FLORIDA SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM

FY 2024-2025 Biennial Applied Science Competition

Request for Proposals

Deadline for LOI: February 17, 2023
(3:00 PM ET)

Deadline for Full Proposals: June 2, 2023
(3:00 PM ET)

Award Period: February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2026

This document is available online:
https://www.flseagrant.org/funded-research/#FSGBiennialRFP

Science Serving Florida's Coast

Florida Sea Grant is a university-based program that supports science, education and extension to enhance coastal resources and generate economic opportunities and benefits for the people of Florida. We are a partnership between the State University System of Florida, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Florida's county governments.

This biennial research competition is designed to help Florida Sea Grant (FSG) support its applied research and educational responsibilities drawing from fields related to ocean and coastal resources. Given the broad scope of the programmatic focus areas outlined in FSG's Strategic Plan, research can span a wide range of disciplines (e.g., natural or social sciences, engineering, planning and design, science communication, policy and legal analysis, architecture, business, education, arts and humanities, etc.).

An important aspect is that projects be developed and implemented in partnership with an end-user (i.e., government agency, private sector business/industry, non-governmental/non-profit organization) who will apply the results in a manner that generates tangible economic, societal and/or environmental benefits. Cooperation with a FSG Extension agent to support outreach is encouraged where feasible and logical for a particular project, especially in conjunction with end-user engagement.

Importantly, the National Sea Grant College Program champions diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) by recruiting, retaining, and preparing a diverse workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the diverse populations of coastal communities. In support of these principles, FSG is committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication, and education programs that serve all people regardless of backgrounds, circumstances, needs, and perspectives. Proposals that support or include diverse participants with regards to age, race, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, education levels, job classifications, socioeconomic status are, therefore, encouraged.

A. TIMELINE FOR THE COMPETITION

- Announcement release date – January, 2023
- Letters of Intent (LOI) due by 3 PM ET – February 17, 2023
- Investigators notified of LOI review results and reviewer feedback – April 21, 2023
- Investigators notify FSG with Intention to submit Full Proposals by 3 PM ET – May 1, 2023
- Full Proposals due by 3 PM ET – June 2, 2023
- Notice of competition results and reviewer feedback – August, 2023
- Award period begins – February 2024 (or commensurate with federal funding appropriations)

B. CONTACTS

- Fiscal/budget questions: Rod Venegas, rodvenegas@ufl.edu (352-392-5870)
- Proposal preparation questions: Dr. Charles Sidman, csidman@ufl.edu (352-392-5870)
- eSeaGrant submission questions: Dr. Nancy Montes, nancymontes@ufl.edu (352-392-5870)

C. ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Project investigators (PIs) must be affiliated with universities, agencies, local governments, non-profits or private corporations that are located in Florida. Co-PI's and associate investigators may be from outside of Florida. Investigators may participate as PI on just one proposal.

To have your LOI and Full Proposal considered in the review process, all of the following criteria must be met, with no exceptions:

1. LOI's and Full Proposals must adhere to the deadlines for submission. Late submissions, for any reason, will be rejected and full proposals will only be accepted from PI's who submit a LOI.

2. The topic of the proposed project must align with a focus area, associated goal and relevant outcomes identified in Florida Sea Grant's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

3. LOI's and Full Proposals must identify end-users and describe anticipated project application, results and benefits. In addition, a description of how the project addresses DEIJA must be included.

4. All required information for the LOI's and Full Proposals must be submitted using the eSeaGrant system.

D. SIZE OF AWARDS

The maximum two-year award that Florida Sea Grant will provide is $200,000 (i.e., a maximum of $100,000 in each budget year), inclusive of indirect costs (IDC) applicable to the submitting entity/institution.

For each Sea Grant dollar, a 50% matching funding commitment is required for the amount requested (i.e., if you request $200,000 of federal dollars, you must provide at least $100,000 of non-federal match). In addition, the minimum match requirement must be made in each year (i.e., if you request $100,000 in year 1 and $50,000 in year 2, you must match with $50,000 in year 1 and $25,000 in year 2). Externally sponsored projects may not serve as match.

Florida Sea Grant is hosted by the University of Florida (UF), therefore, all awards to non-UF entities are subject to IDC as a sub-award to another institution (e.g., current policy is 52.5% on the first $25,000 in direct expenses). Under the current policy, the budgets of non-UF PIs are capped at $186,875 inclusive of the submitting organizations own IDC; non-UF PIs should check with FSG to determine the applicable rate before final submission.

Florida Sea Grant typically receives about 70 LOIs, encourages 20 full proposals, and funds 7-8 projects.

E. PROJECT PRIORITIES

Proposals must address at least one goal and supporting outcome associated with a focus area identified in the Florida Sea Grant FY 2024-2027 Strategic Plan: https://www.flseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Florida-Sea-Grant-College-Program-2024-2027-Strategic-Plan-12-21-22.pdf

Florida Sea Grant seeks projects that both address issues identified in the Strategic Plan and that complement previously funded and ongoing projects and activity. Summaries of recently funded research are available at: https://www.flseagrant.org/funded-research/

Projects that rank high in scientific/technical merit, potential for impact, and support diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and accessibility (DEIJA), will be prioritized. DEIJA can be addressed by (a) engaging researchers or participants from underserved universities and/or, (b) supporting projects oriented towards helping underserved populations or communities. Refer to the National Sea Grant Program's statement: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Network%20Visioing/DEI_Vision_Final_10122018.pdf.

It is essential that projects engage end-users and yield tangible benefits that are applied, measured and/or valued. Examples of desired outcomes to be measured include:

- Acres of habitats protected, restored, or enhanced.
- Products created (i.e., tools, technology, information) and used in decision-making such as:
  - Communities adopt/implement hazard resiliency practices to prepare for and respond to/ minimize coastal hazardous events.
  - Communities adopt/implement sustainable economic and environmental development practices and policies.
  - Fishermen, seafood processing or aquaculture industry personnel modify their practices using knowledge gained in fisheries sustainability and seafood safety.
  - Resource managers use ecosystem-based approaches in the management of land, water, and living resources.
- Products created and used to advance environmental literacy and workforce development (e.g., people engaged in informal education programs).
- Economic benefits resulting from the project (i.e., project generated economic impacts and sustained jobs and businesses, increased financial viability through cost savings and/or higher revenues, or economic value).

Investigators are encouraged to include the measurement of benefits as a project objective and methodological component.

F. LETTERS OF INTENT (LOI) AND FULL PROPOSALS

All requested information detailed below is to be submitted directly through the eSeaGrant website either by completing forms, pasting text, or uploading PDFs. Complete LOIs include information in sections 1 through 6. Complete Full Proposals contain information in sections 1 through 14. At the full proposal stage, all LOI information can be updated except the PI.

Proposal Sections to be entered into eSeaGrant Forms:

1. **TITLE:** Be descriptive yet concise (e.g., 25 words or less).

2. **PRIMARY FOCUS AREA AND GOAL:** Identify the primary focus area and goal to be addressed by the proposal from Florida Sea Grant's FY 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

3. **INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION:** Provide the name, title, institution (affiliation), and email for the PI and that of all co-PIs and associate investigators. End-users/partners can also serve as PIs. The names of all but the PI can be changed for the full submission.

    The National Sea Grant Office has requested additional demographic information. This information is to be provided by each investigator at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdIjYevtFZD2cFT5e_6nsd_YNNbgOuu-i7UdcPVIDN5VndaVg/viewform
    The only identifiers associated with this information are the state program and competition, in this case "FY 2024-2025 Biennial Applied Science Competition due 06/02/2023". As such, the information cannot be linked to proposals for consideration in the review process.

    PIs will be asked to attest to acknowledging this form and sharing with all investigators.

4. **TOTAL FEDERAL BUDGET REQUEST (FY2024-2025)**: Not to exceed $100,000 per year ($200,000 maximum), which requires a minimum 50% match of non-federal dollars (i.e., "hard" or "in-kind" support). Please round to the nearest $1000 for the LOI. Refer to section 10 BUDGET for eligible expenses and guidance on indirect costs.

   YEAR 1 -- SEA GRANT: $_____, MATCH: $ _____.
   YEAR 2 -- SEA GRANT: $_____, MATCH: $ _____.

5. **PARTICIPANTS AND CO-SPONSORS:** Identify the specific technical or lay interests (e.g., agency, company, and/or organization) that will collaborate in the project. These should be only those entities that will substantially participate in the project and provide letters of support documenting their role and potentially match support for the Full Proposal.

6. **LOI NARRATIVE:** Summarize the proposed project in up to 1,000 words. The summary should provide a brief description of Full Proposal sections 7.2 through 7.5 and contain enough information for reviewers to assess the degree to which the project addresses the FSGs strategic plan priorities and goals and has a high likelihood of delivering the proposed outcomes and measurable benefits.

NOTE: Sections 7-14 below are required additional materials for Full Proposals only.

7. **PROJECT NARRATIVE**: Using the appropriate eSeaGrant form, combine and upload sections 7.1 to 7.6 as a single PDF. The project narrative must not exceed 12 pages (single spaced, 11-point font) for the full proposal. Do not put substantive information in the margins; if desired, the margins can contain page numbers, PI last name and a short title.

   7.1 ABSTRACT: In approximately 250 words describe the overall project, including its rationale, proposed response, measurable outcomes, the role of partners, and plans to advance DEIJA.

   7.2 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE: Using quantitative information, describe the problem or opportunity at hand. This section should document the magnitude of the situation, and the relevance of the issue or problem to Florida, and how it will address FSG's focus areas and goals. Reference pertinent literature.

   7.3 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES: In one sentence, concisely state the overall goal of the proposed project. Follow the goal with the list of objectives to be addressed. Objectives should be realistic for a two-year project period that includes data collection, analysis, end-user application/outreach, and quantification/ evaluation of benefits.

   7.4 PROJECT DESIGN: Describe the overall project design and the methods to be applied. Describe the methodology related to data collection, analysis, end-user application and outreach, and quantification/evaluation of benefits. Consider providing a table or list of key project activities and milestones, which could include communications events, product development and benefits evaluation.

   7.5 ADVANCING DEIJA: Describe how the project will support and advance the principles and objectives of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and/or accessibility (DEIJA).

   7.6 LITERATURE CITED: Provide references using any standard literature review format.

8. **LETTERS OF SUPPORT:** Combine and upload any letters of support from partners and/or end users as a single PDF file. Letters should describe the nature of the collaboration and their roles and responsibilities in project implementation and evaluation.

9. **INVESTIGATOR BIOGRAPHICAL DATA:** A one-page biographical data form must be downloaded from the eSeaGrant site and completed for each investigator (PI, co-PIs, and associate investigators). The form includes professional positions from current to past, education from most recent to past, and other information you consider relevant to defining a level of expertise that is aligned with the project being proposed.

10. **BUDGET (90-4 forms):** These forms must be completed in the eSeaGrant application submittal portal. Each budget item must include a justification for EACH expenditure category. The justification can be entered in a text box associated with the budget item on the form. Eligible budget items for this federally funded opportunity include but are not limited to salary and fringe; graduate stipend, tuition, fees, and health insurance; travel; data sharing expenses; page charges for publications; workshop expenses (including participant support); materials and supplies; and indirect costs (IDC) using the applicable rate of the submitting institution.

    All awards to non-UF institutions are subject to UF IDC as a sub-award to another institution; as such, the first $25,000 is subject to the on-campus research rate, which is currently 52.5% or $13,125. Therefore, the budgets of non-UF PIs are capped at $186,875 inclusive of the submitting organizations own IDC rates.

11. **LETTER OF INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL/COMMITMENT:** UF requires sub-awardees to upload a letter of commitment signed by an Authorized Fiscal Authority (e.g., representative from the office of research or sponsored programs). There is no template for this letter. UF-based researchers will satisfy this requirement using UF's UFIRST system.

12. **DATA SHARING POLICY ATTESTATION:** Once a project is complete, all data collected or created with funding from NOAA must be made visible, accessible, independently understandable to general users, free of charge (or at minimal cost), and in a timely manner. This includes physical, chemical and biological data from all experiments or surveys, including for model calibration and verification. The data portal must also have documented longevity, and there must be both project data and metadata for prospective users. Information about the NOAA data sharing plan requirement can be found at: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation

    The PI must attest to knowing and understanding the policy and being willing to, upon notification of award, provide a statement explaining how the environmental data will be developed, described and archived for public access.

    Note: If funds will be required, this may be included in the budget and the budget justification should identify and explain this expense.

13. **ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE ATTESTATION:** If funded, an Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (NEPA) must be answered to ensure that the project complies with established federal policies. The NEPA compliance form can be found at the following link: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation

The PI must attest to knowing and understanding the policy and being willing to, upon notification of funding award, provide the NEPA and copies of any required permits, such as institutional IRB/IACUC authorizations. Funding will not be released, and work cannot begin on associated components of the project until these conditions are met.

14. **ETHICAL CONDUCT ATTESTATION:** The PI must attest to acknowledgement of and adherence to applicable institutional codes of conduct. Prompt notification to FSG (i.e., within 10 days of the determination of a finding) must be made should a team member be the subject of or perpetrate an ethical violation, which can take the form of harassment, assault, sexual misconduct or discriminatory behavior. Ethical violations on the part of project investigators can result in the termination of the award.

G. REVIEW PROCESS, EVALUATION AND PROJECT SELECTION

Formal reviews of proposals are the core of FSG's competitive processes. All reviewers will have subject matter expertise and collectively will provide substantial external and diverse input in the evaluation of potential projects. In advance of reviews, all reviewers will be provided with access to resources to promote fair and unbiased assessments of the proposed projects and the research teams. Reviewers will also attest to being free of any conflict of interest with respect to the applications they evaluate and discuss.

At the LOI stage, a relevancy review will be conducted by program staff, extension faculty, and advisory council members. Reviewers will evaluate proposals based on the five criteria outlined in Components 1 and 2 below and identify the top LOIs that will be encouraged for development into Full Proposals.

Each Full Proposal will also receive at least three written peer reviews from individuals with scientific expertise and that collectively represent significant external/diverse perspectives. A Technical Review Panel (TRP) comprised of a subset of peer reviewers will then be assembled to discuss, rate, and rank applications using the results from the reviews. The evaluation will consist of two components:

Component 1: Applicability, scientific merit, and end-user participation.

Applicability (30%) – The strength of the proposed project in addressing a compelling need, aligning with a FSG Focus Area, and supporting associated goal(s), and facilitating tangible outcome(s) through engagement with end users as prioritized in FSG's FY 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

Scientific merit (40%) – The degree to which the research is likely to provide a rigorous and scientifically-valid or new approach designed to address an identified issue. This includes experimental design, data analysis, modeling approaches, and other attributes of research methodology and/or outreach. The strength and past successes of the project team will also be considered.

End-user participation (30%) – The degree to which partners and end-users have been brought into the planning of the project, the execution of the project, and will apply and help evaluate the results during the course of the two-year project.

Proposals will be ranked and rated according to scores and comments as scientifically "fundable" or "not fundable." The proposals categorized as "fundable" in addressing all criteria in component 1 will be subject to a review of DEIJA and Impact in Component 2.

Component 2: DEIJA and Impact.

Fundable proposals will be evaluated as either low, medium, or high with respect to:

DEIJA – The degree to which the proposed project advances DEIJA. How is DEIJA being defined and addressed in the proposal? Will the proposal meaningfully foster new partners and advance DEIJA?

Impact – The degree to which the proposed project integrates measures and methods to quantify and/or value environmental, societal or economic benefits as project outcomes. How likely is it that the project will succeed? Are the outcomes likely to be sustained following the grant?

The Florida Sea Grant Director has final discretion to recommend applications for funding based on the reviews and discussions; administrative review; availability of funding; FSG's objectives, needs, and priorities; and the diversity and balance of the award portfolio. Applications recommended for funding will be included in a Letter of Intent to fund selected projects that will be submitted to the Federal Program Officer (FPO). PIs will be notified once the applications are approved for funding by the FPO.

H. SUBMITTING THE LOI AND FULL PROPOSAL

Proposals and supporting materials must be submitted through Florida Sea Grant's eSeaGrant system at https://eflseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu. New users to this system will need to first create an account and should do so early in the process to avoid potential problems and risk missing the deadline.

To establish login credentials:
1. Go to: https://eflseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu
2. Click the grey register button at the top right-hand corner of the window to create an account.
3. After you create an account, you will receive an email with login credentials. If you do not receive a "Welcome" email with login credentials, please contact Nancy Montes at nancymontes@ufl.edu
4. To change your password, click your name in the upper-right corner and select "My Profile."

Existing users can log in using their previously established username and password. If you have forgotten your password, use the "forgot password" feature to trigger a reset.

To start a LOI or proposal, or revisit/edit an existing LOI or proposal:
1. Click on "Funding Opportunities" on the banner head and/or on the left side of the screen.
2. Search for and click on the application labeled "FY2024-2025 Biennial Applied Science Competition – Letter of Intent" or "Full Proposal." Note that eSeaGrant forms use the term proposal even for the submission of letters of intent.
3. Upon entering eSeaGrant, a series of tabs are located on the left side of the screen. Each tab represents a section of the proposal and requires information be uploaded as PDF files or entered directly into a text box.

To discourage multiple submissions of the same proposal only the PI has access to the proposal forms in the eSeaGrant system. However, within the system the PI can grant access to others. Anyone desiring to work within eSeaGrant will need their own account and login, then the PI can invite them to edit the proposal.

Submission: You will have the opportunity to view the proposal before you submit. Carefully review all information and when satisfied, click on the SUBMIT button located on the right side of the window. Proposals are accessible for edit/review and resubmittal (as needed) up until the deadline.