

NOFO FAQs

Addressing the Impacts of Multiple Stressors on Shellfish Aquaculture through Research/Industry Partnerships

-- Project Priorities --

Does the proposal need to contain an element of new monitoring/data collection or are data synthesis/product development projects suitable? For instance, where the co-production of multi-stressor monitoring efforts are underway, would projects focusing on data synthesis and information delivery for shellfish growers fit within the scope of the NOFO?

In such a case, PIs would be encouraged to submit an LOI. However, if no new data were to be collected in the scope of work, new results or conclusions would need to be drawn from the existing dataset to qualify for funding from this NOFO. Moreover, the PIs would need to demonstrate how the growers would be participating in the evaluation of the dataset using a co-production of knowledge framework, and explain how the newly derived information will be turned into deliverables that meet growers' needs.

What is the difference between observational and experimental data?

Observational data collection refers to information gathered from uncontrolled field or farm settings. For instance, co-locating environmental data (e.g. pH and temp) and biological data on a clam farm. Experimental data collection refers to information gathered from a controlled study. For instance, setting up larval rearing experiments in a hatchery where larvae are exposed to different pCO₂ and temperature conditions.

Can aspects of fisheries investigation be included if it helps to work towards sustaining production in parallel with aquaculture?

Projects that focus on non-cultured species or those that are not potential culture candidates would NOT address the priorities of the NOFO, unless the proposed work could directly be used to benefit the shellfish aquaculture industry and shellfish growers are co-PIs

Is there an interest in projects with a broad geographic scope versus projects that are more regionally focused?

The strongest applications will produce deliverables responsive to current shellfish aquaculture industry needs across the greater geographic region of the applicants, rather than benefiting a single operation or being relevant to a single culture area.

Would the NOFO consider microplastics as a potential stressor? If yes, does it have to tie to OA?

Ocean Acidification needs to be considered along with another stressor to be considered relevant for this call. If you can connect the stress of microplastics and ocean acidification, this is acceptable as a second stressor.

Are shellfish restoration non-profits eligible to apply for this funding? The shellfish in question are produced through aquaculture.

Yes, this is fine. This NOFO is not limited to commercial aquaculture.

Would this NOFO support conservation aquaculture of Olympia oysters and stressor impacts? Or is this only targeted for commercial aquaculture species (Pacific oysters, Atlantic oysters, etc.)?

Shellfish growers may include groups that raise shellfish for restoration/conservation efforts.

Dungeness crab are not an aquaculture species as the fishery is 100% wild caught. Would work on Dungeness crab be considered under this RFP?

Focusing on non-cultured species or those that are not candidates for potential culture would not address the priorities of the NOFO - unless the work could be used to benefit cultured species.

How will new vs existing partnerships be weighted/valued?

Proposals that build new partnerships and strengthen partnerships will be evaluated objectively. Instead, the strength of a proposal's co-production of knowledge framework (how closely growers and researchers collaborate throughout the ENTIRE scientific process) will be a greater determinant. Good arguments can be made for creating new partnerships, particularly in places where partnerships do not exist. However, good arguments can be made for bolstering existing relationships.

I'm a little confused about the community of practice requirement. You mentioned a couple of big networks (e.g., CAN), so are you looking for PIs to collaborate with groups like these, or can we describe how we will share results with these big groups?

Strong proposals will collaborate in some way with existing communities of practice such as NSGO-supported Aquaculture Collaboratives (HUBs), members of the OAP-supported Coastal Acidification Networks (CANs), or other NOAA-supported groups. How exactly the PIs work with these groups will depend on the scope of work. In any case, the work should bolster the community of practice in some way with respect to the shellfish aquaculture industry. However, proposals that build new communities of practice will also be considered for funding in this NOFO

-- LOIs --

Will LOIs be evaluated for relevance only, or will they be used to invite only the most promising proposals?

LOIs will be evaluated for relevance to the criteria stated in the NOFO. Promising proposals will be encouraged. However, any PI who submits an LOI will be eligible to submit a proposal. Responses to LOIs are anticipated to go out mid-January 2021.

How many LOIs can one PI submit?

There is no limit on the number of LOIs you can submit, except your time!

For this opportunity, am I correct that Sea Grant programs are not responsible for submitting LOIs or proposals, except of course if a Sea Grant person is the PI or co-PI?

That is correct, the PIs (whoever they may be) should submit the LOI and the proposal. However, remember that the full application cannot be submitted by a fed.

Are full itemized/official budgets needed for the LOI?

No, the LOI may just include a budget overview. We do not need an itemized version at the LOI stage.

-- Funding --

What is the maximum request amount for any individual proposal? How many years can projects run?
300,000 per year for three years is the maximum amount allowed.

Does the funding limit include indirect costs, or are they not allowed?
The funding limit includes indirect costs.

Can funds be used for graduate students or post-doc salaries?
Yes, graduate student and post-doc salaries are allowed.

Can federal co-PIs receive funds for instrumentation?
Yes, that is an allowed cost

Can NOAA FTE salaries be funded under this RFP if there is a NOAA co-PI? If so, can federal salaries be used as match contribution?
Federal salaries cannot be used as match. For this NOFO, we can fund federal salaries through a BOP. So, in a situation where a federal employee is a co-PI, we may be able to BOP funds directly to their office and not send them out via the grant. This is why the NOFO says that a fed cannot be the lead (submitting PI).

Are there limitations on what the funds may be used for?

Limitations on what the funds can be used for include:

"No payment under any grant or contract under this section may be applied to:

(a) the purchase or rental of any land; or

(b) the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of any building, dock, or vessel; except that payment under any such grant or contract may be applied to the short-term rental of buildings or facilities for meetings which are in direct support of any Sea Grant Program or project and may, if approved by the Secretary, be applied to the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of non-self-propelled habitats, buoys, platforms, and other similar devices or structures, or to the rental of any research vessel which is used in direct support of activities under any Sea Grant Program or project."

How should the SF-424 and 90-4 be filled out if the project has a federal partner?

If there is a federal partner, the funds going to the federal partner should NOT be included on the standard SF forms. However, the funds going to the federal partner should be included on the 90-4 and budget justification. As with subawards, those federal dollars should have their own 90-4 and budget justification separate from the overall 90-4 and overall budget justification.

-- Funding (Match) --

What are examples of matching funds?

Match can be in the form of cash and in-kind contributions to the project. In-kind match is typically the calculated value of personnel, goods, and services, including direct and indirect costs. You can find more information about match/cost sharing [here](#).

Would a shellfish grower providing research space on his/her property qualify as a match?

Yes, a shellfish grower providing research space could qualify as match. However, growers do not necessarily have to provide match. The match can come from anywhere except federal dollars. You can find more information about match/cost sharing [here](#).

-- Eligibility --

Can international partners be involved? Say, a U.S. research institution partnering with internationally-based growers?

While we have not explicitly stated that partners and co-PIs must be from U.S. groups, we do require that the applications study and address stressors on the U.S. shellfish aquaculture industry. It is up to the applicant to demonstrate how having an international partner would still address our priorities. In addition, keep in mind that the lead PI/institution must be from the U.S.

Could you please describe the perimeters around the specific qualifications of the participants. Could you please explain the qualifications that would apply to the one researcher? Do they need to have a certain level of education or degree or would experience in the fisheries industry qualify them?

We want to cast a wide net in this competition regarding Principal Investigators. For this opportunity, a "researcher" is anyone who does research in some capacity for their job - there is no required level of education.

I am a student at a University. I work on a commercial oyster commercial farm in my region. The owner of the farm and I would like to apply for this competition. As a student, would I be eligible to be the researcher?

Yes, you are eligible to act as a researcher. We do not have a degree requirement. As long as research is a regular part of your job (being a student counts), that is fine. However, you should check with your university to make sure that there aren't rules or restrictions regarding a student submitting an application.