Request for Proposals
2017 Program Development

Submission Deadline: 4:00 PM Tuesday, January 31, 2017

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.

2017 Program Development Research Call for Proposals

The fall of 2016 brought the first incidence of a harmful algal bloom (HAB) to Narragansett Bay since the mid-1980s. This call for research is in support of Rhode Island Sea Grant Program Development objectives to explore and better understand issues related to harmful algal blooms in Rhode Island waters as part of its 2014-2018 Omnibus program.

Rhode Island Sea Grant is interested in funding one (1) project of up to 15-months duration that improves our understanding of:

- The potential for Rhode Island Sound to signal an "early warning" of the threat of harmful algal blooms entering Narragansett Bay waters, including but not limited to:
  - Phytoplankton biotoxin production and rates of transfer to shellfish.
  - Occurrence, abundance, and distribution of *Pseudo-nitzschia* and *Alexandrium* taxa.
  - Use of blue mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) as an early warning biotoxin indicator species.
- Research outcomes must serve the needs of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to better manage shellfish resources to protect public health as well as the economic and social integrity of wild and aquaculture shellfish industries.
- Successful proposals will integrate closely with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management as a project partner and primary recipient and user of research project findings.

Proposal Submittal Process

An online system—*e*SeaGrant—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 *e*SeaGrant, by contacting Alan Desbonnet (aland@uri.edu). Account creation and activation processes may take up to 48 hours.

There is no pre-proposal phase to this research call for proposals. Technical details for proposal development are available upon login to the *e*SeaGrant system.

Funding Details

Research project support will be for the award period April 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018 provided receipt of federal funding. The project budget in not to exceed $70,000 in Year 1 (4/1/17-1/31/18) or Year 2 (2/1/18-8/31/18), and not to exceed $140,00 for the project total. A single 6-month project extension may, if needed, be requested. The funded project must be completely closed on schedule with the RI Sea Grant omnibus award—January 31, 2019.

URI APPLICANTS — Applicants DO NOT use Cayuse for this RFP. Proposal development is strictly through *e*SeaGrant. Funding will be awarded via a URI Chartfield. This funding is part of Rhode Island Sea Grant's 2014-2018 omnibus award, upon which University of Rhode Island indirect costs have already been applied; *no further indirect costs can be applied*, EXCEPT subcontracts which are subject to standard URI indirect cost of 53.5% of the first $25,000 of the total subcontract amount. Further instruction is provided in *e*SeaGrant.

non-URI APPLICANTS — Funding will be awarded via subcontract to the PI's host institution. Indirect costs can be applied as per host institution negotiated IDC rates. A RISG Proposal Cover Sheet, signed by an appropriate authorized institutional representative verifying budget details, must be included as part of your proposal. The RISG Proposal Cover Sheet is downloaded as a PDF Fillable Form in *e*SeaGrant. Further instruction is provided in *e*SeaGrant.

ALL APPLICANTS
Match—As part of its Omnibus Program, Rhode Island Sea Grant has provided match for these research funds. Therefore, no match is required, or requested, for this research competition.

Data Management Plan—NOAA requires a data management plan that describes a process for sharing collected data within two years of the project end date (e.g., by August 31, 2020). All applicants must develop and submit a data management plan as per instruction in *e*SeaGrant.

NEPA Questionnaire—Any project that will collect any data in the field (e.g., outside of a laboratory environment) must complete a required NOAA NEPA Questionnaire, which is available for download in *e*SeaGrant.

Components of A Research Proposal

A. Investigator Information—Investigator data are input directly via *e*SeaGrant data entry screen. CVs (2-page per person limit) are uploaded into *e*SeaGrant as separate PDF documents per investigator.

B. Project Summary—Project Summary data [Sea Grant form 90-2] are input via *e*SeaGrant data entry screen. The Project Summary acts as an abstract of your overall project work, and should accurately, but briefly, depict the details given in the full proposal, including Objectives, Methodology, and Rationale.

C. Project Narrative—Proposal text is uploaded into *e*SeaGrant as a single PDF document. The Project Narrative will not exceed **9 (nine) pages** (including all tables, graphs, maps, etc., but excluding bibliography) in font size not less than 11 point, and will contain the following elements in the following order: Introduction and Relevance; Project Objectives; Methodology; Anticipated Outcomes and Findings; Project Leadership; Bibliography.

D. Budgets and Justifications
- **Budgets** [Sea Grant form 90-4]—Requested funds are not to exceed $70,000 per budget year, or $140,000 project total. Proposal budgets that exceed the total allowable maximum, per year or in total, will not be considered. *e*SeaGrant contains auto-calculating 90-4 budget forms described in further detail at the budget development interface.

E. Project Time Schedule—Investigators are required to submit a schedule of anticipated project milestones over the funding period; a template is provided in *e*SeaGrant.

F. Support Letters— Applicants may upload letters of project support from appropriate sources. Support letters are uploaded into *e*SeaGrant as a single PDF file.

G. Data Management Plan—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).

H. NEPA Questionnaire—Any applicant that will conduct research outside of a strictly laboratory setting must complete a NEPA Questionnaire. This document is available for download in *e*SeaGrant, where further instruction is provided. The NEPA document must be reviewed and approved prior to award of funding.

Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will receive external, out-of-state peer/technical review managed by Rhode Island Sea Grant. PIs will be granted an opportunity to provide a rebuttal to reviewer comments as per the schedule on the final page of this RFP document. Recommendations for reviewers expert in your proposal's subject area will improve the review process, and may be provided in *e*SeaGrant.

Review Criteria for Rhode Island Sea Grant Research Proposals
The fundamental criteria for proposal evaluations and their respective weights are:
- Scientific merit and rationale (30%);
- Technical rigor and innovation (30%)
- Degree of engagement with end users of research findings (e.g., RIDEM; 20%)
- Professional qualifications of investigators (20%)

Key considerations for proposal evaluation are:

Scientific Merit & Rationale—Degree to which the proposed work addresses the issue, problem or opportunity as stated in the RFP.

Technical Rigor & Innovation—Degree to which the proposed work will advance understanding of the issue or problem, in a rigorous fashion through use of state-of-the-art scientific methods, and/or use of innovative approaches to problem solving.

Degree of Engagement with Research Findings Users—Degree to which key users are engaged in development and implementation of the proposed work, and the degree of potential utility of research outcomes for improved management of HABs.

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

Reporting/Failure to Report

Funded projects will be required to report annually during life of project, and perhaps for several years beyond life of project, on research impacts and accomplishments. Detailed guidance will be provided to funded investigators. Failure to report will result in denial of access to future Sea Grant funding opportunities.

Not Considered for Funding

- Incomplete proposals—not containing all of the elements as described in this RFP document and/or as described in *e*SeaGrant.
- Proposals submitted by applicants with delinquent Rhode Island Sea Grant project reports.
- Proposals whose work lies outside of that described under "**2017 Program Development Research Call for Proposals** "of this RFP document.

The Director of Rhode Island Sea Grant retains sole responsibility for decisions on funding of proposals.

2017 Program Development Research RFP Schedule

As part of the RISG 2014–2018 Omnibus Award

2017	
January 04, Wednesday	RFP Released
January 31, Tuesday	**Full Proposals Dues 4:00PM**
March 06, Monday	Rebuttal Period Opens
March 10, Friday	**Rebuttal Period Closes**
March 28, Tuesday	**Applicants Notified of Funding Decisions**
April 03, Monday	**Anticipated Research Project Start**