

FY19 National Sea Grant Aquaculture Competitions March 4th Webinar - Questions and Answers

This is a collection of questions and answers from the March 4th informational webinar on the three open 2019 National Sea Grant Aquaculture Competitions:

Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research Needs in Aquaculture, FFO# NOAA-OAR-SG-2019-2005953

Letters of intent are due April 2, 2019, 5:00pm ET

Full proposals are due May 1, 2019, 5:00pm ET

Exploring New Aquaculture Opportunities, FFO# NOAA-OAR-SG-2019-2005960

Letters of intent are due March 26, 2019, 5:00pm ET

Full proposals are due April 24, 2019, 5:00pm ET

Advanced Aquaculture Collaborative Programs, FFO# NOAA-OAR-SG-2019-2005963

Letters of Intent are due April 15, 2019, 5:00pm ET

Full proposals are due May 15, 2019, 5:00pm ET

For additional questions about this competition, please visit our website at <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Funding> or contact the Sea Grant aquaculture team at oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov.

General

Q. Can I receive a copy of the slides or a recording of the webinar?

A. The webinar was not recorded. You can find the slides here: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Funding>

Q. The Social, Behavioral and Economic Research FFO says up to 3 years, and the power point says up to 2 years. Can you clarify?

A. The intent is to fund projects **up to two years** for this particular FFO. We are working to address this error in the FFO.

Q. Please explain what is a Sea Grant program.

A. Sea Grants is 33 university-based programs. To learn more, please visit: here: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/About>

Letters of Intent (LOI)

Q. Will all applicants who submit an LOI plan to submit a full proposal?

- A. An LOI is required to be submitted to be eligible for submission of a full proposal. Applicants that fail to provide a letter of intent on time will be ineligible to submit a full proposal.

Q. How will LOIs be reviewed? Will feedback be provided to the applicant?

- A. A response acknowledging receipt of the letter of intent will be provided. This information will help the NSGO gauge interest and topics that may be submitted, and will inform the identification of appropriate review panels. The LOI will not be reviewed for content, and no additional information specific to the proposal will be provided to the applicants. There is no approval, rejection or feedback process at this stage.

Q. Do LOIs for FFO #2 (New Opportunities) and FFO #3 (Advanced Collaboratives) have to be submitted from a Sea Grant program?

- A. Yes, Sea Grant programs are eligible applicants. For the 'Social, behavioral, economic research' FFO, the LOIs should come from PIs (whether SG program or other non-SG eligible applicant).

Q. After the LOI deadlines, will the NSGO follow up with each state's Sea Grant program to confirm how many and who submitted LOIs? To verify that we are aware of all of the submitted LOIs well in advance.

- A. No.

Q. The Social, Behavior and Economic Research Needs FFO states "Letters of Intent must be received by electronic mail (oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov). Should it be sent by the SG program or the PI?

- A. Either. This particular FFO is open to Sea Grant programs and other eligible parties as defined in the FFO. For the other two FFOs, they must be submitted by Sea Grant programs.

Q. When you were explaining the "New Opportunity" FFO, you started to list some ideas/topics. In the LOI, do we provide background/reference that this is actually a new opportunity and not previously researched? For example, there is no current publication already done on this research? Or to verify that there is no current foundation?

- A. The FFO includes requirements for an LOI. See the 'Required Elements' section under IV.B. It would be appropriate and encouraged to directly address how your proposal meets the FFO's program priorities in the LOI.

Submission: Eligibility, Process and Partners

Q. Are these FFOs to be developed in national territories of US?

- A. Activities to be undertaken under these FFOs are to be implemented within the United States, which includes U.S. territories.

Q. Can a proposal (#2 or #3) focus on land-based aquaculture using recirculating freshwater systems in coastal areas?

A. Yes

Q. Can a federal partner be a formal part of the proposal if no funds are requested?

A. Yes

Q. Please describe limitations of how a federal agency can participate as a partner in one of these three opportunities (NOS, NMS, etc.)

A. As described in the FFO section III.A.: “Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal scientists and other employees can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on applications. Federal labs and offices can also make available specialized expertise, facilities or equipment to applicants but cannot be compensated under this competition for their use, nor can the value of such assets be used as match.”.

Q. Could some portion of the funding be used to fund a graduate student?

A. Yes

Q. Are foreign collaborations allowed? Will funds be available for foreign nationals?

A. Yes, international partners may serve as co-PIs and receive compensation, as long as the work being conducted is directly related to an issue in U.S. waters. Any international travel must follow the terms of the Fly America Act.

Q. What happens if a group submits to the collaborative or high-risk FFOs and claims affiliation/connection with a Sea Grant program? Is there a confirmation step with the SG program?

A. This scenario is not possible because only Sea Grant programs are eligible applicants for these two FFOs.

Q. For FFO #2 (New Opportunities) and FFO #3 (Advanced Collaboratives), is a Sea Grant lead PI the SG director or must it be a non director?

A. There is no specification, as long as the proposal is submitted by a Sea Grant program.

Budget and Funding

Q. Would this funding be potentially used for salary to hire say a 'coordinator' to work on regional aquaculture issues?

A. Yes, it could be.

Q. Will these all be their own stand alone awards? Or amendments to the omnibus?

A. It is possible to do either, if it is being submitted from a Sea Grant program.

Q. Is capital funding for aquaculture or aquaponic system permissible.

A. Please review the FFOs to determine what is appropriate.

Q. As an industry stakeholder and frequent partner with researchers, we usually donate our facilities and labor. For this round, we hope to donate facilities and labor, and also ask our academic partner to build in some of our labor cost into the budget proposal. What are appropriate items that industry partners might request funding (within a partnered grant proposal).

A. Industry stakeholders can budget salary, supplies, electricity, etc. The primary limitation is that funding can not be used for major infrastructure (such as buildings). See FFO for details. Industry stakeholders cannot ask for profit (only true cost) in the FFO.

Q. Would repurposed storage containers be considered a building

A. Please contact the NSGO at oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov for questions on specific items.

Q. Is the match 50% of request? Or 50% of total program costs (i.e., 100% of request)?

A. The required match is 50% of federal dollars requested. For example, if you are requesting 1 million in federal funds, then you need to match 500k in non-federal funds. Overmatching in year one and undermatch in year two or three is acceptable as long as a cumulative 50% match is always maintained. The reverse (undermatch in year one, and overmatch in subsequent years) is not acceptable.

Q. The 'Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research Needs' FFO indicates that 250K total funds are available. Does this include match funds?

A. No. This is the amount of federal funds.

Q. Can you provide a link to more information about match and how it works?

A. Section III.B. describes 'Cost Sharing or Match Requirement' in each FFO. "Non-federal matching funds equal to at least 50 percent of the federal funding request must be provided unless a waiver justified by statute is granted. The cumulative match at the end of each year of the grant must not fall below 50 percent of the cumulative federal request up to that point. In-kind contributions directly supporting this Application may count towards this matching requirement. See the Sea Grant General Application Guide (<https://seagrants.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>) for more information.

Q. Can match include in-kind time by a commercial collaborator?

A. Yes

Q. Can you mention some examples that we can use as a match?

A. For this information, applicants need to consult the relevant university, state agency, tribal entity, etc. Industry partners often serve as effective partners for matching funds. In-kind contributions are acceptable for fulfilling the matching requirement as long as these are not federal funds and follow the rules and regulations laid out in the '2 CFR 200 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Q. You mentioned that matching funds may not be required from territories. Can you explain?

A. Specific statutes exist to allow some U.S. territories to waive the match. If applicable, work with your University to determine your status. If you have any additional questions, please contact us at oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov . For most applicants this will not apply.

Q. Can industrial collaborators' space and facilities, such as square footage of plant space, utilities, etc, can be used as matching?

A. Yes, but you need to confirm with specific requirements of the University.

Q. Can matching funds be in terms of time? Or it is funds?

A. Matching funds do not need to be monetary. Each organization (such as a university, non-profit, or consortium) determines specifics on how it interprets federal guidelines for "non-federal match."

Proposal Content

Q. For the Advanced Aquaculture Collaborative Programs - how important is collaboration with another group in the criteria evaluation?

A. Successful applicants will involve diverse stakeholders and partners. Read the program priorities' FFO section carefully to understand how the competition defines a collaborative program.

Q. If our proposal addresses multiple FFOs' priorities will it have a better chance of receiving a grant?

A. No. Each FFO will be evaluated separately.

Q. Is Sea Grant interested in better measurement of the broad economic contributions of current aquaculture operations?

A. We are interested in addressing knowledge gaps in these areas.

Q. For "Exploring New Opportunities" FFO, could the definition of aquaculture be expanded to include holding without feeding? We are a nonprofit hoping to remove green crabs from marine environments, hold them in floats, and sort pre-molts for soft-shell production. To note, the crabs would not be fed or placed back in the ocean.

A. You should reach out to the relevant Sea Grant program to explore this topic and jointly craft a proposal with them that addresses program priorities outlined in the FFO.

Q. Would feasibility studies for new land based systems where business models are still being established be compatible with proposal areas 1 and 2? For example, no physical infrastructure would be built, but we are interested in conducting a thorough "on paper" analysis.

A. Possibly, if it addresses the program priorities outlined in the FFO.

Q. My team and I are building an integrated system using livestock waste, for energy and algae, aquaculture, and water cycling. We want to use the seawater intrusion into the groundwater in CA to develop onshore marine aquaculture (RAS). Which of the programs do you think this fits best?

A. This would depend on what you are hoping to accomplish with specific funds, and will also depend on the level of work/foundation already conducted. Read each FFO program priorities for each FFO to determine the appropriate alignment.

Q. Does this first topic [Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research] include training programs?

A. It would depend on the training program and if it addresses the program priorities outlined in the FFO. A training program alone would not likely be a good fit.

Q. These are not research oriented grants, correct? These are pre-research grants.

A. This depends on the FFO. Review the program priorities section of each FFO to determine the appropriate role for targeted research activities.

Q. Just to clarify, will the socio-economic grant consider proposals that address freshwater aquaculture production in the Midwest?

A. Yes. The Great Lakes are included.

Q. Are research pertaining to land-based aquaculture, such as fish and shrimp farms with aquatic system, eligible for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research Needs FFO?

A. Yes.

Q. If land-based aquaculture systems are eligible for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research Needs, can this include catfish (it is land based)?

A. Yes, if it addresses program priorities described in the FFO.

Q. Could we submit an individual proposal under the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research Needs FFO that would tie into a consortium through our local Sea Grant office that may submit under a collaborative proposal?

A. Yes, if it meets the program priorities of each FFO.

Q. Are projects on marine ornamental aquaculture eligible?

A. Yes, if the application submitted meets the program priorities of an individual FFO.

Q. Can these proposals address non-commercial aquaculture applications to ecosystem restoration, species recovery or stock enhancement?

A. Some techniques in aquaculture can be utilized for other applications and purposes. It depends on if the proposal addresses the program priorities in the FFO.

Q. Since there is an existing funding opportunity for oyster for three regions, can the oyster topic be still proposed for the FFO by the PIs from these three regions?

A. Yes.

Q. Please explain about not funding individual research projects? Would this include projects not involving my local Sea Grant office?

A. Please see program priorities of each FFO for details, and work with your state Sea Grant programs to determine what are appropriate projects that can be incorporated into a proposal.

Q. Trying to recall - is there a concise list of SG-funded aquaculture projects and investigators?

A. See <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/News/PID/468/evl/0/TagID/148/TagName/Aquaculture> for examples of current and previously funded projects.

Application and Submission

Q. Is there a limit on the number of proposals submitted by Sea Grant programs for the Sea Grant-eligible FFOs?

A. There is no limit.

Q. Can you apply to more than one FFO for a single project?

A. We recognize that an area of work may have needs that align with more than one FFO. However, we do not want to see the same exact proposal submitted to more than one FFO. Each FFO has very different program priorities. Please read the FFO carefully to determine which is the best fit for your project/proposal.

Q. Do we submit individually to grants.gov or through a Sea Grant office?

A. Submission depends on which FFO. The Social, Behavioral and Research Needs FFO can be submitted individually to grants.gov. The other two FFOs must be submitted by a Sea Grant office to grants.gov.

Q. I am at UC Santa Cruz, so would collaborate with CA Sea Grant. Does this mean that CA Sea Grant will have it's own internal deadline before the NOAA deadline?

A. All Universities will have a deadline by which the sponsored programs office needs a proposal to be able to submit it. Thus, internal deadlines in institutions may differ. We encourage you to reach out as early as possible to the appropriate office / relevant SG program.

Q. For FFO #2 (New Opportunities) and FFO #3 (Advanced Collaboratives), will my state's Sea Grant program have an internal competition and only select certain LOIs? Or will it pass through all the submitted LOIs?

A. Sea Grant programs are not intended to serve as a pass through for these FFOs. Rather, proposal development should be a collaborative effort with the relevant Sea Grant program(s).

Q. What happens when two Sea Grant programs want to submit an FFO together? Is there a preference as to which program is lead?

A. There is no preference from a National Sea Grant Office perspective. This decision should be made amongst the individuals and programs involved in proposal development. The FFOs were designed to encourage interactions among SG programs and/or stakeholders.

Q. Can Sea Grant college programs submit or participate in multiple applications for any of the opportunities?

A. Yes.

Q. Can the lead or PI for the Collaborative program be another institution besides a Sea Grant program (while working in collaboration with a local Sea Grant College)?

A. The applicant must be as listed in the FFO.

Annual Aquaculture Symposium

Q. Should travel be budgeted in the grant for the Symposium, or will separate support be available?

A. Travel should be budgeted within the grant for each year of the proposed project.

Q. For budgeting purposes, is there any more information on where the symposia will be? For example, has a location been selected and should we budget for a business week (5 day) symposium?

A. Details are not available at this time. You should budget for a full week of travel (2-3 days plus travel days), with a location likely in the Washington D.C. area.

Q. Will the annual aquaculture symposium include existing Sea Grant Aquaculture research program projects funded prior to this new FFO?

A. This is to be determined.

Other

Q. When will awardees be notified of a successful application?

A. Summer 2019.

Q. The goal of FFO opportunities #2 (New Opportunities) and #3 (Advanced Collaboratives) is to "build the capacity of Sea Grant and its partners to advance aquaculture", and Sea Grant programs are the applicants. To what extent are the efforts of Sea Grant staff expected to be (i.e. given the potential range from a primary Sea Grant effort that may involve partners, to primarily a partners project that helps build the capacity of Sea Grant and partners)?

A. This will depend on the proposal and Sea Grant program. There are no specific guidelines or recommendations.

Q. If the research generates a sellable product, can that product be sold for profit or at cost and the money put back into the project?

A. Please contact the National Sea Grant Office at oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov and we can provide more details and caveats that may apply.