Special Projects Competition
FY2023 Northeast American Lobster
Regional Extension Program

SPECIAL PROJECTS "C" ANNOUNCEMENT

Competition:

FY2023 Northeast American Lobster Regional Extension Program

Closing Dates and Deadlines:

December 1, 2022

Eligible Sea Grant Programs:

This competition is open only to the following programs in the northeast region - Maine Sea Grant, New Hampshire Sea Grant, MIT Sea Grant, Woods Hole Sea Grant, Connecticut Sea Grant, Rhode Island Sea Grant and New York Sea Grant.

Award Time Frame:

The proposed start date should be no earlier than 04/01/2023, with projects to be completed no later than 3 years after the project start date. Additionally, project end dates may be no later than 12/31/2026.

Funding Availability:

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates that up to $850,000 in federal funds will be available to individual Sea Grant programs in order to support a Northeast American Lobster Regional Extension Program.

Each award will be no greater than $850,000. Applications require the standard 50% non-federal match for Sea Grant projects.

Project Description:

The American Lobster fishery and the communities that rely on this valuable resource are facing unprecedented challenges. The rapid warming in the Gulf of Maine and recent regulatory changes modifying the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (FR–210827–0171) present significant

challenges that threaten the iconic fishery's economic and ecological vitality. In 2019, a Regional Lobster Extension Program was established to increase the American lobster industry's resilience to the biological, economic, and social impacts of ecosystem change, in parallel with the National Sea Grant American Lobster Research Program. This announcement seeks proposals to continue a regional lobster extension program in the region from 2023 through 2026.

A Gulf of Maine-focused, but regionally-coordinated American lobster extension program, ensures that industry and management stakeholders across the northeast region benefit from the research conducted to support American lobster (*Homarus americanus*) and its fishery. This includes research carried out through the National Sea Grant American Lobster Research Program, state Sea Grant projects and other pertinent research, as well as the lessons learned and best practices developed to benefit the sustainability of the fishery and its associated communities and economies.

Given the maturity of the current regional extension program, applications should highlight how the proposed scope of work will build on previous program success and address emerging priorities impacting American Lobster fishing communities in the region. Applications to this FY2023 Northeast American Lobster Regional Extension Program competition should address the following objectives:

(1) Build bridges among industry, resource managers, and researchers to address challenges facing the industry and implement practical solutions to address these challenges

(2) Ensure research results are communicated to end-users (resource managers, commercial lobster industry, NGOs, universities, and NOAA), the northeast Sea Grant programs and others economically and ecologically impacted by the status of the lobster fishery.

(3) Ensure technical extension expertise to facilitate engagement with and increase understanding of stakeholder needs regarding assistance with a changing environment and gear adaptation alternatives

(4) Respond to emerging needs impacting the economic and ecological vitality of the lobster fishery

The Sea Grant Northeast Regional Lobster Extension Program should look to support and coordinate with existing efforts while also seeking new partnerships that continue supporting a framework that facilitates regional coordination among its stakeholders. It is expected that applications will identify shared and complementary goals and strategies to leverage resources across the region and enable coordination among existing efforts. For example, the program should add value to and support relationships with related efforts among state and federal agency partners that advance the above objectives. In order to enhance relevancy, visibility, and use of lobster-funded research, the regional extension program should continue to host twice-yearly meetings with American Lobster Research Program PIs to discuss research progress, emerging issues, and extension opportunities.

It is anticipated that the extension component of this initiative will be awarded as a cooperative agreement, due to the substantial involvement of NOAA in the execution of the project. The nature of

the substantial NOAA involvement includes staff of the Northeast American Lobster Regional Extension Program coordinating and communicating with the NSGO northeast regional lead regarding program activities as part of the National Sea Grant American Lobster Initiative. This Initiative has two parts, the American Lobster Research Program, administered by the National Sea Grant Office, and the Northeast American Lobster Regional Extension Program, administered at the state Sea Grant program level.

<u>**Application Requirements:**</u>

Consult the NOFO **NOAA-OAR-SG-2023-2007550**, available at Grants.gov, for eligible applicants, required elements of the application, how to submit, general programmatic priorities and selection factors, and other necessary information. Submit your application to **SPECIAL PROJECTS "C"** under this opportunity in grants.gov.

Discrepancies between this special project announcement and the NOFO may exist. Specific application details and instructions outlined in this special project announcement take precedence over guidelines in the NOFO.

Applications <u>must</u> include the following elements. Failure to adhere to these provisions may result in a delay in award processing or rejection of the application, based on the extent of the noncompliance.

1. **Project Narrative -** The Project Narrative <u>must</u> include the following elements:
   a. **Project Description.** The total number of pages in the project description can be up to fifteen (15). Applicants do not need to use the entire 15-page maximum. Depending on the complexity of the proposed activities, a shorter description may suffice. Any works cited, CVs, letters of support, and current and pending support sections included do not contribute to the suggested page limit.
      i. Cover page (not included in the page count)
         ● Project title and names, titles, affiliations, and contact information (email and phone) of co-PIs.
         ● Budget overview - Total cost and annual breakdown of requested funding, including by partner if appropriate.
      ii. Project Abstract (½ page maximum; not included in the page count)
      iii. Project background
         ● Explain the specific problem(s) this project seeks to address and justify its importance.
      iv. Project objectives
         ● Provide a list of clearly defined objectives. For each objective, provide a concise statement explaining how it is aligned with the goals and priorities of this funding opportunity.
      v. Project details
         ● Provide an explanation of the methods you will use to address your project objectives.
      vi. Anticipated outcomes and results
         ● What are the expected outcomes and results related to the creation of

scientific knowledge?
- What are the expected outcomes and results related to the creation of data products, tools, technologies, and management practices?

vii. Project timeline
- Provide a timeline for accomplishing the proposed work covering the entire duration of the project. Include approximate dates for key milestones related to the proposed work, including the accomplishment of anticipated outcomes and release of results.
- Applicants submitting proposals that involve the use of human test subjects should state so clearly in their application. These proposed research activities require approval of the applicant's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before such research can proceed. Applicants are responsible for obtaining IRB approval from their institution and providing that documentation to NOAA once the approval is obtained and prior to any NOAA-funded human subject testing. Proposals intending to use human test subjects should specify clearly in the timeline approximately when IRB approval will be obtained and when the testing is expected to occur.

viii. Outreach and engagement plan
- Provide a cohesive strategy to ensure that users across the greater geographic region, beyond those who actively participate in the proposed work, will learn about the project's outcomes.

ix. Diversity statement
- In this section, describe how well the proposed activity broadens the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, geography, etc.) and how these groups are given a voice in the community of practice. Examples could include (but are not limited to) the full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in conducting this work or benefitting from its outcomes.
- Applicants are encouraged to review the resources and best practices compiled by NSGO related to diversity, equity and inclusion: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation/Network-Visioning/DiversityInclusion

x. Works cited (does not count towards page limit)
- All in-text citations should be listed here.

xi. Curriculum vitae (CV) for each PI (does not count towards page limit)
- Each person's CV should not be longer than 2 pages. Excess pages will not be included in the review.

xii. Letters of support (optional, if included does not count towards page limit)

xiii. Current and pending support (if applicable, does not count towards page limit)

b. Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)
    i. Applicants **must** ensure that the questionnaire is completed in full and includes detailed information regarding project location, methodology, and permits. Copies of all permits required for project activities should be included with application materials. If a permit is pending or planned, please provide this information.
    i. A separate questionnaire must be completed for each relevant action/project in the proposal.
    ii. The questionnaire can be found [here](#).
    iii. Guidance on how to complete the questionnaire, including how to describe work that will not involve any environmental impact, can be found [here](#). Examples of questionnaires can be found [here](#).*

c. Data Management Plan
    i. All applications **must** include a Data Management Plan that is compliant with NOAA's [Public Access to Research Results](#) Plan. The Data Management Plan should not exceed 2 pages. The Data Management Plan should include descriptions of the types of metadata and data expected to be created during the course of the project, plans for disseminating the metadata and data to the broader community, and plans for long-term archiving of the metadata and data.
    ii. If proposed activities will not generate any environmental data, such as the scoping activities and research competition, please include the following statement at the end of your proposal: "Because this project will not generate environmental data, a Data Management Plan is not required."

d. **Demographics Information:**

    NOAA will not provide collected demographics information to reviewers for any purpose, including evaluation, and will not consider demographics information during selection.

    i. Please provide the following anonymous information for all named collaborators on your proposal. (2022, OMB approved for PRA under DOC generic clearance information collections, 0690-0030 and 0690-0035) You may use [this optional form](#) for collecting the information.
    ii. Do you or your organization identify with any of the following groups that the federal government, in Executive Order 13985, has identified as underserved? Check all that apply.
        a) Black
        b) Latino
        c) Indigenous and/or Native American
        d) Asian American
        e) Pacific Islander
        f) Other person of color
        g) Members of religious minorities
        h) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons
        i) Persons with disabilities
        j) Persons who live in rural areas
        k) Persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality

l) No, I do not identify with any of these groups

2. **Budget Narrative and Justification.** *The Budget Narrative <u>must</u> include the following documents (Sea Grant 90-4 Forms and Budget Justification) in that order and format. Additional budget narrative guidance can be found [here](#).*
   a. Sea Grant 90-4 Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362) - Sea Grant 90-4 Forms are required to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the proposal. A completed Sea Grant 90-4 Form should be completed for each project year as well as a total budget for the entire project duration (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Years 1-3). Guidance on filling out these forms is located in the [Sea Grant General Application Guide](#).
   b. Budget Justification - For each year of the project, a Budget Justification is required. Each Budget Justification should explain the budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. Each Budget Justification should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 Form, as appropriate. Guidance on completing the Budget Justification is located in the [Sea Grant General Application Guide](#).

3. **Overall Application.** *In addition to the forms required above, standard Federal Forms and Assurances are required for the overall application and can be found with the application package on Grants.gov or on the Sea Grant website (links found below). These include:*
   a. SF-424 Form ([Grants.gov](#), OMB Control No. 4040-0004)
      i. This form, titled "Application for Federal Assistance," **must** identify the entire funding period, as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant and the non-federal matching fund amount. The form must be completed with the institution's accurate EIN and DUNS and Point of Contact, and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.
   b. SF-424A Form ([Grants.gov](#), OMB Control No. 4040-0006)
      i. This form, titled "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs," should describe the entire funding period in federal and non-federal dollars, for the entire application. Fill out Section B of this SF-424A form to show the overall budget breakdown by object class by year. Each federal and match year should have its own column. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B should be used (see below).
   c. Additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B (https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation, OMB Control No. 4060-0006)
      i. The SF-424A Form described above only includes space to report the applicant's yearly federal and non-federal dollars over two years. If the application covers more than two years of federal and non-federal dollars, then please complete the Additional SF-424A, Extra Section B to report the yearly non-federal matching fund budget of the grant. Guidance on filling out the form is located in the Sea Grant [How to Use Form "424A Extra Section B" Document](#).
      This form is an outlier and will be added to the "Budget Narrative Attachment" section on Grants.gov, as described in Section IV. C. 2 of the NOFO.
   d. SF-424B Assurances ([Grants.gov](#), OMB Control No. 4040-0007)
      i. The form, titled "Assurances – Non-Construction Programs," should be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.

      e. CD-511 (Grants.gov, US Department of Commerce)
         i. The form, titled "Certification Regarding Lobbying," should be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee. In some instances, the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form may also be required. See the instructions on the CD-511 for further information.
      f. SF-LLL (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046) if applicable
         i. The form, titled "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," should be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee, if appropriate.

Application Evaluation Criteria:

The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals. Note that the weights of each criteria are different from the Evaluation Criteria laid out in the Special Projects NOFO announcement. Proposals submitted to this competition will be evaluated by at least three independent written reviews:

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals (25%). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.

2. Technical/scientific merit (25%). This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For the Northeast American Lobster Regional Extension Program competition this includes the incorporation of shared and/or complementary goals and objectives, as applicable.

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (20%). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the Northeast American Lobster Regional Extension Program competition this also includes the provision for gear adaptation expertise.

4. Project costs (10%). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. For the Northeast American Lobster Regional Extension Program competition this includes the extent to which resources necessary to support regional-scale engagement with stakeholders are considered.

5. Outreach and Education, including efforts to ensure inclusive and equitable engagement (20%). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For the Northeast American Lobster Regional Extension Program competition, this includes the extent to which resources necessary to support regional-scale outreach and communication across research teams and with communities are considered.

Additionally, projects will be recommended for funding only if they have a complete application package and if funds are available.

Other Information:

Reporting:
This will be a stand-alone (i.e., non-omnibus) award for which annual progress reporting will be required.

Once applications have been recommended for funding, applicants must submit a Sea Grant 90-2 Project Summary Form (for each project within the application) through the 90-2 Webform portal. This is due within 30 calendar days after the applicant has been notified via email that their application has been awarded. A detailed step-by-step guide for completing the web-based 90-2 Form is available on Inside Sea Grant. Once the project is approved and funded, that information will be publicly available and searchable on the National Sea Grant College Program public website.

Recipients are required to use the National Sea Grant Planning Implementation and Evaluation Reporting (PIER) project database to communicate with the National Sea Grant Office on activities relating to this award. This includes tracking progress and impacts, in addition to performance metrics.

All public-facing products produced with funding from the award(s)/project(s) must ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Agency Contacts:
Questions about this competition or the Special Projects Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) may be sent to Alison.Krepp@noaa.gov. Please specify that your question is related to the Northeast American Lobster Regional Extension Program Competition in the subject line.

More information can also be found in the "Frequently Asked Questions" located at: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Funding-Opportunities. This document will be continually updated with questions received that are of general interest to prospective applicants.

Fillable versions of required Sea Grant forms can be found here: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation

Guidance for completing these forms is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf