

Sea Grant Support of Regional Coral Disease Response Coordinator

SPECIAL PROJECTS ANNOUNCEMENT

Competition: Florida-Caribbean Regional Coordination of Coral Disease Response Effort

Closing Date: April 30, 2020

Eligible Sea Grant Programs: This competition is open to all Sea Grant programs.

Funding availability:

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates that up to \$660,000 in federal funding over a 4-year period will be available to a Sea Grant Program to coordinate a regional level response to the recent outbreak of Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in Florida and the U.S. Caribbean. The NSGO anticipates making one multi-year award to the lead Sea Grant Program. Applications will not require non-federal match.

Project Description:

Atlantic-Caribbean coral reef ecosystems are currently in the midst of an epidemic of a newly identified coral disease referred to as Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) which is affecting approximately half of the existing hard coral species found in the Caribbean region. This particular disease is characterized by rapid tissue loss and high mortality rates. While the disease was first identified on Florida's reefs in 2014, reports of its spread to the wider Caribbean region started in early 2018. It has now been reported in 8 Caribbean countries and territories including the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The spread of the epidemic is ongoing and there is still much to be learned about this disease. NOAA along with its Federal and State and Territory partners on the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force are working to document the outbreak, identify a likely pathogen(s), understand what environmental factors may be contributing to the outbreak/spread of the disease, identify innovative and advanced treatments that may slow or halt the disease from spreading, and identify best practices to restore damaged habitats.

State and Territorial governments are supporting local response efforts in each of the three affected jurisdictions. Interjurisdictional coordination is needed to facilitate communications, identify information and resource gaps and efficiently allocate federal resources to support an effective response to this new threat to U.S. coral reef resources.

Funding Goals:

This project would provide support for a Regional Coral Disease Response Coordinator position to be established at a Sea Grant program with Federal FY 20 funding from NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program. This position is based on the recommended approach for developing a coral disease outbreak response national coordinating center as proposed by the Coral Disease and Health Consortium (Woodley, C.M., Bruckner, A.W., et al. 2008. Field Manual for Investigating Coral Disease Outbreaks. NOAA Technical Memorandum NOS NCCOS 80 and CRCP 6. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Silver Spring, MD 85pp.). The position should be based in Southeast Florida to facilitate engagement with currently affected jurisdictions (FL, USVI, PR) and access to experts and resources leading response efforts in Florida.

Application Requirements:

Applicants may request up to \$165,000 per year over a 4-year period for a total maximum of \$660,000. Applications will not require non-federal matching dollars.

Projects should propose a start date no earlier than September 1, 2020 with a proposed end date no longer than four years after the proposed start date.

Applicants must include the following components in their proposal package:

1. Project Narrative:

- Project Proposal Narrative of **not more than 10 pages**:
 - Introduction/background/justification
 - Project objectives
 - General work plan and milestones
 - Anticipated outcomes
 - Coordination with other program elements, if relevant.
 - References/literature citations
- Include with the Project Narrative the following components which do not count toward the 10-page limit:
 - Short CVs (no more than 2 pages each) for each principal and co-principal investigator
 - At least one and no more than three Letters of Commitment/Support from relevant State/Territorial resource management agencies.

2. Budget Narrative:

- 90-4 Budget detail form(s)
- Budget justification

3. All standard components of an application package as described in the NOFO, which include the following:

- Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (unless the application falls into one of the listed exceptions);
- Data Management Plan (follow guidance in NOFO if no environmental data is to be collected);
- SF-424
- SF-424A
- SF-424A, Extra Section B
- SF-424B Assurances
- CD-511
- SF-LLL (if applicable)

Deadlines:

April 30, 2020: Consult the NOFO [NOAA-OAR-SG-2020-2006252](#), 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 "I"** under this opportunity in grants.gov. Projects should propose a start date no earlier than September 1, 2020 and an end date of no longer than four years after the proposed start date.

Application Evaluation Criteria:

The following criteria, which are outlined in greater detail in the Special Projects NOFO, will be used to evaluate proposals. Note that these criteria are different from the Evaluation Criteria laid

out in the Special Projects NOFO. Proposals will be evaluated by three independent written reviews based on:

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals (30 percent). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities: i.e., how does this proposed activity enhance NOAA and Sea Grant strategic focus areas and mission goals? This includes how well the proposed activity addresses the goals of the individual competition announcement, and any geographic, programmatic, or other restrictions placed on available funds.
2. Technical/scientific merit (20 percent). 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 this competition this includes: articulation of need and priority, including demonstrated support by partners and others in Sea Grant.
3. Overall qualifications of applicants (20 percent). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
4. Project costs (20 percent). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.
5. Outreach and Education (10 percent). 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. Additionally, projects will be recommended for funding only if they have a complete application package and if funds are available.

Other Information:

Award Form: The award will be in the form of a Cooperative Agreement with NOAA. The awardee will work closely with the National Sea Grant Office and subject matter experts from the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program throughout the process in implementing the project.

Reporting: Progress will be reported annually.

Questions: Questions about this competition or the Special Projects Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) may be sent to oar.hq.sg.competitions@noaa.gov. Please specify that your question is related to the Florida-Caribbean Regional Coordination of Coral Disease Response Effort competition in the subject line and CC Kelly Samek, kelly.samek@noaa.gov.

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>

A checklist for building your application is available here:

<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>