

Questions asked and answered from the Q+A Session: Advancing Research for the Co-Existence of Fishing, Coastal Communities and Regional Ocean Renewable Energies, Thursday, April 15, 2021

Is it okay to fund researchers from outside the six Northeast States?

Yes. Co-PIs and additional team members may be from outside of the six states in the Consortium (i.e., NY, CT, MA, RI, NH, and ME) as long as the lead PI is from one of the six states.

Do we need to budget for outreach functions that will be handled by Sea Grant offices?

It depends. Our SG Extension agents are funded to a certain extent to help with these efforts. Application teams will interact with an ORE Team community of practice that funded project members will be meeting with three times. The ORE Team is committed to working with you during the proposal phase and shaping your stakeholder engagement but anything more than that should be budgeted for.

Can co-PIs be from industry?

Yes, co-PIs can be from industry but they cannot be the primary or lead co-PI. For example, we encourage cooperative research proposals, so if you are partnering with fishers or others from the fishing industry, they may be co-PIs but cannot be PIs.

Does a 501(C) organization count as a research organization? If yes, does the organization have to be registered in one of the six states, or does staff serving as the lead PI residing in one of the six states suffice?

Not every 501(C) (non-profit) organization would count as a research organization. Rather, it is a question of whether or not your 501(C) organization conducts research as a part of its core mission. If the organization qualifies, the organization itself has to be registered and physically located in one of the six states (NY, CT, RI, MA, NH, ME). Where the PI resides, especially in today's virtual world, is not relevant. If in doubt, please check with the Research Coordinator to make sure your organization qualifies before preparing a submitting a pre-proposal.

Can a PI or co-PI be on more than one proposal?

Yes. A PI can put in more than one proposal, or be PI on one proposal and co-PI on another. However, please remember it is unlikely, based on available funding, that one PI will be awarded more than one project as lead, so we encourage you to focus your efforts into preparing one excellent proposal rather than submitting several ideas for consideration by the review panel.

Can you speak about indirect costs (IDC, or overhead costs) to Sea Grant? Can you advise on whether we should budget for paying IDC to state programs, which has not been required in the past?

PIs only need to budget for indirect costs as required by their own institution and (if applicable) that of their co-PIs.

Will you aim to distribute funds equitably across the six states?

This is specified in the RFP as a secondary consideration as part of the evaluation criteria of the full proposal. However, our primary goal is to fund projects with excellent scientific and technical merit as well as strong stakeholder engagement and outreach activities. If all the strongest scientific ideas with the broadest regional benefits come from just one or two states, we would have no reason not to fund those ideas.

Are PIs limited to academic institutions? How about small businesses and non-profits?

PIs must be from “RFP LANGUAGE”. Small business can be co-PIs (or subcontractors) but not lead PIs. Non-profits can be the lead PI if their mission includes research as a core activity and they are registered in one of the six Consortium states (NY, CT, RI, MA, NH, ME).

Can a co-PI be from NOAA Fisheries or a government organization?

As stated in the RFP, “Federal agencies and staff may not receive salary support as part of this competition. However, they can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators.” However, Federal employees from the funding agencies (i.e., NOAA’s Northeast Fisheries Science Center, or the Department of Energy’s Wind Energy Technologies Office and Water Power Technologies Office may not be a co-PI.

If NOAA Fisheries can’t receive the funding can they serve as the qualifying PI based on location when partnering with non-profits?

No. Individuals from NOAA’s Northeast Fisheries Science Center, or the Department of Energy’s Wind Energy Technologies Office and Water Power Technologies Office cannot serve as lead PI. They can be a co-PI and involved in the project, but cannot be the qualifying PI based on location. They may not receive salary support in any case.

Are these one or two year projects?

Projects may be one or two years, however, we are expecting most projects to be two years to allow for the research to be carried out and communicated to end users.

How many projects will be funded?

The number of awards that will be granted depends on the budgets of the highly ranked proposals. The total anticipated funding for this RFP is one million dollars, so we are expecting to fund a minimum of five proposals and potentially more depending on the bottom lines of those selected for funding and the federal budgets for fiscal years 2022 and 2023.