



Special Projects Opportunity Announcement

FY 2023 Aquaculture Economics and Markets Collaborative

SPECIAL PROJECTS "G" ANNOUNCEMENT

Special Project Opportunity Title:

FY 2023 Aquaculture Economics and Markets Collaborative

Closing Dates and Deadlines:

Wednesday, April 12, 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. 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. All projects must take place within the United States or territories or their respective waterways.

Award Time Frame:

The proposed start date should be no earlier than **September 1, 2023**, with projects to be completed two years after the proposed start date. The proposed end date should be no later than **November 30, 2025**.

Funding Availability:

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates that up to **\$1,000,000** in FY 2023 federal funds will be available to Sea Grant programs to support one project for a duration of up to two years. Applications require the standard 50% non-federal match for Sea Grant projects.

Project Description (program priorities):

The goal of this competitive funding opportunity is to create an aquaculture economics and markets focused collaborative program that will serve as a hub for generating and promoting a greater understanding of economic and market issues of geographically diverse U.S. aquaculture sectors, encompassing coastal and marine aquaculture, Great Lakes aquaculture, and recirculating aquaculture businesses. The selected project will develop fully integrated research, outreach, and education activities that will seek to align aquaculture more closely with established commercial fishing and agricultural industries with respect to applied economics and market practices and resources.

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

- Include a comprehensive assessment of existing economic and business planning knowledge and tools available to the major U.S. coastal and marine, Great Lakes, and recirculating aquaculture sectors, as well as market resources;
- Create diverse partnerships among stakeholders (including across aquaculture sectors and among Sea Grant Programs) to successfully encompass all regions and species produced by U.S. coastal and marine, Great Lakes, and recirculating aquaculture;
- Support extension outreach, education, and technology transfer capacity to enhance the synthesis and transfer of past research as well as inform next generation efforts; and
- Advance the topics of aquaculture economics and markets to the next appropriate phase of development.

Successful applications will:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of economic and market issues affecting U.S. aquaculture industry stakeholders;
- Increase the knowledge base of various aspects of aquaculture economics and markets with the goal of advancing management of existing and potential aquaculture businesses;
- Include funding (Federal or Match) for Sea Grant extension personnel and relevant activities (e.g., education, outreach, transfer of technology and results) to build on research and inform stakeholders;
- Include industry stakeholder participation;
- Develop new and improve existing economic and business planning models for major U.S. coastal and marine, Great Lakes, and recirculating aquaculture sectors;
- Assess economic risks in key aquaculture sectors arising from fluctuations in production, marketing and financial conditions;
- Develop a national group of economists, market specialists, and extension professionals (within and outside of the Sea Grant network) to provide new and updated economic and market information for major coastal and marine, Great Lakes and recirculating aquaculture sectors in the U.S. to support existing and new businesses; and
- Support the career development of next-generation aquaculture economists and market experts.

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 the proposal selected for funding will be required to participate in a virtual National Sea Grant Aquaculture Symposium to present a summary of the establishment of an aquaculture economics and markets collaborative and its activities to benefit coastal and marine, Great Lakes, and recirculating aquaculture in the U.S.

Application Requirements:

Consult the NOFO [NOAA-OAR-SG-2023-2007550](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/list-notices.html), 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 "G"** 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 fifteen (15). The narrative format should use a 12-pt font with 1" margins. Applicants need not fill the entire 15-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 15 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 Abstract** (½ page maximum; not included in the page count - include a brief description of background, objectives, and anticipated outcomes and deliverables).
 - iii. **Project background**
 - Explain/describe the need or needs to be addressed regarding economics and markets of U.S. coastal and marine, Great Lakes, and recirculating aquaculture businesses and work (including that of the applicant and project team) that has been conducted to date addressing these topics.
 - iv. **Project objectives**
 - Provide a list of clearly defined project objectives. For each objective, provide a concise statement explaining how it is aligned with the goals and priorities of this funding opportunity.
 - v. **Methods/Project details**
 - Provide a detailed description of the methods used to address the project objectives.
 - Provide a list of all project partners additional to the PI and co-PIs, and explain how this project leverages the expertise of project partners.
 - vi. **Anticipated outcomes and deliverables**
 - Provide a description of expected outcomes and deliverables that will result from the project. Explain how these outcomes will be directly and beneficially applied to the current and future needs of the U.S. coastal and marine, Great Lakes, and recirculating 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.

- vii. **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 release of deliverables.
 - Applicants submitting proposals that involve the use of human test subjects should state so clearly in their application. These proposed research activities require approval of the applicant’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) before such research can proceed. Applicants are responsible for obtaining IRB approval from their institution and providing that documentation to NOAA once the approval is obtained and prior to any NOAA-funded human subject testing. Proposals intending to use human test subjects should specify clearly in the timeline approximately when IRB approval will be obtained and when the testing is expected to occur.
- viii. **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://seagrants.noaa.gov/insideseagrants/Implementation/Networking/DiversityInclusion>.
- ix. **Works cited (does not count towards page limit)**
- All in-text citations should be listed here.
- x. **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.**
- xi. **Letters of Support (does not count against page limit).**
- All letters of support should be included here. Required in the instance that a Sea Grant program is applying on behalf of a partnership of multiple Sea Grant programs; otherwise, recommended but optional.
- b. **Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538)**
- i. A separate NEPA Questionnaire must be completed for the proposed project. The Questionnaire can be found here: <https://seagrants.noaa.gov/insideseagrants/Implementation>. Applicants must ensure that the Questionnaire is completed in full and includes detailed information regarding project location, methodology, and permits. Copies of all permits required for project activities should be included with application materials. If a permit is pending or planned, please provide this information.
- ii. Guidance on how to complete the Questionnaire and example Questionnaires for different types of projects can be found here: <https://seagrants.noaa.gov/insideseagrants/Implementation>.

The NEPA Questionnaire is required for any project that meets the following criteria:

- Environmental permits, authorizations or waivers
- Biological take and/or release
- Environmental sampling
- Hazardous or toxic substances and waste
- Permanent or temporary environmental effects
- Endangered or threatened species and/or protected areas
- Known or unknown risks to human health or the environment
- Controversial environmental subject matter

NEPA Statement

The NEPA Statement can be used instead of the NEPA Questionnaire for certain low-impact projects. If none of the project's activities will take place in the environment and the project is not research, you may include the NEPA Statement in place of the NEPA Questionnaire. However, NOAA has final responsibility to determine whether a project or action requires environmental compliance review. If NOAA determines that the NEPA Statement is not sufficient, staff may request that a NEPA Questionnaire be provided instead. Please use the following format for the NEPA Statement:

“This project’s activities include [list the activities]. Because no part of this project will involve research or the collection of environmental data or take place in the environment or involve the collection of environmental data, the NOAA environmental compliance questionnaire is not needed.”

Some examples of projects that can use the NEPA Statement are:

- Program management (i.e., any projects be assigned the “M/” project ID)
- Placeholder projects (e.g., "Future Competed Projects"; these projects will have a Special Award Condition on the grant and undergo environmental compliance review when the program submits an award action request to satisfy that special award condition at that time)
- Workshops or conferences that do not involve the above list of actions in the previous section
- Communication activities that do not involve the above list of actions in the previous section
- Fellowships where the Sea Grant Program does not have discretion over the fellow’s externally funded research

c. Data Management Plan

- i. All applications **must** include a Data Management Plan that is compliant with NOAA’s [Public Access to Research Results](#) Plan. The Data Management Plan should not exceed 2 pages. The Data Management Plan should include descriptions of the types of metadata and data expected to be created during the course of the project, plans for disseminating the metadata and data to the broader community, and plans for long-term archiving of the metadata and data.

- ii. If proposed activities 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. *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 proposed projects 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 Economics and Markets Collaborative** program, this includes:
 - A description of the need or needs to be addressed regarding economics and markets of U.S. coastal and marine, Great Lakes, and recirculating aquaculture industries and work (including that of the applicant and project team) that has been conducted to date addressing these topics.
 - A description of how the project will address the need or needs identified in the background.
2. **Technical/scientific merit** (25 points). This criterion assesses whether there are clear project goals and objectives, the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, the methods are appropriate, and if there is a clear description of partner involvement. For the **FY23 Aquaculture Economics and Markets Collaborative** program this includes:
 - Project Goals - The main goals and objectives of the proposal are clear.
 - Methodology - The approach and methods proposed for the work are appropriate and sufficient for the expected results.
 - Project partners - Partners are listed and their involvement in project activities is clearly described.
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 Economics and Markets Collaborative** 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** (10 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** (15 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 online 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:

Given that these projects will span FY2023 and FY2024 (two distinct omnibus years), these projects will be stand-alone, non-omnibus awards. Annual progress reporting in the form of the Research Performance Progress Report 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 Economics and Markets Collaborative program in the subject line.

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

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