



Request for Research Proposals

Rhode Island Sea Grant 2018-2020 Research Omnibus

Issued Wednesday, January 11, 2017

**Preproposal Submission Deadline:
4:00 PM Friday, 17 February 2017**

Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program
University of Rhode Island
Coastal Institute Suite 34
URI Narragansett Bay Campus
Narragansett, RI 02882-1197
Phone: (401) 874-6800

This RFP is available at: seagrant.gso.uri.edu/research/

Introduction

Rhode Island Sea Grant's core mission is to improve understanding and management of Rhode Island's coastal and marine ecosystems. To achieve this mission, we provide support for scientific research, legal and policy studies, outreach, extension, and communications programs. Our primary offices are located at the University of Rhode Island (URI) Graduate School of Oceanography. Our Legal Program is located at Roger Williams University School of Law, and our extension program at the URI Coastal Resources Center. Rhode Island Sea Grant is a partnership between URI, the National Sea Grant College Program, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the State of Rhode Island.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is for research projects (individual or multi-institutional) up to 2 years in length to be funded under Rhode Island Sea Grant's 2018–2022 Omnibus Proposal. Project funding will begin 01 February 2018 and end 31 January 2020.

We anticipate supporting approximately six projects of up to \$100,000 per year contingent upon receipt of federal funding. Modification in the number of and/or funding for individual proposals may be made based on final program budget allocations. Each proposal for this highly competitive research program receives extensive peer review, with final reviews conducted by ad hoc external, expert peer, and relevancy review panels.

An informational meeting for this RFP will be held on **Monday, January 30, 2017, in the Coastal Institute Large Conference Room, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM on the URI Narragansett Bay Campus**. Attendance by applicants is optional. This meeting is an opportunity to meet with Rhode Island Sea Grant staff to discuss this RFP and address any questions about developing and submitting proposals.

The preproposal submission deadline is 4:00 PM Friday, February 17, 2017. The full proposal submission deadline is 4:00 PM Thursday, June 01, 2017. A full schedule for this research competition is provided as the last page of this RFP document.

Rhode Island Sea Grant's Research Priorities for 2018–2020

For the 2018–2020 portion of its Omnibus, Rhode Island Sea Grant intends to fund projects that include Sea Grant's functional areas of research, education, outreach and communications, and that are collaborative, multi-disciplinary, and/or multi-institutional in the following topical/thematic areas:

Establishment of baselines that lead to improved understanding of the socio-economic impacts of wind energy produced by the wind farm off Block Island on, including but not limited to:

- Rhode Island tourism
- Commercial and recreational fishing in Rhode Island waters
- Coastal and water-dependent business in Rhode Island

Improved understanding of harmful algal blooms (HABs) in Rhode Island waters, with a focus on *Alexandrium* and *Pseudo-nitzschia* taxa, including but not limited to:

- Synthesis of timing and occurrence of regional blooms and their use as a predictive mechanism for blooms in Rhode Island coastal waters.
- Phytoplankton biotoxin production and rates at which biotoxins are transferred to shellfish.
- The role that environment vs. genetics plays in determining "toxicity" within species of concern along a north–south geographic gradient.
- Development of tools and models that improve prediction of HABs and the ability to

- manage recreational and commercial shellfish resources in Rhode Island waters.
- The socio-economic impacts of HAB outbreaks on the Rhode Island shellfish industry.

Application Process

- An online system—*eSeaGrant*—is used by Rhode Island Sea Grant for all proposal development and project reporting activities. Applicants must establish new accounts, or activate existing accounts in *eSeaGrant*, by contacting Alan Desbonnet (aland@uri.edu). Account creation and/or activation may take up to 48 hours.
- A Sea Grant Proposal Cover Sheet (available in *eSeaGrant*) containing the signature(s) of authorized university/institution/department person(s) verifying that proposal budgets are correct and that specified matching funds are available and will be applied to the proposed work is required at the full proposal phase of this research competition. Full proposals lacking a completed, signed cover sheet will not be considered.
- Applicants with overdue project reports from previously funded Rhode Island Sea Grant projects will not be considered.

Budget Development

- All research proposals will have a \$100,000 per year, \$200,000 total project maximum allowable budget, which includes institutional overhead.
- Sea Grant is a match program; for each \$2 of Sea Grant funding received at least \$1 of non-federal support must be contributed. The applicant is responsible for provision of the 50% match on the total funding requested. **Federal funds cannot be used as matching funds.** Match support may include:
 - Salaries, wages, and benefits of those working on the project;
 - Tuition provided by non-federal sources;
 - Expendable supplies, equipment and ship time;
 - Indirect costs;
 - Contributions by private, local, or state entities or non-federal special project funds.
- Match must be institutionally verified by signature on the Sea Grant Proposal Cover Sheet (full proposal only). The applicant is responsible for providing match on the entire amount of funding requested.

Impacts of Research

Reporting of research impacts and accomplishments to funders and stakeholders is a critical element of showing the benefits of research for the public. Applicants must describe anticipated research outcomes and how they may be applied to solving or better understanding problems and issues at local, state and regional scales, and which resource management audiences would likely find the research results useful, and how.

Funded projects will be required to report annually during life of project, and for several years beyond end of project, on research impacts and accomplishments. Detailed guidance will be provided to funded investigators.

Data Sharing

NOAA requires the inclusion of data management plans for all funded research except where limited by law, regulation, policy, or security agreement. Data, along with accompanying metadata, must be available to general users, free of charge and in a timely manner, generally no later than two (2) years after the project end date. The data management plan should be brief, but should clearly describe the time frame for data availability, the format that data will be available in (e.g., Excel

spreadsheet), and the process by which data and metadata are requested by and provided to prospective users. Failure to comply with a submitted and approved data management plan could result in ineligibility for future NOAA and/or Sea Grant funding. Complete details of the NOAA Directive on Data Management can be found at: <https://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/tor.php>. One option for compliance is through the NOAA National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC; <http://www.nodc.noaa.gov/submit/index.html>).

NEPA Questionnaire

Any applicant who will conduct research outside of a strictly laboratory setting must complete a NEPA questionnaire at the full proposal phase of this research competition. The questionnaire will be available for download in eSeaGrant. The NEPA document must be reviewed and approved prior to award of funding.

Sea Grant Graduate Research Fellows

Rhode Island Sea Grant Graduate Research Fellows (e.g., graduate students receiving RISG research funding through this RFP) may be required to meet with Rhode Island Sea Grant staff at the beginning of the funded project and may be requested to engage in a Rhode Island Sea Grant outreach or education activity of their choice. These activities will not detract from the primary research focus of the fellowship, but will help develop a better understanding of the linkages between science and outreach. Further details will be provided as appropriate.

URI Undergraduate Coastal Fellows

Rhode Island Sea Grant encourages PIs to incorporate URI Coastal Fellows interested in engaging in hands-on experience in a research environment into their funded research projects. The request for a URI Coastal Fellow should be included in the budget of preproposals and full proposals. Coastal Fellows engage in the research project for 20 hours per week during the summer session; please contact the Coastal Fellows Program to determine the correct amount to budget for inclusion of a Coastal Fellow in your proposal. Contact Brienne Neptin (401-874-7829; bneptin@uri.edu; or see cels.uri.edu/coastalfellows/).

Connections to Outreach and Education

Rhode Island Sea Grant seeks to fund research of the highest scientific excellence and relevance; proposed research projects must be well designed and scientifically rigorous. No proposal will be considered for funding unless the rationale, methods, prospective uses, and evaluation of impacts are explained thoroughly. In addition, well thought out, direct connections to Rhode Island Sea Grant's outreach and communications efforts will be essential considerations during proposal evaluation. Applicants to the RFP are strongly encouraged to develop their outreach plan in consultation with Rhode Island Sea Grant extension agents in coastal and legal programs. Collaborations with industry, state and regional agencies, and other research institutions are also strongly encouraged.

PREPROPOSALS

Preproposals should present a succinct but detailed synopsis of the project in order to evaluate relevance to the RFP, PI qualifications, and potential outcomes of the proposed research.

YOU MUST SUBMIT A PREPROPOSAL TO BE ELIGIBLE TO SUBMIT A FULL PROPOSAL.

Preproposals must be submitted in eSeaGrant by 4:00 PM, Friday, February 17, 2017. The eSeaGrant portal automatically deactivates at the deadline time.

Preproposal text is uploaded to eSeaGrant as a single PDF document, **limited to 3 pages** (not including references) and contains the following elements arranged in the order given below:

- Statement of Problem—indicate the specific problem to be addressed;
- Outline of Project Objectives and Goals;
- Methodology—this must be succinct, but detailed enough so that a preliminary determination of the appropriateness of the proposed approach, including statistical analyses can be made;
- Impact Statement—A concise explanation of how anticipated research outcomes will contribute to and have impact upon solving or better understanding problems and issues relative to this RFP at local, state and/or regional scales, and which management audiences are likely to find the research findings useful, and how;
- Outreach Plan—A summary of education and outreach activities proposed, and how these will interface with Rhode Island Sea Grant extension and legal programs;
- References;
- Budgets and other materials are input directly into eSeaGrant online budget worksheets. Budget justifications are not required for preproposals.

The Data Management Plan, NEPA Questionnaire, and Rhode Island Sea Grant Cover Sheet are not applicable to the preproposal phase of this research competition.

Rhode Island Sea Grant welcomes any recommendations for reviewers expert in the proposal's subject area that you wish to submit for consideration. Suggested reviewers are input in eSeaGrant.

FULL PROPOSALS

Full proposal guidelines and guidance will be available in eSeaGrant when the full proposal phase of this research competition is open.

Proposal Evaluations

PREPROPOSALS are reviewed for relevancy to the needs described in the RFP, and that they present a sound research plan that can achieve/test stated hypotheses. **Even if Rhode Island Sea Grant does not recommend that a preproposal be developed into a full proposal, applicants may still submit a full proposal. In such cases, the applicant MUST notify Alan Desbonnet (aland@uri.edu; 401-874-6813) by Friday April 15, 2017, of the intent to submit a full proposal.**

FULL PROPOSALS are expected to be reviewed by at least three external peer reviewers selected by Rhode Island Sea Grant. Applicants will be given anonymous access to all external reviews of their proposals and will have the opportunity to respond in writing to the reviews. A full proposal review panel will be convened in late August 2017 to review full proposals, their peer reviews, applicant rebuttals to the reviews, and relevancy to stakeholder needs. A representative of the National Sea Grant College Program Office will attend the full proposal panel meeting. The Rhode Island Sea Grant director and other administrative staff participate as ad hoc members in the deliberations of review panels; however, panel members are responsible for ranking the proposals. Based on these external evaluations, applicants with proposals selected for funding may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets according to recommendations of the full proposal review panel. **The Director of the Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program retains sole responsibility for all final decisions on funding of proposals.**

Review Criteria for Rhode Island Sea Grant Research Proposals

The fundamental criteria for full proposal evaluations and their respective weights are:

- Scientific Merit and Rationale (20%);
- Technical Rigor and Innovation (30%)
- Connections to Sea Grant Extension and Legal Programs (20%);
- Relevancy to Rhode Island Sea Grant Stakeholders (20%);
- Professional Qualifications of Investigators (10%).

Key considerations for proposal evaluation are:

Scientific Merit and Rationale—Degree to which the proposed work addresses an important issue, problem or opportunity in sustainable utilization and/or management of marine and coastal resources in Rhode Island as requested in the RFP.

Technical Rigor and Innovation—Degree to which the proposed work advances the state of the science or discipline in a rigorous fashion through use of state-of-the-art scientific methods and/or use of innovative approaches to problem solving or exploiting opportunities in resource management.

Connections to Sea Grant Extension and Legal Programs—Degree to which the proposed work will make its way into practical use or application in local resources management, and/or be brought forth to general public or target audiences, to improve understanding of, and capacity for addressing, pertinent coastal marine issues, and the degree to which the PIs have engaged with Rhode Island Sea Grant extension, legal program, and/or communications staff in developing their research project outreach plan.

Relevancy to Rhode Island Sea Grant Stakeholders—Degree to which the proposed work relates to priorities set in the 2018-2020 Research RFP and Rhode Island Sea Grant Strategic Plan, and the degree to which users or potential users of the proposed work's outputs and outcomes have or will participate in project planning and implementation, or will be targeted by the project outreach components.

Professional Qualifications of Investigators—Degree to which the investigators are qualified by education, training, and/or experience to execute the proposed work and the degree to which they possess solid records or accomplishment derived from previous projects.

Reporting/Failure to Report

All funded investigators shall submit a 6-month project update, a Year 1 progress report, and an 18-month project update, as well as a final completion report within 3 months of the end of the funding period. All reporting will be done through eSeaGrant; guidance will be provided.

Post project reporting to define research impacts will be defined pending submission of the final project completion report. Compliance with the NOAA data sharing plan will occur according to the schedule submitted as part of the full proposal.

Rhode Island Sea Grant's Program Administration Assistance

Visit our website (seagrants.gso.uri.edu) for further information about Rhode Island Sea Grant, including the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan document.

For questions on Rhode Island Sea Grant's strategic goals and priorities, proposal reviews and grant decision-making, budgeting and match requirements, or about the online system, application or review process, please contact:

Alan Desbonnet, Assistant Director
401-874-6813 | aland@uri.edu

For questions and/or guidance regarding communication of research results with public audiences please contact:

Meredith Haas, Research Communications Specialist
401-874-6019 | mmhaas@uri.edu

For assistance in developing goals and work plans for the outreach components of your research proposal please contact:

Jennifer McCann, Director for Extension, Rhode Island Sea Grant
401-874-6127 | mccann@crc.uri.edu

Julia Wyman, Director, Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program
401-254-5734 | jwyman@rwu.edu

2018-2020 Omnibus Research RFP Schedule

For Omnibus Period 01 February 2018 to 31 January 2020

2017

January 11, Wednesday	RISG Omnibus RFP Released
January 30, Monday	RFP Informational Meeting (<i>optional</i>); URI Bay Campus 10AM - 12PM
February 17, Friday	Pre-proposals due by 4:00 PM
Feb 20 - Mar 20	Pre-proposal technical review period
Mar 27 - Mar 31	Pre-proposal Review Panel
April 07, Friday	Invitations for Full Proposals issued to applicants
April 14, Friday	Intent to submit Full Proposal by 4:00 PM (uninvited proposals only)
June 01, Thursday	Full Proposals due by 4:00 PM
June - July	Full proposal peer review period
August 01, Tuesday	Blinded reviews to Applicants for optional rebuttal
August 11, Friday	Rebuttals from Applicants due by 4:00 PM
Late August	Full Proposal Review Panel Convened
September 01, Friday	Proposal Funding Decisions issued to PIs
September 29, Friday	Final Proposal, Budget, etc. due to RISG via Cayuse by 4:00 PM

2018

mid-January	Funded PI/Graduate Research Fellow Meeting
February 01	Funded research projects begin