

## Questions and Responses about the 2012 NOAA Sea Grant Aquaculture Research Competition NOAA-OAR-SG-2012-2003249

**\*\*LAST UPDATE: 4-9-2012\*\***

**Disclaimer:** Please consult the official Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) Announcement available on <http://grants.gov> for official information on the requirements of this competition. (Search for Funding Opportunity number NOAA-OAR-SG-2012-2003249.) The answers in this Q&A document are NOT official competition requirements.

**Note:** Q&As referring to the preproposal stage are no longer applicable and have been struck out in this version.

**Q: I did not prepare a preproposal. Can I still submit a full proposal?**

A: No. As stated in the FFO, only applicants who submitted a preproposal are eligible to full a full proposal.

**Q: My preproposal was not encouraged to be submitted for a full proposal. Can I petition to change the decision and be invited to submit a full proposal?**

A: Please re-read the Federal Funding Opportunity notice and your summery letter where it states that **all applicants who submitted a timely preproposal are able to submit a full proposal**, regardless of encouragement or not. There is no "decision" made at this stage or "invitation" required to submit a full proposal. The preproposal step merely informs the applicant for their decision on whether to submit a full proposal or not. The preproposal feedback from this stage is meant to give you as much information as we can for you to make an informed decision on how to spend your valuable time and efforts.

**Q: I submitted a preproposal, but now feel I need to change the scope, budget, or co-PI. Is this permitted?**

A: You do not have to stick with the scope, budget, or co-PIs listed in the preproposal as you develop the full proposal. But, check with your state Sea Grant about how the work you are proposing might align with their strategic plans. Selected projects will become part of the Sea Grant Program's portfolio, so it is in the interest of both the PI and the Program to work together to produce a proposal that is well integrated with the needs and other activities of the Program.

**Q: When will I hear whether my preproposal is encouraged or not to submit a full proposal?**

A: As stated in the FFO announcement, by March 9, 2012, applicants should have received a summary statement that includes whether their preproposal is likely to fare well ("encouraged") or poorly ("discouraged") as a submitted full proposal. If you do not hear by the close of business on March 9, 2012, please contact [oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov).

~~**Q: I submitted a preproposal, but have not gotten a confirmation. Will I receive some sort of confirmation that my preproposal has been received?**~~

~~A: We expect to send an email confirmation of receipt by the end of this week (2/10/12). If you have not received one by then, please contact [oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov).~~

~~**Q: For the preproposal format, there are some items that appear to be required for both the cover page and within the 3-page text. Is it necessary to provide those names and addresses in both places in the proposal or if it would be sufficient to include them on the cover page?**~~

~~A: Regardless of any potential duplicate items among the cover and the body of the preproposal text, they should follow the instructions of the RFP. If the RFP tells them to put it in both places, I recommend that. Any choice to do otherwise is up to the investigator.~~

**~~Q: For preproposals, can I include additional items (references cited, letters of support, appendices)?~~**

~~A: As long as it conforms to the format requirements in the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) for preproposals (keep in mind the page length requirement). For preproposals, we are not requiring references cited or letters of support beyond what is required in the FFO. There is no assurance that any additional items (citations, letter, etc.) beyond what are required and exceeding the page limits will not be reviewed.~~

**Q: When are full proposals due?**

A. Please refer first to the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) announcements for questions about submission requirements. The FFO announcement, and not this Q&A page, provides the official information for this competition. The announcement is available on <http://grants.gov>. Search for Funding Opportunity number NOAA-OAR-SG-2012-2003249.

~~The FFO says that preproposals from applicants are due at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on February 7, 2012.~~  
FULL PROPOSALS from applicants are due by 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 17, 2012.

**Q: Where are proposals due?**

A. Again, please refer first to the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) announcement. The FFO announcement, and not this Q&A page, provides the official information for this competition. The announcement is available on <http://grants.gov>. Search for Funding Opportunity number NOAA-OAR-SG-2012-2003249.

~~Preproposals are due via email following the directions in the FFO.~~

Applicants in different locations have different instructions for submitting full proposals. Specific instructions should be obtained from the FFO, or from your State Sea Grant program.

You are strongly encouraged to contact your Sea Grant program as soon as possible! The Sea Grant program can not only tell you how and where to submit your application, but may have other information to help you prepare and submit your proposal. There may be preliminary steps you need to take before you can submit your proposal, so do not wait to make contact!

Contact information for all Sea Grant programs and projects participating in this competition is available at [http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/nsi/2012/eligible\\_2012.htm](http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/nsi/2012/eligible_2012.htm).

**Q. Is this a one-shot funding opportunity, or is it anticipated that there will be other calls annually under this initiative? Also, will be an upcoming National Marine Aquaculture Initiative (NMAI) competition this fiscal year?**

A. This will likely be NOAA's only aquaculture-specific competition for this fiscal year (FY2012). Some applications selected in these competitions are expected to be funded next year, pending congressional appropriations.

**Eligibility questions:**

**Q: Can I skip the preproposal stage and just submit a full proposal?**

A: No. Only those who submit a preproposal that conforms to all the instructions and is submitted by the preproposal deadline are eligible to submit a full proposal. If you do submit such a preproposal, you are eligible to submit a full proposal regardless of how well your preproposal fares in the technical review process.

**Q: Can federal scientists apply?**

A: Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal scientists can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on research proposals.

**Q: I am a Federal Scientist whose salary is only partially covered by federal funds, with the rest needing to be covered by extramural funding. Can I apply and request funding for salary?**

A: As stated in the FFO, Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition, therefore you as a federal employ cannot receive federal funding for salary, equipment, travel or anything else . Also any federal equipment or time you spend as a federal employee working on this cannot be counted towards the required non-federal matching funds.

**Q: Can a foreign entity apply for this competition? Can project activities occur outside the U.S.?**

A: Sea Grant funding is limited by legislation to activities that "...increase the understanding, assessment, development, management, utilization, and conservation of the Nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources..." Foreign entities are eligible to apply and project activities may occur outside of the U.S., as long as any proposed work is relevant to the RFP and directly impacts U.S. resources. If you choose to propose activities outside the U.S., applicants must clearly articulate how those activities support U.S. resources.

**Q: Is there a maximum number of proposals that can come from each state Sea Grant Program?**

A: No.

**Priorities for this competition:**

**Q. Is it necessary to address all three of the topics listed (Research to inform specific regulatory decisions; Research that supports multi-use spatial planning; and Socio-economic research)?**

A. No. It's a programmatic priority to support projects that address **at least one** of the three topics listed.

**Q. Is freshwater pond aquaculture a priority in this competition?**

A. No.

**Q: I think I have a specific technical focus for my proposal (e.g., hatchery, disease, harmful algal blooms, genomic techniques). Is this work eligible and a priority under the scope of this call?**

A: Your focused topic is eligible for submission, but please pay careful attention to the program priorities in the FFO announcement. Competition for funding is usually fairly tight, and proposals that do not address the priorities have a reduced chance of success.

**Q. Are basic research proposals eligible?**

A. Individual circumstances may vary based on the details of what is proposed, but typically purely technical topics are not priorities for this competition, unless they clearly contribute to one or more of the three topical priorities: 1) research to inform specific regulatory decisions; 2) research that supports multi-use spatial planning; and 3) socio-economic research targeted to understand aquaculture in a larger context.

**State Sea Grant Role:**

**Q: How can I get in touch with my state Sea Grant program?**

A. The link for contact information for all Sea Grant programs and projects participating in this competition is [http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/nsi/2012/eligible\\_2012.htm](http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/nsi/2012/eligible_2012.htm).

**You are strongly encouraged to make contact with your Sea Grant program as soon as possible!**

The Sea Grant program can not only tell you where to submit your application, but may have other

information you need to prepare and submit your proposal. There may be preliminary steps you need to take before you can submit your proposal, so do not wait until the close to due date to make contact!

**Q: What role do the state Sea Grant programs have in technical review of the proposals?**

A: None. The preproposals and full proposals will be evaluated by review panels assembled by the National Sea Grant office.

**Q: Can Sea Grant Directors apply? What about other management personnel?**

A: Directors of the state Sea Grant Programs are not eligible to compete for funds under this announcement, although for administrative purposes, they will be considered to be the Principal Investigator for all awards made to their state programs. All other Sea Grant personnel are eligible.

**Q: I live in one state, but I plan to conduct activities in another state. To which Sea Grant program should I apply?**

A: If your project were to be selected, it would probably be funded by a subaward to your institution or business from the state Sea Grant Program, so you should apply to the Sea Grant Program in the same state as your organization. If this is not the same state as where the work would take place, you should also notify the Sea Grant Program in the state where the work is occurring, to see if there is any information about this type of work going on in the state that could be usefully shared.

**General**

**Q: What projects have been funded in previous cycles?**

A: A list of past projects funded in a similar competition (National Marine Aquaculture Initiative) can be found at: <http://aquaculture.noaa.gov/funding/grants.html>

**Q. Is there a maximum number of co-PIs allowable on a single project?**

A. No.

**Q: Does the \$500,000 maximum refer to the total project cost or the per year cost?**

A: As stated in the FFO, the \$500,000 maximum is the maximum federal funds you can request for the entire duration of the project (not including the required matching funds). Given that projects can be up to 2-years duration, how to assign annual costs between years is up to the applicant.

**Q: The duration of the RFP says up to two years, but the impacts say 3-5 years. What is the duration of these projects?**

A: The project duration can be for a maximum of 2 years. It is recognized that the impact of a project is often felt after the project work itself is done.

**Q. Is this competition for both research proposals and extension proposals?**

A. No. This competition is for research proposals. There is no a separate national FFO this fiscal year (FY 2012) for aquaculture extension and technology transfer.

**Q. May my research proposal include an extension component?**

A. Yes, in fact all research proposals are required to include an Outreach Plan, and one of the evaluation criteria assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy, which could involve extension activities.

**Q. Where can I find the Sea Grant state, regional and national plans?**

A. Sea Grant state plans can be found at <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/other/admininfo/ppe/statestrategicplans.html>

(or by contacting your state program at [http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/nsi/2012/eligible\\_2012.htm](http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/nsi/2012/eligible_2012.htm))

The current Sea Grant National Strategic Plan is at  
[http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/other/admininfo/documents/0209\\_StratPlan.pdf](http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/other/admininfo/documents/0209_StratPlan.pdf)

The regional Sea Grant research and information plans are at  
<http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/regional/index.html>

**Q. If a proposal submitted to a Sea Grant program is selected, will the award be made to the state Sea Grant program's current omnibus grant?**

A. Yes, that is our intention, unless there are special circumstances that make that impossible or inadvisable.

**Q. How tight do you expect the competition to be?**

A. Perhaps tight. We expect to be able to fund as at least seven proposals this year. We can't yet estimate the number of proposals we will receive, but past Sea Grant aquaculture research competitions have sometimes had ten times as many proposals submitted as could be funded.

**Q. What are the required standard forms that are mentioned in the FFO?**

A. The unnamed standard forms referred to in the FFO are the forms that come included in the application package from grants.gov (i.e., SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, CD-511). Any required forms (e.g., NEPA survey) that are not included in the application package are described in the FFO by name and form number, and with a link provided to where they can be obtained.

**~~Q: How much detail on the budget info for the preproposal? Are the budget forms (90-4, 90-2) required for the preproposal?~~**

~~A: How much budgetary detail is ultimately up to the applicant. At a minimum, I would expect annual and total amounts for federal portion and matching funds. A more detailed preproposal budget might help assessment of how well a full proposal might fare (using the evaluation criteria and weights and selection factors in the Federal Funding Opportunity), but keep in mind the overall size limits on preproposals.~~

**Q. I am a for-profit organization. Can I include a profit or fee in my proposal?**

A15. No. By the Department of Commerce Grants Manual, "Fee or profit or other increment above cost may not be paid on Department of Commerce financial assistance awards unless there is statutory authorization to do so."

**Q. When will selections be announced?**

A. Final selections and official announcements will probably be in the July-August timeframe. Between July and September, we may be contacting applicants who have been recommended for funding, to ask questions or provide a heads up, but this will not be a guarantee that the project will ultimately be selected for funding.

**Q: Are indirect cost rates limited in this competition? If we negotiate indirect cost rates to a rate less than our federally negotiated rate, can we apply the value of foregone IDC to the match requirement?**

A: IDC is only limited by the federally negotiated rate for the institution (i.e., the state Sea Grant Program that will submit the full proposal). Negotiated indirect cost rates less than the federally negotiated rate can be considered as match.