FY2026-2028 Request for Proposals

Deadline to request eSeaGrant access: February 17, 2025 by 5:00 pm ET

Deadline for Preproposal Submittal: February 18, 2025 by 5:00 pm ET

Deadline for Full Proposal Submittal: May 23, 2025 by 5:00 pm ET

Note: Full proposals will only be considered if applicants have submitted a Preproposal. All applicants that submit a Preproposal are permitted to submit to the full proposal process.

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1. Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide details and instructions on how to apply for the FY26 MIT Sea Grant Request for Proposals (RFP). Research at MIT Sea Grant is directed by the four Focus Areas and their Objectives and Outcomes as outlined in the 2024-2027 MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan. This RFP outlines research topics that are in line with our Strategic Plan and provides instructions on submitting preproposals and full proposals. The evaluation process for each phase and specific evaluation criteria used are described in detail after the full proposal requirements.

Important Dates and Details:

- **Deadline for eSeagrant registration:** February 17, 2025 by 5pm ET.
- **Deadline for Preproposals:** February 18, 2025 by 5pm ET.
- **Deadline for Full Proposals:** May 23, 2025 by 5pm ET.
- **Eligibility:** All researchers from academic, research and educational institutions (e.g., museums) within the state of Massachusetts who are eligible to submit a proposal according to his/her home institution may apply.
- **Requested Funding:** Budget requests may not exceed $170,000 annually, for a total of $340,000 over a two-year period. A 50% non-federal match is required.
- **Submitting:** Submittals are through eSeaGrant, our online proposal system. Please contact MIT Sea Grant (seagrantinfo@mit.edu) for access prior to February 17, 2025 in order to avoid missing the deadline due to technical issues.

Contact Information:

- **RFP Process:** Mary Newton Lima, Assistant Director, Administration, seagrantinfo@mit.edu
- **Budgets:** Caroline Johnston, Financial Administrator, carolin@mit.edu
- **eSeaGrant:** MIT Sea Grant, seagrantinfo@mit.edu
- **MIT Sea Grant Advisory Services Group:** Robert Vincent, Assistant Director, Advisory Services, rvincent@mit.edu

2. Introduction - MIT Sea Grant

MIT Sea Grant is part of NOAA's National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP), and one of the 34 programs located in coastal and Great Lakes states, Puerto Rico, and Guam. Research at MIT Sea Grant is directed by our four Focus Areas and their Goals and Outcomes as described in the MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan. The Focus Areas, Goals, and Outcomes guide us in supporting scientific and/or technology development research that aims to understand and improve ecosystem health and the human use of coastal and marine environments. Applicants should refer to the MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan throughout the planning process and make sure to identify which focus area their project falls under. All MITSG research is driven by constituent input and success is judged based on addressing needs specific to Massachusetts and having the results adopted by our constituents. Hence, early engagement with constituents and a robust outreach plan are crucial elements of every application, in addition to scientific excellence.

One of MIT Sea Grant's cross-cutting principles is to enhance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility (DEIJA). MIT Sea Grant is committed to bringing a range of voices and values together to find solutions that are innovative, creative, and responsive to the complex problems facing coastal communities. MIT Sea Grant is striving to enhance scientific and cultural understanding and enable the program and network to pursue its vision and mission among all audiences. Our program and the NSGCP encourages applicants from all groups including underrepresented or underserved groups to apply.

3. FY2026-2028 Topics and Topic Selection

For each RFP, MIT Sea Grant selects certain high priority research topic areas, relevant to Massachusetts, to focus on the priorities identified in the MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan. These topics take advantage of MIT Sea Grant's unique abilities to address issues impacting coastal and marine waters; conduct innovative research to increase the capabilities of industry and resource managers; and ensure communities have access to science, tools, and technologies to support informed decision-making for the conservation of sustainable marine resources. The specific topics for this year are presented below.

MIT Sea Grant is looking for applications that apply current or emerging technologies to solve existing problems in the fields represented in the RFP Topics. Applicants should consider how state-of-the-art techniques used in their field (biotechnology, molecular biology, engineering, robotics, etc.) can be used to pose novel solutions to existing problems. Proposals will focus on the coast of Massachusetts with relevancy to MA state priorities.

1. **Sustainable aquaculture and seafood processing:** MIT Sea Grant is looking for innovative solutions to aquaculture, seafood processing, workforce development, and safety issues through biological, chemical, and engineering innovations. Current issues include impacts of farms/processors on the environment, offshore aquaculture development, and monitoring for pathogens that impact coastal aquaculture.
2. **Offsetting climate impacts to coastal and ocean environments:** We are seeking transformative techniques in biological, chemical, engineering, and water quality research to assess and offset effects of climate change, including effects of ocean acidification on coastal and marine resources, marine carbon dioxide removal, and storm coastal protection. Proposals that include artificial intelligence methods, and novel methods for monitoring and sensor development are especially encouraged.
3. **Tracking and preventing impacts of marine debris.** The two-fold focus of this topic is finding long-term solutions to reducing macro-, micro- and nano-plastics, and innovative ways to identify and map them in the marine environment for management purposes. This broad topic encompasses designing products that replace plastic, mapping marine debris for management, and innovative methods for finding, removing, and disposing of all sizes of marine debris.
4. **Ocean applications of biotechnology.** We request proposals that offer novel applications of existing biotechnology methods, or development of new methods, to address current issues in climate change, aquaculture, and other coastal and marine issues. Examples include but are not limited to devising a way to detect parasites, viruses and precursors of harmful algal blooms using next-generation sequencing, or real time monitoring utilizing eDNA to get spatial and temporal resolution.
5. **Engineering for ocean uses:** Proposals that utilize robotics and/or machine learning to

develop inventive solutions or improvement to existing technologies to address current community, management, and industry concerns. Examples: underwater manipulation and intervention for aquaculture; autonomous navigation for ocean sampling.

6. **Decarbonization of fisheries and the seafood industry:** The commercial fishing fleet and greater seafood industry face rising costs, especially for fuel, and increased pressure to reduce emissions. Fishermen in MA are already at the forefront of reducing these costs, and MIT Sea Grant has long been at work on decarbonizing the cargo shipping fleet. Proposals to reduce carbon emissions and fuel consumption of fisheries vessels and the seafood processing industry through low-cost, innovative technology are welcome.

An informational Open House for the FY2026 RFP was held virtually on January 13, 2025 to provide guidance for interested applicants. Meeting slides are available for download here.

4. Proposal Information

4.1 Funding

The maximum allowable annual research budget request is $170,000, for a total of $340,000 for a two-year project. This does not include the required matching funds provided by the Principal Investigator (PI), which amount to at least 50% of the figure requested from MIT Sea Grant. Projects may be up to two years in length.

The PI must not be the recipient of other MIT Sea Grant funding during the period of the grant (i.e., 2/1/2026 to 1/31/2028). The Director may, at his discretion, remove a proposal from further consideration at any point in the process if an investigator has overdue obligations to MIT Sea Grant under a previous research award or contract.

4.2 MIT Sea Grant Marine Advisory Services Group

A robust outreach plan is a crucial element of our evaluation. Proposals featuring strong research accompanied by meaningful engagement/ outreach components will be more competitive, and PIs are required to discuss their outreach and engagement plans with the MIT Sea Grant Advisory Services Group (ASG) prior to submittal of their full proposal. The ASG specializes in constituent engagement, outreach, and education and are well connected with partners and collaborators throughout Massachusetts and the region. Most of the ASG staff are research scientists that design and conduct research, bringing a thorough understanding of how to combine research and outreach that develops and transfers information and technology in support of constituent needs and the Sea Grant mission. Contact Rob Vincent (rvincent@mit.edu), Assistant Director of the ASG, to locate specialists who might be able to assist you or connect you with others as you develop your outreach and engagement plan. Involving MIT Sea Grant Advisory staff early in the planning and preparation process is expected and required.

Once proposals are funded, a close connection should be established and maintained between the PI and an ASG staff member to ensure continuous coordination so as to engage with our constituents. All PIs must attend a first kick-off meeting to present their plans for engaging with our advisory staff. Annual research symposia throughout the duration of the project will be held in March to present the research accomplishments to fellow researchers, all constituents, and the MIT Sea Grant staff.

4.3 RFP Schedule

The proposal process is initiated each year when the RFP Open House is announced. The contents

of proposals must be complete by the dates and times given in the RFP Schedule presented in Table 1. These deadlines are strictly enforced. Preproposals and/or full proposals that are incomplete or not submitted by the deadlines will not be moved forward in the competition, and rebuttals submitted after the deadline will not be included in the review process.

This is a multi-step process, so please be aware of each due date.

Table 1. RFP Schedule

RFP Open House	January 13, 2025
Access to eSeaGrant requested by 5:00 pm local time	February 17, 2025
Preproposal due by 5:00 pm local time	February 18, 2025
Full proposals due by 5:00 pm local time	May 23, 2025
Blinded peer reviewer comments sent to Principal Investigators	June 30, 2025
Optional PI rebuttals due by 5:00 pm local time	July 14, 2025
Technical Review Panel Meeting	August 2025
Principal Investigators notified of funding decisions	October 2025
Beginning of FY2026-2028 funding	February 2026

5. Preproposal

Once the PI has selected a topic, please contact MIT Sea Grant (seagrantinfo@mit.edu) as soon as possible for access to eSeaGrant, MIT Sea Grant's online submission portal, in order to avoid missing the deadline due to technical issues.

5.1 Preproposal Instructions

A preproposal is required in order to submit a full proposal. Preproposals must be submitted to MIT Sea Grant through eSeaGrant by 5:00 pm local time on February 18, 2025. Please read the detailed directions for each form in eSeaGrant for further instruction.

5.1.1 90-2 Project Summary Form 2025 Preprop

Please fill out the title, start date and end date of your proposal, and your institution's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number by clicking on Preliminary Project Information.

5.1.2 Principal Investigator and Current/Pending (Required) and Co-Principal Investigator and Current/Pending (Optional)

Enter the required information on the form. Note that the PI must be eligible to submit a proposal according to his/her home institution. Attach a CV/resume and (if available) a Current/Pending Form at the bottom of the forms for each PI and co-PI. CVs must be no more than two pages long and submitted as PDFs.

5.1.3 Preproposal Narrative (Required)

The project narrative may be up to two pages long and must be a PDF that is double-spaced, in 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. References/bibliography are not included in the page count and can be appended to the end of the narrative.

The narrative should address the following:

- Identify the marine-related problem, issue, need, or hypothesis requiring this work. You must identify the project's relevance to one or more of the Topics identified above, including how these will be advanced by supporting the proposed work. You may also consult the MIT Sea Grant focus areas as detailed in the MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan.
- Describe your approach. Include theoretical studies, laboratory analyses, fieldwork, and the approximate amount of time needed for these activities.
- Explain how this project contributes to the basic scientific discipline involved.
- Explain how this project demonstrates support, cooperation and/or collaboration with industry, government, and community groups within the state of Massachusetts.
- Briefly describe your outreach and engagement plan activities. Contact Rob Vincent, Assistant Director of the Marine Advisory Services Group, for guidance on extension and outreach opportunities.
    - Describe how the work addresses constituent-driven needs and how results will be made available to the user and/or the general public. Describe any associated engagement throughout the course of the project and/or educational activities that are a result of the project.
    - If applicable, describe how the proposed activity broadens the participation of individuals from underrepresented groups in STEM fields and how this research will have broader societal impacts on constituents from underrepresented or underserved communities.

5.1.4 Preproposal Funding Request for Years One and Two (Required)

Note that matching funds must be at least 50% of the funds requested from Sea Grant and the matching funds must come from non-federal sources.

5.1.5 Suggested Reviewers (Optional)

You may provide contact information for potential peer reviewers. Reviewers should be scientific peers who are qualified to provide independent and knowledgeable reviews of your project in the full proposal phase. MIT Sea Grant peer reviewers should not be from Massachusetts institutions.

5.1.6 Preproposal Summary (Required)

Once you are satisfied with your submittal, submit by clicking SUBMIT on the Proposal Summary form. This will time stamp your submission and generate an acknowledgement email for your records. **If you have not pressed the SUBMIT button by February 18, 2025 at 5:00 pm ET, your preproposal will not be processed and will not move forward in the competition.** No exceptions can be made.

5.2 Preproposal Evaluation

All complete preproposals submitted through eSeaGrant by 5:00 pm local time on February 18, 2025 will be evaluated by the MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee. The MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee is comprised of a diverse group of academic, industry, tribal, and professional community members of Massachusetts. All members are required to sign a Non-Conflict of Interest form as part of agreeing to serve and no Advisory Committee member will take part in the review of any proposal with which they have a conflict of interest.

Preproposals submitted by the deadline are distributed to members of the MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee who will evaluate the submitted preproposals (except as noted above) for scientific soundness, relevance to the MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan, innovativeness, and responsiveness to the RFP. The Advisory Committee will then meet with the MIT Sea Grant Director to determine a rank for each preproposal based on the overall scores. The highest-ranking preproposals will be encouraged, and the rest will be discouraged from continuing with the full proposal submission process. MIT Sea Grant Marine Advisory staff who do not have a conflict of interest may also participate in the meeting or separately review preproposals for education, outreach, engagement components, and relevance to the MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan.

6. Full Proposal

Based on the outcome of the preproposal evaluation process, principal investigators whose projects are scientifically sound and are aligned with the MIT Sea Grant Objectives and Outcomes will be encouraged to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will not be accepted unless a preproposal was submitted and reviewed. Per the NSGCP's National Competition Policy, all PIs who submitted preproposals are eligible to submit full proposals, even if they are not encouraged. However, preproposals that are not encouraged are unlikely to be successful at the full proposal stage. MIT Sea Grant will inform all PIs as to whether, or not they are encouraged to submit a full proposal in mid-March. Full proposals must be submitted to MIT Sea Grant through the eSeaGrant online portal by 5:00 pm local time on May 23, 2025.

The rest of this section explains the eSeaGrant forms that are part of the full proposal submittal.

6.1 Full Proposal Instructions

6.1.1 Budget (Required)

You are strongly encouraged to begin the budget preparation process early. If your budget is completed with justifications in eSeaGrant five (5) business days before the deadline, the MIT Sea Grant Program Support Team will review it for completeness and correctness. PIs are encouraged to submit their budgets early as an incorrect budget may lead to the proposal being removed from further consideration. Please contact the MIT Sea Grant Financial Officers Caroline Johnston (carolin@mit.edu) with any questions you may have regarding the budget.

The budget must include all direct (including fringe benefits) and indirect costs of the project, and include details on matching funds. Be sure to indicate which salaries and wages are subject to indirect costs, and those not subject to indirect costs on the worksheets. Applicants must budget for all costs of the project, including anticipated salary and wage increases for year 2 and costs of the extension, communications, and publication activities.

Detailed information on how to fill out the budget worksheets can be found on the Budget Instructions tab in the Budgets form. You will need to fill out an online budget worksheet for each year and each year of each subaward.

Home Institution Approval: Applicants should contact the appropriate office of their home institution to obtain the current rates for fringe benefits and indirect costs. In addition, the PI's home institution must review and approve the proposal's budget, including matching fund estimates, prior to submission to MIT Sea Grant.

Matching Funds: Every MIT Sea Grant-funded investigator is required to match 50% of the contributions from NOAA with funding from non-federal sources. The source of matching funds must be specified in the budget. Sources of matching funds include but are not limited to: private foundation grants, state and local government contracts, co-sponsorship by industry, up to one month's salary per year for the PI, waived tuition, equipment, supplies, cash, and in-kind contributions. Examples of in-kind contributions include salaries, wages / benefits of investigators and students working on the project, expendable supplies and equipment, ship time, and donated supplies, space, or equipment. Foreign government funds also qualify, but funds from federal sources do not, including equipment purchased with federal funds. Matching funds from an external source require a letter of commitment from that organization.

Budget Justifications: Budget justifications must be prepared for each budget category (e.g., Salaries and Wages, Fringe Benefits). This feature is integrated into the eSeaGrant online tool and justifications must be entered as line-by-line descriptions. Failure to include complete budget justifications, or if the budget justifications do not match the budget worksheet, may result in your proposal being removed from the competition. Subcontracts must have their own budget justifications. Please refer to eSeaGrant's budget justification examples for complete guidance on developing your budgets with proper justification.

6.1.2 90-2 Project Summary Form 2025 (Required)

Click on the Preliminary Project Information section and fill out all information. The title, start date and end date of your proposal, and your institution's UEI number should be the same information you supplied in the preproposal phase.

6.1.3 Principal Investigator and Current/Pending (Required) and Co-Principal Investigator and Current/Pending (Optional)

Enter the required information on the form. Note that the PI must be eligible to submit a proposal according to his/her home institution. Attach a CV/resume and (if available) a Current/Pending Form at the bottom of the forms for each PI and co-PI. CVs must be no more than two pages long and submitted as PDFs.

6.1.4 Additional Personnel with CV and Current/Pending (Optional)

List additional personnel such as sub-awardees, graduate students, post docs, community collaborators, and staff that will work on the project and listed in the budget. While resumes or CVs are not required for these individuals, please include them if they are considered key staff.

6.1.5 Project Abstract Summary Form

Provide an abstract of your proposal in 4,000 characters or less, Additional information is in eSeagrant.

6.1.6 Proposal Narrative (Required)

The project narrative may not exceed fifteen (15) double-spaced pages, in Times New Roman font (at least 12 pt font), and with 1-inch margins. Narratives longer than 15 pages WILL NOT be accepted. The 15-page limit for project narratives includes items b-h in the list below and all tables and figures. References and literature citations (i) should demonstrate your familiarity with the literature of your topic, may be single-spaced and do NOT count against the page limit. The project narrative should address the following as explicit sections:

a. Cover page, including the project title and names, titles, affiliations, and contact information (email and phone) of the PI and any co-PIs
b. Project abstract
c. Introduction / Background / Justification
d. Project objectives
e. Project details or methods
f. Anticipated outcomes (including how the project advances the MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan)
g. Project Timeline
h. Outreach and/or Engagement Plan: All MIT Sea Grant research is driven by constituent input and success is judged in part by having the results disseminated and adopted by our constituents and not just researchers. A robust outreach and engagement plan is expected as part of the full proposal. To ensure this, PIs are required to contact the MIT Sea Grant ASG for guidance on the types of techniques that could be used to disseminate your research to a broad and general audience. Contact Rob Vincent, Assistant Director of the ASG, to discuss who on the team can advise you on this section.
i. References and literature citations

6.1.7 Data Management Plan (Required)

Data and information collected and/or created under NOAA grants and cooperative agreements, including this RFP, must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, at no cost (or no more than the cost of reproduction) free of charge and in a timely manner, except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements. NOAA grant applications for projects expected to produce environmental data must include a Data Management Plan (DMP) describing how the PIs plan to make the data available. The plan must conform to NOAA's Data Sharing Directive for Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts. PIs are expected to fully execute the plan.

If your project does not generate datasets, a simple statement such as "This proposal will not generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required as part of the Proposal" is all that is necessary to satisfy the DMP requirement. Please refer to the MIT Sea Grant Data Sharing Directive Policy for more information.

6.1.8 Letters of Support (Optional)

If other organizations are described as contributing to your project in the narrative portion of your proposal, it is advisable to include a letter of support from them detailing their intentions and commitment. In addition, letters of support from constituents that will benefit from the work may also be submitted. Address letters to Dr. Michael Triantafyllou, Director, MIT Sea Grant.

6.1.9 Letters of Commitment (Required for cost-sharing and subawards)

A letter of commitment is required from:

- The contractor of each subaward
- Any external source for cost-sharing (match)
- For MIT PI's: if you are using another PI's salary

Failure to provide letters of commitment for either of these will result in the automatic disqualification of your proposal.

6.1.10 Suggested Reviewers (Optional)

You may give us contact information for potential peer reviewers. Reviewers should be scientific peers who are qualified to provide independent and knowledgeable reviews of your project in the full proposal phase. MIT Sea Grant peer reviewers should not be from Massachusetts institutions.

6.1.11 Proposal Summary (Required)

Submit by clicking SUBMIT on the Proposal Summary form. This will time stamp your submission and generate an acknowledgement email for your records. **If you have not pressed the SUBMIT button by May 23, 2025 at 5:00 pm ET, your full proposal will not be processed.** No exceptions can be made.

6.1.12 Institutional Review Board

Projects intending to use human test subjects for research purposes should be identified and include an anticipated timeline for when Institutional Review Board approval will be obtained and when the activities involving human test subjects are expected to occur. No work involving human subjects may be undertaken, conducted, or costs incurred and/or charged for human subjects research, until the appropriate documentation is approved in writing by the NOAA grants officer.

6.2 Full Proposal Evaluation

Per the NSGCP National Competition Policy Guidance, each full proposal will receive a minimum of three written peer reviews. Peer reviewers will be experts in the field(s) which are covered in the proposals and will be chosen to avoid any potential conflict of interest. In the event that an in-state reviewer needs to be used, the selection will be justified to the federal program officer. Peer reviewers will be tasked with evaluating the proposal package using the criteria identified in the Evaluation Criteria section (section 7) of this RFP. Each reviewer will rate their proposal(s) and submit their entire review to MIT Sea Grant via eSeaGrant.

Blinded peer reviews for each proposal will be sent to the PI of that proposal by June 30, 2025. The PIs then have until 5:00 pm Eastern Time on July 14, 2025, to respond to the reviewer's comments. Rebuttals are optional and not required of any PI.

The full proposal, blinded peer reviews, and the PI's rebuttals (if provided) are submitted to a Technical Review Panel (TRP) which meets in August for extensive discussion of the technical merits of the full proposals.

The Director will present the results of the TRP to the MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee for additional programmatic insight and discussion and will make the final funding recommendations based on the TRP's rank order except in instances where the Director may deviate from the rank order based on the following selection factors:

1. Strategic priority;
2. number of proposals within each Topic;
3. diversity in applicant pool (e.g., institution, geography, career stage, end-user groups);
4. prior award performance (e.g., timeliness of reports); and
5. availability of funding.

Final funding recommendations will then be submitted by the MIT Sea Grant Director in a Letter of Intent to the National Sea Grant Office for final concurrence. Principal Investigators will be informed of the funding decision following final authorization by the National Sea Grant Office.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Below are criteria used by both peer reviewers and technical review panelists in evaluating proposals for funding by the MIT Sea Grant program. As part the review process, all reviewers are assessed for conflicts of interest. Peer and TRP reviewers will provide a written review of the proposal taking into consideration the list below:

1. Rationale (20%) - the degree to which the proposed activity addresses an important issue, problem, or opportunity in development, use, or management of marine or coastal resources.

2. Scientific or Professional Merit (20%) - the degree to which the activity will advance the state of the science or discipline through use and extension of state-of-the-art methods.

3. Relevance to Sea Grant Priorities (10%) - degree to which the proposed activity relates to priorities, goals, and outcomes provided in the 2024-2027 MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan.

4. Innovativeness (15%) - the degree to which new approaches to solving problems in resource management or development; the degree to which the activity will focus on new types of important or potentially important resources and issues; the degree to which the proposed activity addresses a little-known or emerging field and builds a foundation for additional research.

5. Outreach (20%): the degree to which investigators have incorporated an engagement plan for the project and/or outreach plan for the research findings or tools they plan to develop, relevance to Massachusetts constituency-driven needs, and the likelihood the work will inform the public and decision-makers, benefit industry and/or communities, support underrepresented groups, and provide meaningful constituent impacts as a result of the efforts. PIs are required to have discussed their outreach plan with the MITSG Advisory Services Group.

6. Qualifications and Past Record of Investigators (10%) - degree to which investigators are qualified by education, training, and/or experience to execute the proposed activity; record of achievement with previous funding.

7. Appropriate and Cost-Effective Budget (5%) – degree to which the proposed budget is adequate to accomplish the objectives and of the budget justification in explaining the need for resources.

8. Scoring Definitions

The Advisory Committee, peer reviewers and technical reviewers will assign an overall proposal score by choosing one of the following:

5 - Excellent - Exhibits outstanding scientific quality; demonstrates research strategy and methods well-designed to address problem; contributes to basic discipline as well as more general Sea Grant goals in marine resource development, use, management; and has outlined a meaningful engagement plan, including the identification of constituents, collaborators and/or linkages to user groups

4 - Very Good - With careful consideration of recommended changes, would be rated Excellent

3 - Good - Routine but acceptable scientific quality; needs revision in some major part of the proposal; for example, the methodology, linkage to user groups, clarification of relationship to similar projects, or major budget changes necessary to achieve objectives

2 - Fair - Marginal scientific approach to a potentially interesting problem; limited understanding of how proposed research related to general Sea Grant goals; major deficiencies in problem definition, research strategy, and methods; inadequate institutional support

1 - Poor - Proposal has major deficiencies and should not be funded