



Special Projects Opportunity Announcement

FY 2023 Aquaculture Technologies and Education Travel Grants

SPECIAL PROJECTS "F" ANNOUNCEMENT

Special Project Opportunity Title:

FY 2023 Aquaculture Technologies and Education Travel Grants

Closing Dates and Deadlines:

Wednesday, April 5, 2023 at 11:59 PM Eastern Time

Eligible Sea Grant Programs:

This competition is open to all Sea Grant Programs. A Sea Grant Program may submit more than one application. Programs are encouraged to partner with other Sea Grant Programs and/or other entities such as individuals, State and Tribal Agencies/Organizations, HBCUs/MSIs, NGOs, aquaculture industry members and associations, universities, and colleges, including community colleges. International travel must adhere to federal and university-specific international travel policies as well as the Fly America Act.

Award Time Frame:

The proposed start date should be no earlier than **September 1, 2023**, with projects to be completed no later than **one** year after the project start date (**August 31, 2024**).

Funding Availability:

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates that up to **\$200,000** in FY 2023 federal funds will be available to Sea Grant programs to support approximately 4-10 projects for a duration of up to one year. Awards will be made for no more than **\$50,000** in federal funds per project. Available funding can be used to support travel costs, salary, and costs associated with outreach activities following travel. Funding for research activities is not permitted through this announcement. Applications require the standard 50% non-federal match for Sea Grant projects. Please note that it is envisioned that this funding opportunity, with potential variation in total funding available, will be reinstated annually, contingent on available funding.

Project Description (program priorities):

This funding opportunity is focused on supporting travel for one or more individuals to domestic or international aquaculture facilities or sites to facilitate enhancing the knowledge exchange and expertise of coastal, Great Lakes, or marine-focused aquaculture. The purpose of travel is to provide an opportunity for researchers (faculty, graduate students, post-doctoral), Sea Grant extension personnel, and industry members, or a mixture of participants, to enhance knowledge of aquaculture technologies, production practices and systems, and associated topics pertinent to the species or species group of interest to participants. The goal of this opportunity is that participants will utilize the knowledge and expertise gained through their travel experiences in their approach to improve aquaculture research, extension, or aquaculture production activities that will benefit the U.S. aquaculture industry.

It is a priority for this competition to fund proposals that:

- Define and address a need or needs regarding improvement of aquaculture research, extension, or aquaculture industry production activities;
- Demonstrate that the work (travel activities) proposed will meaningfully advance the knowledge and expertise of the participants, and lead to improvement of aquaculture research, extension, or production activities and goals; and
- Demonstrate a plan to extend the improved approach (techniques, methods, practices, operations) to benefit the U.S. aquaculture industry.

Successful applications will:

- Identify, justify, and describe the need or needs to be addressed regarding improvement of aquaculture research, extension, or production activities.
- Describe and document the proposed plan regarding how the proposed travel activities will address the identified need or needs.
- Describe how the proposed activities will enhance aquaculture-related activities of project participants.
- Describe how the proposed activities will benefit the U.S. aquaculture industry and associated stakeholders.

Engagement with, and support of faculty and students, through partnerships with HBCUs, MSIs, and other under-represented institutions and entities is encouraged.

Principal investigators or at least one project team member of proposals selected for funding will be required to participate in a virtual National Sea Grant Aquaculture Symposium to present a summary of project activities, what was learned by project participants, and how participants will utilize knowledge gained through their travel experiences in their approach to improving aquaculture research, extension, or aquaculture production.

Available funding can be used to support travel costs, salary and costs associated with outreach activities. Funding for research activities is not permitted through this announcement.

Application Requirements:

Consult the NOFO [NOAA-OAR-SG-2023-2007550](#), 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 "F"** under this opportunity in grants.gov.

Discrepancies between this special project announcement and the NOFO may exist. Specific application details and instructions outlined in this special project announcement take precedence over guidelines in the NOFO.

Applications must include the following elements. Failure to adhere to these provisions may result in a delay in award processing or rejection of the application, based on the extent of the noncompliance.

1. Project Narrative. *The Project Narrative should include the following elements:*

- a. Project Description. The total number of pages in the application description should not exceed five (5). The narrative format should use a 12-pt font with 1" margins. Applicants need not fill the entire 5-page maximum for the application description. Excess pages will not be included in the review. The works cited, CVs, and letters of support do not contribute to the page limit.
 - i. Cover page (not included in the 5 page limit)
 - Lead and participating Sea Grant programs, project title and names, titles, affiliations, and contact information (email and phone) of PI(s) and co-PI(s), including investigators/partners not part of a Sea Grant program.
 - Budget overview - Total cost and annual breakdown of requested federal funding of the project, including required matching funds.
 - ii. Project background
 - Explain/describe the need or needs to be addressed during the proposed travel, regarding improvement of aquaculture research, extension, or production activities.
 - iii. Project objectives/details
 - List the project objectives and describe in detail the proposed travel activities (site(s) and contact(s) to be visited) and how the project will address the need or needs identified in the background.
 - **Applicants must include Letters of Support from travel hosts.**
 - iv. Anticipated outcomes and deliverables
 - Provide a description of expected outcomes and deliverables that will result from the project. Specifically, describe how the proposed activity will be of benefit to participants as well as the U.S. aquaculture industry. In addition, the proposal should include a description of outreach activities to ensure that project activities and project results are disseminated to the aquaculture community and other appropriate stakeholders, including the general public.
 - v. Project timeline
 - Provide a timeline for accomplishing the proposed work, which covers the entire duration of the project. Include approximate dates for key milestones related to the proposed work, including the accomplishment of anticipated outcomes and deliverables.
 - vi. Community engagement, DEIJA, and outreach plan
 - In this section, describe how the proposed activity was developed in collaboration with researchers, extension personnel, or industry members that are connected to local needs and communities and/or are part of traditionally underserved groups that may benefit from project activities.
 - Describe how the work will provide long-term engagement and support to those groups.
 - Applicants are encouraged to review the resources and best practices compiled by NSGO related to diversity, equity, and inclusion: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation/Network-Visiting/DiversityInclusion>.
 - vii. Works cited (does not count towards page limit)

- All in-text citations should be listed here.
 - viii. CVs (two page limit per each CV) of principal and co-principal investigators (does not count towards page limit). CVs of other investigators and partners are optional.
 - ix. Letters of Support (does not count against page limit). **Please note that Letters of Support from travel hosts are required.** Any additional letters of support are optional.
 - b. Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)
 - i. This announcement is seeking proposals to support travel, salary, and costs associated with outreach activities only. Therefore, an Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire is not required as part of the proposal.
 - c. Data Management Plan
 - i. This announcement is seeking proposals to support travel, salary, and costs associated with outreach activities only, and will not generate any environmental data. Please include the following statement at the end of your proposal: “Because this project will not generate environmental data, a Data Management Plan is not required.”
- 2. **Budget Narrative. As stated, available funding can be used to support travel, salary, and costs associated with outreach activities following travel. Funding for research activities is not permitted through this announcement. The Budget Narrative must include the following budget documents (Sea Grant 90-4 Forms and Budget Justification) in the following order and format. Additional budget narrative guidance can be found [here](#).**
 - a. [Sea Grant 90-4 Form](#) (OMB Control No. 0648-0362) - Sea Grant 90-4 Forms are required to provide budget breakdowns and budget justifications by year and object class for the proposal. A completed Sea Grant 90-4 Form should be completed for each project and each project year, as well as a total budget for the entire project duration (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Years 1-2). Guidance on filling out these forms is located in the [Sea Grant General Application Guide](#).
 - b. Budget Justification - For each year of each project, a Budget Justification is required. Each Budget Justification should explain the budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. Each Budget Justification should be attached as a PDF to each Sea Grant 90-4 Form, as appropriate. Guidance on completing the Budget Justification is located in the [Sea Grant General Application Guide](#).
- 3. **Overall Application. In addition to the budget forms required above, standard Federal Forms and Assurances are required for the overall application and can be found with the application package on [Grants.gov](#) or on the [Sea Grant website](#). These include:**
 - a. SF-424 Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0004)

This form, titled “Application for Federal Assistance,” must identify the entire funding period, as well as the federal funding amount being requested by the applicant and the non-federal matching fund amount. The form must be completed with the institution’s accurate EIN and DUNS and Point of Contact, and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee.

- b. SF-424A Form (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0006)
This form, titled “Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs,” should describe the entire funding period in federal and non-federal dollars, for the entire application. Fill out Section B of this SF-424A form to show the overall budget breakdown by object class by year. Each federal and match year should have its own column. If there is insufficient space, an additional SF-424A Form, Extra Section B should be used (see below).
- c. SF-424B Assurances (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 4040-0007)
The form, titled “Assurances – Non-Construction Programs,” should be completed and signed by the institution's authorized representative or designee.
- d. CD-511 (Grants.gov, US Department of Commerce)
The form, titled “Certification Regarding Lobbying,” should be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee. In some instances, the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form may also be required. See the instructions on the CD-511 for further information.
- e. SF-LLL (Grants.gov, OMB Control No. 0348-0046) if applicable
The form, titled “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” should be completed and signed by the institution’s authorized representative or designee, if appropriate.

Application Evaluation Criteria:

Federal program officers and technical experts will review application packages using the following criteria. Note that the weights of each criteria are different from the Evaluation Criteria laid out in the Special Projects Funding Opportunity announcement.

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of the proposed activities to the program goals (25 points). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the **FY23 Aquaculture Technologies and Education Travel Grants** program, this includes:
 - A description of the need or needs to be addressed regarding improvement of aquaculture research, extension, or production activities.
 - A description of how the project will address the need or needs identified in the background.
2. Project details (25 points). This criterion assesses whether the approach is sound and/or innovative, if proposed activities are appropriate and address a defined need or needs, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For the **FY23 Aquaculture Technologies and Education Travel Grants** program this includes:
 - A description of the goals and objectives of the proposal are clearly described; proposed travel activities (site(s) and contact(s) to be visited) are presented in detail; and a description of how the project will address the need or needs identified in the background.
3. Outcomes and Deliverables (25 points). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a clear description of anticipated outcomes and deliverables that will result from the project. For the **FY23 Aquaculture Technologies and Education Travel Grants** program, this includes:
 - A description of how the project will be of benefit to participants as well as the U.S. aquaculture industry.
 - A description of outreach activities to ensure that project activities and project results are disseminated to the aquaculture community and other appropriate stakeholders, including the general public.

4. Project costs (15 points). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the proposed project activities, needs, and time frame.
5. Overall qualifications of applicants (10 points). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant(s) possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities (if applicable), and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

Additionally, projects will be recommended for funding only if they have a complete application package and if funds are available.

Other Information:

Demographics Information:

- NOAA will not provide collected demographics information to reviewers for any purpose, including evaluation, and will not consider demographics information during selection.
- Programs must submit documentation by either including a statement within the application, or via email to sg.grants@noaa.gov, that they have responded to the new requirement to provide the following information for all named collaborators on the proposal. (2022, OMB approved for PRA under DOC generic clearance information collections, 0690-0030 and 0690-0035).
- Note: Programs may use their own method of collecting this information. The NSGO has also developed an [online form](#) as an optional method for collection. Submission to this form would count as fulfillment of this requirement.
 1. Do you or your organization identify with any of the following groups that the federal government, in Executive Order 13985, has identified as underserved? List all that apply.
 - a) Black
 - b) Latino
 - c) Indigenous and/or Native American
 - d) Asian American
 - e) Pacific Islander
 - f) Other person of color
 - g) Members of religious minorities
 - h) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons
 - i) Persons with disabilities
 - j) Persons who live in rural areas
 - k) Persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality
 - l) No, I do not identify with any of these groups

Reporting:

Selected projects will be placed on Sea Grant omnibus awards and extend the overall omnibus award to the end date of the period of performance. Annual progress reporting in the form of the Research Performance Progress Report and in PIER will be required.

Once applications have been recommended for funding, applicants must submit a Sea Grant 90-2 Project Summary Form (for each project within the application) through the [90-2 Webform portal](#). This is due within 30 calendar days after the applicant has been notified via email that their application has been recommended for funding. A detailed step-by-step guide for completing the web-based 90-2 Form is available on [Inside Sea Grant](#). Once the project is approved and funded, that information will be publicly available and searchable on the [National Sea Grant College Program](#)

[public website](#).

Recipients are required to use the National Sea Grant Planning Implementation and Evaluation Reporting (PIER) project database to communicate with the National Sea Grant Office on activities relating to this award. This includes tracking progress and impacts, in addition to performance metrics.

All public-facing products produced with funding from the award(s)/project(s) must ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Agency Contacts:

Questions about this opportunity should be directed to NSGO Aquaculture Managers Chuck Weirich or Mark Rath at oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov. Please specify that your question is related to the FY23 Aquaculture Technologies and Education Travel Grants program in the subject line.

Fillable versions of required Sea Grant forms can be found here:

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