposition.
- Develop key messaging framework.
- Establish brand differentiation strategy.

Task 4.2 Launch Strategy Development

- Advise on launch campaign roadmap.
- Identify target audiences and stakeholder segments.
- Develop communications calendar.

Task 4.3 Marketing Content Support

Assist with development of:

- Website content
- Editorial announcements
- Press materials
- Social media content
- Conference and webinar materials
- Recruitment communications

Task 4.4 Stakeholder Engagement

- Support outreach to researchers and institutions.
- Coordinate launch events and webinars.
- Facilitate ambassador and advocacy programs.

Task 4.5 Performance Monitoring

- Establish launch KPIs.
- Monitor campaign performance.
- Recommend optimization actions.

Task 5 – Open Peer-Review Framework Development: The contractor shall develop an open peer-review model that is rigorous, ethical, transparent, and aligned with best practices in scholarly publishing:

Task 5.1 Open Peer-Review Policy Development

Develop policies addressing:

- Reviewer selection and qualifications, including statistics and data reviews
- Conflict-of-interest management
- Confidentiality and transparency
- Research integrity and misconduct
- Data and methodology review
- Artificial intelligence disclosure and use
- Appeals and complaints processes

Task 5.2 Workflow Design

- Map editorial and review workflows.
- Define reviewer and editor responsibilities.
- Establish quality-control checkpoints.
- Develop escalation procedures.

Task 5.3 Transparency Framework

- Define reviewer identity/conflict-of-interest disclosure options.
- Establish publication of review reports.
- Create standards for editorial decision transparency.

Task 5.4 Ethics and Integrity Framework

- Align processes with industry-recognized publication ethics standards.
- Develop misconduct investigation procedures.
- Establish safeguards against bias and manipulation.

Task 5.5 Training and Implementation Support

- Develop reviewer training materials.
- Conduct editor and reviewer workshops.
- Support implementation and change management.

Please see the attached Performance Work Statement (PWS) and the evaluation criteria for complete details and specifications.

(vi) **Delivery Location:**

BG 530 DAVIS DR KEYSTONE BLDG - RTP RM 3157
530 DAVIS DR RTP
DURHAM NC 27560

(viii) FAR 52.204-7, *System for Award Management,* applies to this acquisition.

(ix) The provision at FAR 52.212-1, *Instructions to Offerors—Commercial Items*, applies to this acquisition. Add any agency-specific instructions as required.

(x) The provision at FAR 52.212-2, *Evaluation—Commercial Items*, applies to this acquisition.

(a) The Government will award a contract resulting from this solicitation to the responsible offeror whose offer conforming to the solicitation represents the best value to the Government, price and other factors considered.

(b) **Evaluation Factors:**

See attached PWS and evaluation criteria for specifics.

(c) A written notice of award or acceptance of an offer, issued within the time specified in the offer, shall result in a binding contract without further action by either party. The Government reserves the right to accept any offer before the expiration date.

(xi) FAR 52.212-4, *Contract Terms and Conditions—Commercial Items*, applies to this acquisition.

(xii) Additional contract requirements or terms and conditions, as determined necessary by the Contracting Officer and consistent with customary commercial practices:
"None."

(xiii) The Defense Priorities and Allocations System (DPAS) is not applicable.

(xiv) **Submission Requirements:**
Responses must include sufficient information to demonstrate the offeror's capability to provide the required product or service. Quotes shall include, at a minimum:

- Unit and total price
- Shipping and handling costs
- Delivery timeframe after award
- Delivery terms
- F.O.B. point (destination or origin)
- Product or catalog numbers (if applicable)
- Product/service description

Additional evaluation considerations may include past performance, warranty, lifecycle cost, maintenance availability, and environmental or energy efficiency.

Responses must include the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), and business size certification. All offerors must be actively registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov.

All responses must be received by August 17, 2026, at 9:00 AM EDT and must reference solicitation number RFP 1823593. Responses must be submitted electronically to brian.lind@nih.gov.

Question submissions deadline is August 7, 2026, at 9:00 AM EDT.

(xv) **Point of Contact:**

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