Sea Grant Webinar, "Addressing Economic and Market Needs for the US Aquaculture Industry"

February 5, 2020

Webinar Questions Log

Q: I know that Sea Grant programs cannot set earlier deadlines, but we do need materials in advance of the April 22 due date to get proposals through sponsored programs. Can we provide "strongly encourage" dates or other soft deadlines to facilitate admin needs?

A: Yes, we are encouraging applicants to reach out to the programs they are interested in partnering with as early as possible for this very reason. Applicants should be aware that
The programs will have to abide by the rules and timelines imposed by their host universities and they should account for that extra time when preparing their proposals.

Q: Will this presentation be made available from your website after we conclude?

A: Yes, it is available at [this link.](#)

Q: What does "in partnership" mean?

A: Applicants must be in a collaborative and coherent relationship with a Sea Grant program if successfully awarded a proposal. All parties must have some involvement in the project, and those roles must be defined and described in the full proposal submission.

Q: Is there a place online where you can see the existing Sea Grant Programs to partner with?

A: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/About

Q: How does the call for proposals define "business management"? Interested in what fits within this.

A: We're seeking proposals that, focusing on economics and market analysis, help growers start and/or maintain their businesses more effectively.

Q: Are projects with freshwater aquaponics operations eligible to submit applications?

A: Yes, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities.

Q: Can a state Sea Grant program specific how proposals are received, i.e. through e-SeaGrant?

A: Yes, we expect each Sea Grant program to work within their own systems and processes. If those are incompatible with an individual applicant's needs or capabilities, the National Office can try and match them with another program.

Q: Will the grant fund piloting innovative aquaculture systems and hardware to the extent that piloting these novel systems underpin market development and expansion?

A: Yes, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities.

Q: Will we get feedback from the Letter of Intent?
A: No, you will receive no feedback from the National Office as these are "notices to Submit" so we know what is coming.

Q: How does an individual interested in partnering with a Sea Grant program?

A: Start by contacting the Sea Grant program that's closest to the area in which you intend to focus your project. If they are unable to partner with you, you can reach out to us at the National Sea Grant Office for assistance with identifying another program to partner with. Please be aware that there is no guarantee that a suitable program will be available to partner with every interested applicant. For that reason, we encourage you to initiate contact as early as possible in the process of developing your proposal.

Q: Can freshwater catfish proposals be considered

A: Yes, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities.

Q: Can we submit two independent proposals?

A: Yes, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities.

Q: do you need to provide match commitment during LOI submission?

A: No, those details can wait for the full proposal submission.

Q: Can a Principal Investigator work for another company 50% of the time?

A: Yes, you are submitting for what is needed

Q: Who is the best person to contact for to initiate a relationship for a Sea Grant Program?

A: Start by contacting the Sea Grant program that's closest to the area in which you intend to focus your project. If they are unable to partner with you, you can reach out to us at the National Sea Grant Office for assistance with identifying another program to partner with. Please be aware that there is no guarantee that a suitable program will be available to partner with every interested applicant. For that reason, we encourage you to initiate contact as early as possible in the process of developing your proposal.

Q: Is the $250,000 for all three years or per year?

A: For all three years.

Q: Does the point of contact on the notice to submit need to be a Sea Grant personnel?

A: No

Q: Should we keep an eye out for other Sea Grant funding opportunities this February?

A: No, not this February. We anticipate that the next funding opportunity won't be announced until mid-Summer 2020.

Q: Are we allowed to use the award money to acquire capital needed to conduct the research? Would our company own the capital, or would it be shared ownership with Sea Grant?

A: It depends, but you should consult this section of 2CFR 200 for guidance. If the capital you want to purchase is within the "special equipment" category that would be allowable, then you would have to adhere to the "equipment" rules found here.

Q: Are we limited on the number of proposals with which we participate?

A: No

Q: 50% Match can be difficult to obtain. Show can this be reached?

A: We realize this is a challenge for some applicants, however it is required by law as part of the language authorizing the Sea Grant program from Congress. Work with your Partner programs to help identify possible sources and methods for match funding.

Q: Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs) affect aquaculture species. If a project was designed to determine the economic impact to aquaculture, is it in your purview?

A: Yes, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities.

Q: So, will be able to download the presentation slides from your website?

A: Yes, they will be posted to https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Funding under the listing for this NOFO.

Q: Is there a limit on the number of proposals that will be accepted from each Sea Grant office?

A: No, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities, programs can choose to accept as many as the like to submit to the competition. Be aware, however, that Programs do have discretion to refuse proposals if they do not have the capacity or relevant expertise required to participate. Your best bet is to start communicating with programs as early as possible in increase the likelihood that you'll find one willing and able to partner with you.

Q: Is Sea Grant required to be the PI on the project?

A: No

Q: How does Sea Grant feel about the inclusion of catfish in a multi-species study?

A: Fine, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities.

Q: Are any proposed projects too small?

A: There is a funding "floor" of $10,000. When funds requested fall below a certain amount, it's no longer worth the administrative burden of the state programs to take on.

Q: Does the director need to be the nominal PI on the grant? Are these expected to be independent awards or part of the Sea Grant Omnibuses?
A: No, the director does not need to be the PI on the grant. These are independent awards, but if the timeline of an award justifies the extension of a program's Omnibus, they can work with the National Office to make that happen.

Q: Is there a specific definition of Multi-partner effort? For example if there are two partners on a project would it be considered "Multi-partner", does one of the partner have to be industry, etc.

A: Sea Grant, plus additional partners for the multi-partner funding level.

Q: I assume catfish economics proposals will be reviewed

A: Yes, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities.

Q: Could a proposal on "conducting economic analyses to inform, lenders, investors, resource managers and regulators" focus on 2-3 business aspects that are relevant for many types of marine aquaculture businesses, such as economics of specific inputs into aquaculture operations? Or do priorities really want econ analysis for an entire business?

A: Yes that would be acceptable, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities.

Q: Do CVs have to adhere to a specific format?

A: No, as long as they adhere to the required page limit described in the NOFO.

Q: If 2 separate Sea Grant programs submit a proposal, does that count as multi-partner?

A: Yes, but including outside stakeholders is very strongly encouraged.

Q: If two research teams that submit notice under the $250K category start talking and realize that it would make more sense to submit under the $1 million multi-partner category, can they merge and transfer to the $1 million category?

A: Yes, that kind of teaming is encouraged. Additionally, if we at the National Office identify teams intending to submit who might form a strong collaboration, we may put them in touch with one another and ask that they consider consolidating their submission.

Q: I'm sorry, did you say freshwater aquaponics only?

A: No only that freshwater aquaponics may be, as long as the work proposed meets the published

program priorities.

Q: Is there an expected minimum % of total budget for any extension portion of these projects?

A: No, only that the proposed budget must sufficient to fund the extension work proposed AND that the program you are partnering with can commit their available extension resources to the project. If not, the proposed budget must be sufficient to hire additional extension staff.

Q: Given that you said freshwater aquaponics is eligible, please clarify what types of freshwater aquaculture are allowed (assuming proposal meets program priorities).

A: There are no restrictions on type, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities.

Q: Thanks, Kola. Sea Grant programs really need to know what we can and can't do in terms of admin (i.e. timelines and other processes)

A: Please see the answer above on this topic. If programs have more specific questions, they should contact the National Office for clarification.

Q: Does National Sea Grant have an official definition of Aquaculture to determine eligibility?

A: No, but the standard definition is the rearing of aquatic animals or the cultivation of aquatic plant for the production of food or other products.

Q: Can you submit a full proposal without submitting a letter of intent?

A: No

Q: Does the local Sea Grant director need to be listed as PI?

A: No

Q: Who will submit the final proposal on grant.gov? Is it the PI institutions or the concerned local Sea Grant office?

A: The proposal must be submitted by the partnering Sea Grant program.

Q: Would a letter of recommendation from the Sea Grant director be advisable?

A: Letters of recommendation are always well received by review panels

Q: If the local Sea Grant program does not choose to partner on a proposal, will that make it not eligible?

A: No, applicants can work with any Sea Grant program. If they need assistance finding a suitable and willing program to partner with, they can contact the National Office for assistance.

Q: do you need to provide match commitment with a Notice to Submit?

A: No

Q: Can we ask for funding to support new extension staff or only to support existing?

A: Yes

Q: Can Co-PIs be added between the notice deadline and the full proposal as the proposal is being developed prior to the full proposal deadline?

A: Yes

Q: How many co-PIs are allowed in one proposal?

A: We don't set a limit on co-PIs.

Q: Does a Sea Grant staff person have to be listed on the proposal (as PI, coPI, AI or other)…can it be wholly completed by an outside individual or organization?

A: While it would be unusual for no one from the Sea Grant program to be listed as a participant on the proposal, it is not required, as long as the program is willing to submit the proposal as written.

Q: Are US affiliated Pacific islands eligible to submit to this opportunity?

A: Yes, as long as they partner with and submit through a Sea Grant program

Q: $250,000 is the floor limit for the grant?

A: This is an error in grants.gov and is being corrected.

Q: Could you put in a proposal that would allow you to investigate a hypothesis in the first year that may encourage us to go on to conduct research in years 2 and 3?

A: Yes, as long as the work proposed meets the published program priorities.

Q: We are a for profit company do we have to apply through a University or other NGO? Or can we apply directly?

A: All submissions MUST be made in partnership with a Sea Grant program. If you need assistance identifying a suitable program to potentially partner with, please contact us at the National Sea Grant Office. It is also worth mentioning that all work funded through this competition will be made available to the public. If you have any concerns about protecting intellectual property, please contact us with specific concerns and we will help you determine whether or not this competition is appropriate for your needs.

Q: Can graduate students submit a proposal in partnership and through a Sea Grant program?

A: Yes

Q: If a proposal involves two state Sea Grant programs, do we have freedom to decide which state Sea Grant submits it?

A: Yes

Q: Does it have to be a UNIVERSITY Sea Grant program or can it be any Sea gGant program, if we are a for profit company?

A: Any Sea Grant program is fine, but please see the answer above regarding intellectual property considerations.

Q: In the intro of the NOFO you state: "Proposals must also include funding (Federal or match) for Sea Grant extension personnel as collaborators. Industry stakeholder participation/involvement in projects is strongly encouraged." Does this mean you MUST include a Sea Grant extension personnel?

A: No, only that if extension personnel are included in the proposal, they must be adequately funded in the proposed budget.

Q: Can a Sea Grant program refuse a partnership, do we need to work with anyone / everyone who submits to us?

A: Yes, Sea Grant programs can accept or decline partnerships at their discretion. For example, a Program could decline a partnership if a proposal does not match well with a program's capabilities or if a program is already fully committed to as many projects as they can manage. Programs should feel free to direct interested applicants to other programs or to the National Office.

Q: Is there any Grant tutorials or free help that you all recommend?

A: Yes, please visit the following website for guidance:
Sea Grant Forms (90-2, 90-4, Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire)
https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation

Sea Grant Application Guidance
https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf

2 CFR 200 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl

Q: Would it be possible for an existing private aquaculture farm to submit a proposal to implement BMP, and to further assess the economic and market needs of the species grown at the farm?

A: Yes, as long as the proposal is written in a way that reviewers can determine that the work aligns with the program priorities.

Q: Does the project length have to extend to the full 3 years, or can the length be shorter, say one or two years?

A: No, 3 years is only the maximum duration. Projects can be shorter.

Q: Could you please repeat what day and time in Aquaculture America - Honolulu to discuss about this opportunity?

A: Tuesday afternoon 1:30 pm local time, mostly like rm. 307 and all day Wednesday

Q: Where will this be posted?

A: A recording of the webinar will be available on the Sea Grant webinar channel at [this link.](#) The slides will be posted to https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Funding under the listing for this NOFO.