

NOAA Sea Grant 2018 Aquaculture Research competition
Federal funding opportunity number [NOAA-OAR-SG-2018-2005489](#)
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS updated 3/14/2018

ELIGIBILITY OF PIs AND LOCATIONS	
Are all elements of the FFO inclusive of both marine and Great Lakes applications?	Yes. Great Lakes aquaculture PIs and topics are as eligible as marine ones in all respects.
Can a non-U.S. PI apply for funding?	Yes, but all applicants must apply through a state SG program. It is important that projects focus on promoting U.S. aquaculture and are in line with the priorities listed in the FFO.
Are projects conducted in non-US waters such as Pohnpei and Palau eligible for this opportunity?	Yes, proposals to conduct work outside of the U.S. are eligible, but to be successful they will also need to demonstrate how their proposal will "address the needs of the U.S. ocean, coastal and Great Lakes aquaculture".
Are Hawaii and Guam considered to be in the same region for regional proposals?	Yes.
Alaska is its own NOAA region, is there a recognition that ours is already considered regional?	Yes. As a NOAA region, it is acceptable to have regional efforts that are within the state of Alaska. To have true regional impact, principal investigators desiring to have regional impact should strive to describe to reviewers how the proposed work might affect multiple communities within the greater Alaska region.
Do I have to submit a proposal to the SG program in the state where I live and work, or can I submit my proposal to a SG program in another state? Could I submit my proposal to the SG program in the state where the proposed research would take place?	You do not need to submit a proposal to the Sea Grant program in the state where you live and work. Proposals should be submitted to the state SG program that makes the most sense, considering where the work will be conducted, and the complexity of the administrative relationship between the researcher's institution and the SG program's institution.
Are state SG Program Directors, Interim Directors or Acting Directors eligible to apply for funding?	No. By the FFO, SG Directors play an administrative lead role and are not eligible to apply for funding. Interim or acting Sea Grant Directors are considered Directors and are also ineligible.
Are other SG staff eligible for funding?	Yes. Other SG staff (e.g., extension agents) are eligible to compete for funding.
Can one PI submit multiple proposals?	Yes.
ELIGIBILITY OF TOPICS	
Is tilapia an eligible species for this FFO?	Yes.
Are non-food aquaculture interests eligible (e.g., culturing marine ornamentals)?	Yes.
Does priority #2 listed in the FFO (communicating accurate, science based messages about aquaculture) include communicating benefits and risks of aquaculture products, or its production practices?	This priority is broad and can cover both. Please see section I.B of the FFO, "Program Priorities," for suggestions.
Regarding priority #3, resiliency of aquaculture systems to natural hazards, could this include how producers organize to grow, process and market aquaculture products?	Yes.
Will you be funding offshore aquaculture projects (e.g., technology development and transfer in support of offshore aquaculture)?	These will be considered. These projects should match the priorities in the FFO as much as possible.
ALLOWABLE EXPENSES	
Are private partners eligible for salary costs associated with the project?	Yes.
We intend to request funds to purchase renewable energy equipment (i.e. solar panels, wind mills, and other appropriate technology). Is this an allowable cost under the current FFO?	Yes, the FFO allows these types of proposed purchases. Please refer to section IV.F of the FFO, "Funding Restrictions," for purchases that are not allowed under federal law.
Is a building expansion an allowable expense?	No, by Sea Grant law, you cannot use these grant funds (including matching funds) to construct buildings or expansions. See section IV.F of the FFO, "Funding Restrictions."
What's the advice about capital equipment purchases?	There are some limitations; for example it cannot be used to construct a building. Refer to the FFO for details.
Is aquaculture gear for individual farmers an allowable funding expense?	Yes.
Can we include a Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) salary and benefit on the budget? Can we include the GSR Fees on the budget?	Yes.

Can Aquaculture budget be used to pay association dues? Could budget also be submitted to cover travel to annual association meetings?	In general, yes, as long as you can demonstrate that the dues and travel are necessary for the success of the project.
Can the grant cover expenses for patent application, legal fees, etc?	Federal regulations at 2 CFR 200.448, Intellectual Property, describe what patent-related expenses are allowable. In addition, your proposal should demonstrate that such expenses are necessary for the success of the project.

THE APPLICATION

Is the title page optional?	Yes.
Are Letters of Support allowed/required?	Letters of Support are allowed, but not required, and do not count toward the 20-page project description limit.
Do references and citations count towards the 20 page limit of the project description?	Yes.
Is Current and Pending Support documentation required for those who would be paid as Consultants for this grant? Additionally, does "support" refer only to personnel hours, or could it also refer to federal support for products?	Current and pending support information is required of co-PIs and other senior personnel. If you are one of the senior personnel on the project, it doesn't matter whether you are there as a consultant or in some other capacity. Support information should include all support, not just time.
Are there format requirements for the CV other than the 2-page limit?	No, we do not require a format for the CV or Current and Pending support. You may use any standard format as you see fit.
The 90-2 or 90-4 form I am using has an OMB expiration date of 1/31/2018. Can I still use it?	Yes, forms with expiration date 1/31/2018 or earlier can be used to apply to this competition.

MATCHING FUNDS

Are matching funds required for each year, or over the course of the project period?	Non-federal matching funds of at least 50% are required for each and every year of requested funding (e.g., Year 1 = a \$500,000 request would require at least \$250,000 in match for year 1; matching funding cannot be below 50% in any year).
Can university contributions be considered an in-kind match?	Yes.
Is farmer funding contributions for gear an allowable match for this grant?	Yes.
Can matching funds provided by a partnering private partner (e.g. facility costs, etc.)?	Yes.
Is a building expansion an allowable match?	No, by law you cannot use these grant funds (INCLUDING MATCHING FUNDS) to construct buildings or expansions. See section IV.F of the FFO, "Funding Restrictions."
Can non-US (e.g., Canadian) federal support be used as match?	Yes.
Are there any special considerations/provisions for 1890 universities that apply? For example, are there exemptions for meeting the matching requirement?	No, the only exemptions to the matching requirement are those required by federal law, such as for Guam, as described in the FFO.

INDIRECT COSTS

Is there a limit on indirect costs?	Yes. If your organization has a current "Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement" (NICRA) with the federal government, this rate would apply. PIs should talk with their state SG program to help determine the appropriate amount of indirect that should appear on the application.
Does the \$750,000 maximum federal request amount include any indirect expenses?	Yes. This maximum includes all federal expenses, direct and indirect. PIs should talk with their SG program well in advance of final submission, to determine the appropriate amount of indirect for the proposal.
Our negotiated indirect cost rate is 46% here at ____ University. Can we request only a portion of that, say 10%, and use the difference toward meeting our 50% match requirement?	Yes.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Who owns the Intellectual Property that is developed in the course of the grant-funded project?	<p>Researchers should discuss this question with the state SG Program as part of proposal development.</p> <p>NOAA's rules on intellectual property are described in the Department of Commerce (DOC) standard terms and conditions for grants and cooperative agreements, which can be found here: http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20%26%20Conditions%2031%20March%202017.pdf</p> <p>Among other things, these terms and conditions say, <i>"The rights to any work or other intangible property, produced or acquired under a Federal award are determined by 2 C.F.R. § 200.315 (Intangible property). The non-Federal entity owns any work produced or purchased under a Federal award subject to the DOC's royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work or authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for Government purposes."</i></p>
What level of disclosure is required on the project?	Please see the DOC standard terms and conditions for grants and cooperative agreements described above. In general, you retain ownership of intellectual property, but you are subject to disclosure requirements, and must provide the federal government right to royalty free nonexclusive use.
Can the grant cover expenses for patent application, legal fees, etc?	Federal regulations at 2 CFR 200.448, Intellectual Property, describe what patent-related expenses are allowable. In addition, your proposal should demonstrate that such expenses are necessary for the success of the project.
Can I ask for a 6 or 12 month publication delay by the collaborators to allow me to apply for patent before info become public domain?	NOAA will not require you to publish data less than twelve months after the completion of the project, unless you proposed more rapid publication in your application to the competition.

PI INTERACTION BY THE STATE SG PROGRAM

What is the role of Sea Grant Directors?	Sea Grant Directors are listed as Principal Investigators on Grants.gov applications, and will serve as administrative leads. They will oversee distribution of funds to co-Principal Investigators through their SG programs. Directors cannot compete for funds.
If the Sea Grant director serves as the PI of record and administrative lead, does that mean that the funds will come through the Sea Grant program rather than directly to the (project coordinator) co-PI?	Yes, funds will come through the Sea Grant program. The Sea Grant program will then administer the funds to the co/PI(s) through appropriate subaward mechanisms.
Can a State SG Directors provide his or her time as match on a proposal?	No. This could be seen as a potential conflict of interest. (An exception may be granted by NSGO in the rare cases this requirement conflicts with institutional rules of the SG host. Contact NSGO in advance of final submission to Grants.gov to seek such an exception.)
Can state SG programs impose restrictions on certain types of aquaculture that are controversial in nature, such as net pen culture in the Great Lakes?	No. State SG programs cannot impose additional restrictions on applicants beyond what is in the FFO. State SG programs should communicate potential constraints to applicants so they are properly informed prior to investing the time in submitting an application.
Can state SG programs run their own selection process?	No. All eligible proposals submitted by the March 2nd deadline must be entered into Grants.gov by the national deadline (March 30th). Selections for this competition are made at the national level, guided by a national expert review panel's recommendations.
Is the SG program allowed to set up an earlier date by which we've asked interested PIs to submit a 1 page description of the proposal idea, and involvement of SG staff, etc., to give us a heads-up on how many are coming in and what kind of staff capacity they will need?	Yes. While a SG program can not require a PI to submit their application early (or do anything beyond the requirements in the FFO) as a condition of accepting their application, the Sea Grant program can ask or encourage PIs to work with them early, to assure everything is communicated and worked out well in advance of the March 2 deadline. This encouragement can include suggesting times by which certain steps (such as communicating with the SG program) should be met.
Are extension specialists required to collaborate or partner with all applicants?	No. State SG programs have the flexibility to choose which proposals they have the expertise and bandwidth to dedicate extension capacity to participate in.

How should state SG programs balance the requirement to offer the same amount of assistance and/or collaboration to all applicants?	State SG programs should do their best to offer support to those that reach out in good faith and with adequate notice during the proposal development stage. We understand that the level of collaboration will vary among proposals based on resource and time constraints and mission priorities of individual state programs.
Is there a limitation of how many proposals a PI, or a SG program, can submit?	No, there is no limit.
Can the Sea Grant Program help applicants with their 90-2 and 90-4 forms, if it is done before the March 2 deadline?	Yes, we encourage it.

APPLICATION PROCESSING BY THE SG PROGRAM AFTER MARCH 2

Our state SG program expects to receive multiple proposals. Do we need to submit these individually through Grants.gov?	Yes, submit each one individually as a separate application.
A proposal was submitted to our SG Program that doesn't seem to meet the application requirements. Do I still have to submit it to grants.gov or can I reject it?	Please notify the National Office at oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov as soon as possible if you believe a proposal you received may not meet application requirements. NOAA bears the responsibility of declaring proposals ineligible, not the SG program. Once you notify us, we can determine whether you should submit the application to grants.gov anyway, or forward the application to us via secure email for disposition outside of grants.gov.
The 90-2 or 90-4 form I am using has an OMB expiration date of 1/31/2018. Can I still use it?	Yes, forms with expiration date 1/31/2018 or earlier can be used to apply to this competition.
Should standard forms regarding disclosure of lobbying and assurances for non-construction be filled by (1) the PI's (Sea Grant director) institution, (2) the co-PI(s) leading the activities, or (3) the PI's institution with input from the co-PI(s)?	The Sea Grant program's institution is the one officially applying for the grant, therefore it can decide who is the appropriate person to fill out which forms. NOAA will hold it ultimately responsible for the correctness of those forms.
Can the budget detail in the current and pending documents be updated/changed after the submission deadline to state programs (March 2nd)?	Yes, as long as it is done before the March 30 deadline, and budget is only changed in ways allowed by the FFO.
Are PIs did not submit annual budgets on 90-4 forms. May I reject the proposal?	No. The FFO did not include a requirement for annual 90-4 budget forms, so a proposal cannot be rejected for not providing them.
A PI submitted a proposal with no yearly budget breakdown, only an overall budget. May I work with him to report a yearly budget after the March 2 deadline?	You are allowed to work with the PI to modify budget information (in the ways allowed by the FFO) after the March 2 submission deadline.
What types of budget changes can the SG program make after the March 2 submission?	Per the FFO, the following changes may be made: "budget detail in parts 1 (c), 3, and 6 of Section IV.B, Application Format and Content Requirements, requiring adjustment for Sea Grant host program administrative costs, and budget totals resulting from those changes in other parts of the application package."
If the Sea Grant institution issues a sub-award to the project coordinator co-PI's institution, some institutions impose indirect costs on the first \$25k of each sub-award. Can we add those costs to the budget if the proposal has to be submitted unchanged through Grant.gov?	Yes, if this does not put the federal request above the application maximum federal request of \$750,000. If a proposal requests \$750,000 without including all indirects required by the institutions involved, some part of the proposal budget must be reduced to ensure that the total does not exceed the maximum. It is important for the PI and the SG program to talk well before the submission deadline to ensure that all expenses are properly calculated.
I believe a proposal budget would be improved (more realistic, more efficient) if the PI spent more funding on category X, and less funding on category Y. May I adjust these budget numbers after the March 2 deadline?	No. The FFO describes the only ways that the budget information can be changed, which deal with meeting administrative requirements. <i>After March 2, you cannot change the narrative or the budget (or anything else) of a proposal for purposes of improving it.</i>
Can we add to the application a letter of support that was received after the March 2 deadline?	No. As described in the FFO, the only changes allowed to an application after the March 2 deadline are related to budget information.
How do we account for match on the additional indirect costs for a sub award from our University to an outside entity? Are we supposed to ask the non-university PIs to provide that match?	We do not put restrictions on who provides matching funds. The Sea Grant program's institution is the one officially applying for the grant, therefore it must decide how matching funds will be covered. NOAA will hold it ultimately responsible for the matching funds.
Serving as PI of record, does the Sea Grant director have to submit a CV and current and pending support information?	No.

<p>A proposal was submitted to our SG Program before the deadline that doesn't seem to meet the application requirements. Can I reject it?</p>	<p>No! Please notify the National Office at oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov as soon as possible if you believe a proposal you received may not meet application requirements. NOAA bears the responsibility of declaring proposals ineligible, not the SG program. Once you notify us, we can determine whether you should submit the application to grants.gov anyway, or forward the application to us for disposition outside of grants.gov. <i>(This is a repeat of an earlier question, but it is so important that it bears repeating.)</i></p>
<p>The PI proposed 50% match overall, but some individual years proposed less than 50% of the Federal request. Can I change that after March 2, as I am working on the budget?</p>	<p>No. This is not a change you are allowed to make after March 2. The FFO says that an application must propose match of at least 50% of the Federal request every year of the project. An application that proposes less than 50% match in any individual year does not meet the FFO requirements, and you should contact the National Office at oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov if you receive such an application.</p>
<p>Does the NEPA questionnaire need to be bundled into the Project Narrative PDF, or should it be a standalone attachment to the application?</p>	<p>We don't have requirements for how the NEPA questionnaire is attached. It is easier for us if you make it a separate attachment to the grants.gov application package, but that's not required.</p>
<p>We use Cayuse (or some other software) to prepare our grants.gov application, and it won't let us attach the 90-2 form because it's an Excel file. What do we do?</p>	<p>Cayuse has told us that while a basic user can't upload an Excel file to a grants.gov application package, your institution's Cayuse "system administrator" is able to. Please check with that person. If you still can't get the 90-2 form attached, please contact us at oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.org, and we'll give you instructions (Please do not wait until the last day before the deadline to contact us!). DO NOT JUST ATTACH A PDF of the 90-2 form--that does not meet submission requirements.</p>
<p>I have a question not listed here.</p>	<p>Please send questions to oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov</p>