SOUTH CAROLINA SEA GRANT CONSORTIUM

Charting Seas of Change

FY 24-25 Biennial Sea Grant Request for Proposals

Biennial Sea Grant Program February 1, 2024 to January 31, 2026

January 17, 2023

Important Dates, Registration, and Contact Information

Contact: proposals@scseagrant.org

Register to use S.C. Sea Grant Grants Management System, eSeaGrant: eseagrant.scseagrant.org/index.php

Concept Letters Due in eSeaGrant: February 17, 2023

Full Proposals Due in eSeaGrant: May 19, 2023

General Information Webinars:

January 27 at 1pm, Register at scseagrant-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvc-2rqzIqHNWeYpaxFzNTwVLjodIO__Pu

February 3 at 10am, Register at scseagrant-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtcuirrz4qEtf3I5k80Ea01DPkOT7JeliS

Contents

About the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium

The S.C. Sea Grant Consortium (Consortium) is a member of a nationwide network of 34 Sea Grant College Programs that are certified by the National Sea Grant College Program, which is located within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. The Consortium is charged with managing and administering the Sea Grant program for the State of South Carolina and regionally.

Our purpose is to generate and provide science-based information on issues and opportunities to improve the social and economic well-being of coastal residents while ensuring the optimal use and conservation of marine and coastal natural resources.

The Consortium member institutions are Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, Francis Marion University, Medical University of South Carolina, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, S.C. State University, The Citadel, and University of South Carolina. Our member institutions serve as our partners in research and outreach, and the executive officer of each institution serves on our board of directors. **Only faculty from Consortium member institutions are eligible to submit proposals though they may include Co-PIs from other institutions. Partnership is always encouraged.**

The National Sea Grant College Program champions diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) by recruiting, retaining, and preparing a diverse workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the diverse populations of coastal communities. Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication, and education programs that are made up of and serve people with unique backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives, and ways of thinking. We encourage applicants of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital statuses, job tenure, veteran status types, income, and socioeconomic status types to apply for this competitive research opportunity.

The Consortium announces a Biennial Research Program to address important questions in coastal conservation, resilience, sustainable development, fisheries and aquaculture, and education and workforce development. These are one- to two-year projects. About $500,000 is available each year, with projects usually funded around the range of $30,000 to $80,000 per year.

The Consortium is now soliciting proposals for consideration and possible inclusion in the Consortium's Biennial Program Plan for fiscal years 2024-2025 and 2026-2027. This is a two-phase competition, with concept letters submitted by February 17, 2023, review and

encourage or discourage emails sent by March 19, 2023, and full proposals due May 19, 2023. Included in this overview is a summary of the following topics:

- Overview of the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium and Proposal Process
- Priorities for Research in this Cycle
- The Proposal Process, Instructions, and Evaluation

Priorities for Research in this Cycle

Consortium program priorities fall within the context of the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program Strategic Plan and the Consortium's FY 24-27 Strategic Plan (www.scseagrant.org/strategic-plan-24-27) and focus on critical marine and coastal resource-related needs and opportunities for South Carolina and the region. PIs are strongly encouraged to submit Concept Letters t*hat directly address one or more of these priorities*. Concept letters that address other topics may be submitted; however, the burden of justifying the need for the effort proposed lies entirely with the investigator(s). Keys to Sea Grant funding include:

- Interdisciplinary projects involving the natural, physical, and social sciences are appropriate and strongly encouraged.
- Multi-institutional and regional efforts also are encouraged, as are collaborations with non-Consortium members, including S.C.-based historically black colleges and universities, and colleagues in business, industry, and government agencies.
- Formal engagement of targeted stakeholders (e.g., resource management entities, local communities, business and industry, etc.) in both the development of concept letters and proposals and in the projects, if funded, is expected.
- Project results must provide environmental, economic, and/or social benefits to an identified and engaged target constituency.
- Principle Investigators (PIs) are strongly encouraged to support the careers of undergraduate and graduate students, and to publish project results in scholarly journals.
- Development of a diverse and inclusive research team and an inclusive environment for engagement is strongly encouraged. See the Consortium's strategy for inclusiveness at www.scseagrant.org/dei.
- PIs should contact the project-relevant Consortium research, extension, education, and communications staff to discuss cooperators and stakeholders in the public and private sectors as well as engagement and outreach plans (see www.scseagrant.org/staff-directory for Consortium staff listing).

Special Note: In addition, the National Sea Grant College Program Office has announced plans to provide up to 50% co-funding of highly ranked aquaculture proposals received through this FY24-FY25 Request for Proposals process. This allows Sea Grant programs such as ours to access additional funds for aquaculture research and extension. We encourage proposals which seek to further the development of sustainable aquaculture in the state of South Carolina.

Resources

- S.C. Sea Grant Consortium dynamic document: Environmental Equity Checklist for Projects and Programs www.scseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/program-equity-checklist.pdf
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Current Conditions and Best Practices across the National Sea Grant Network seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/DEI%20Best%20Practices%20Paper.pdf
- "A Seat at the Table: Training for Whole-Community Climate Resilience Planning" NOAA Digital Coast coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/whole-community.html
- "Introduction to Stakeholder Participation" NOAA Digital Coast coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/stakeholder.html
- "Why Am I Always Being Researched?" Guidebook: Chicago Beyond chicagobeyond.org/researchequity
- EJSCREEN: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool www.epa.gov/ejscreen
- SCDHEC Environmental Justice Community Tool sc-dhec.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f8ff40f3e0fb46f2b5209ae9252dc3a0 This resource was developed to provide a visualization of environmental, demographic, and resource information at locations throughout South Carolina. This tool is intended to support initiatives spearheaded by community residents and other stakeholders as they develop and implement community awareness projects, community action plans, educational programs, grant proposals, revitalization efforts, technical assistance centers, etc.

Available Funding

The Consortium anticipates having a minimum of $500,000 available for new project starts in February 1, 2024. Because our program proposal will cover two years, two-year projects will start February 1, 2024 and one-year projects may be scheduled to begin February 1 in either 2024 or 2025, dependent on FY2024 and FY2025 federal appropriations. A separate invitation for one-year proposals for 2025 starts will not be issued. Successful major projects

through the Consortium are generally supported in the range of $30,000 to $80,000 per year (somewhat higher for multi-investigator, multi-institutional proposals) and must provide at least the required 50% non-federal matching dollars (that is, non-federal match of at least $1 is required for every $2 requested from Sea Grant). *In the spirit of cooperation among Consortium member institutions, and in order to get the maximum benefit from funds available for its programs, it is the long-standing policy of the Consortium Board of Directors not to use Sea Grant funds to pay indirect costs to its member institutions; however, importantly, indirect costs may be used to satisfy the National Sea Grant College Program's 50% matching fund requirement.*

Priorities

The Consortium operates on a four-year strategic plan. All proposals should address this plan as it is built off a substantial effort to include the current issues, challenges, and opportunities provided by our constituents. Be sure to read through all areas in the strategic plan, https://www.scseagrant.org/strategic-plan-24-27/, that might apply to your interests as many priorities could fit into multiple program areas but are only listed once. In developing the plan with input from Consortium advisors and stakeholders, specific priorities were identified and are listed below. You might consider how to address one or more of them in your proposal. These are listed by program area and Goal number but are in no particular order.

HEALTHY COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

More information can be found in our strategic plan, www.scseagrant.org/strategic-plan-24-27

Goal 1: Sound scientific information is available to support ecosystem-based approaches to land use and resource management decision-making throughout the coastal and ocean environment.

Priorities:

- Forecast physical changes (e.g., in temperature, salinity, turbidity, hydrology, freshwater delivery) on South Carolina's coastal ecosystems and resources due to increased variability in coastal hydrology and projected sea-level rise, and identify recommended strategies to address the effects.
- Assess and characterize groundwater in coastal areas to examine salinity content and increasing height/depth due to sea-level rise.
- Assess and develop practical and realistic models that predict and forecast the impacts

of land-use change and practices on coastal watersheds (e.g., rivers, estuaries, salt marshes, tidal creeks) and the resources therein.

- Develop estuarine sediment transport models supporting the establishment of a regional sediment budget for the State of South Carolina.

- Assess the extent to which climate variability (e.g., droughts, salinity changes, precipitation) and development changes in coastal and upland watersheds have impacted drinking water supplies and living marine resources (e.g., quality, quantity) in coastal communities.

- Evaluate and assess the extent to which harmful algal blooms (HABs) and contaminants that are captured in stormwater ponds travel to receiving waters.

- Estimate social, economic, and cultural values for ecosystem services (e.g., water quality enhancement, flood protection, value of coastal wetlands in supporting fisheries) provided by coastal habitats, including sand dunes, wetlands, salt marshes, oyster reefs, and beaches, to inform coastal zone management decision-making.

Goal 2: Productivity and function of coastal and ocean ecosystems are improved through restoration of function and enhancement.

Priorities:

- Facilitate stakeholder-driven and community-based approaches to habitat enhancement and restoration.

- Support research, education, and outreach programs that seek to prevent, remove, repurpose, and dispose of marine debris.

- Working collaboratively with state and regional partners, assess and mitigate the impacts of invasive species on coastal ecosystems and human communities.

- Develop stakeholder-driven and community-based demonstration projects that effectively protect and restore oyster and salt marsh habitats through the use of new approaches and technologies and the incorporation of evaluation metrics.

- Evaluate and compare coastal habitat restoration strategies to identify those that best improve the functionality of coastal creeks and streams with changes in sea level and increased weather variability.

SUSTAINABLE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMY

More information can be found in our strategic plan, www.scseagrant.org/strategic-plan-24-27

Goal 1: Healthy and viable coastal communities and economies include economic

opportunity and equity in coastal access.

Priorities:

- Characterize the social, economic, cultural, and demographic factors that impact South Carolina's traditional water-dependent activities and identify options for sustaining these uses.
- Assess how climate variability and change may affect working waterfronts.
- Identify the potential economic, societal, and environmental effects of expanding and new uses of the nearshore and offshore ocean environment on coastal waterfront communities and consider effects on preserving heritage and history.
- Identify avenues for rural, island, and small-town coastal communities to engage in the tourism economy in sustainable economic, environmental, and culturally diverse ways.
- Use ethnography and storytelling to characterize maritime cultural heritage and environmental sustainability in South Carolina.
- Evaluate impacts of public access on coastal habitats, and co-produce planning and policy with coastal communities to evaluate current and future needs for sustainable coastal access.
- Assess the need for enhanced services at coastal beaches, waterfronts, and waterways.
- Generate and distribute information, management tools, and technologies on beach, marsh, and dune systems that can help communities manage coastal environments for recreation, tourism, maritime heritage, and cultural history.

Goal 2: Coastal communities manage and conserve the resources needed to sustain their diversity and quality of life in light of rapid population growth, land-use change, and variations in climate and weather.

Priorities:

- Develop decision-support tools that illustrate possible changes in land use and land cover in response to projected population growth and changing climate and weather patterns.
- Identify and evaluate regionalized approaches to land use, watershed, and coastal ocean planning to support integrated community and economic development projects.
- Identify, test, and deliver local and regional information on the cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and durability of watershed planning and management techniques (e.g., LID, Green Infrastructure) to control non-point source pollution.
- Evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and durability of water and stormwater management techniques, including existing and sustainable development practices, and

inform target audiences, such as individual landowners and community planners, of the results.

- Evaluate the impacts from sea-level rise and climate variability on various Low Impact Development (LID) and other innovative systems.
- Evaluate culturally significant sites in coastal communities to determine how environmental changes and related anthropogenic actions have impacted these sites, and document those that are vulnerable to future impacts in order to maximize conservation potential.

Goal 3: State and local decision-makers possess the knowledge about the complex inter-relationships among the social, economic, cultural, and environmental characteristics of the coastal ocean (offshore) environment of the state and Southeast region.

Priorities:

- Communicate science-based information and foster information exchange with communities and stakeholders on offshore energy development (e.g., issues, policies, technologies, infrastructure needs, costs and benefits, and impacts) in South Carolina.
- Assess existing and potential public- and private-sector uses of the coastal and ocean resources which exist within South Carolina's territorial sea to document and describe current – and the potential for future – multiple-use conflicts.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

More information can be found in our strategic plan, www.scseagrant.org/strategic-plan-24-27

Goal 1: Widespread community understanding of the risks associated with living, working, and doing business along the South Carolina coast encourages public and private decision-makers to create and adopt policies, plans, and ordinances to reduce risks, manage weather and climate events, and speed recovery.

Priorities:

- Assess the effects of the interaction of short-term weather and long-term climate change on urban and rural communities, critical infrastructure, built and natural environments, cultural resources, and economies of South Carolina's diverse coastal communities.
- Assess key audiences' trusted sources and risk perception of weather and climate in South Carolina to inform response and improve communication about risk before, during, and after a weather or climate event.
- Assess the level of environmental health literacy, especially in high exposure

communities, to determine effective strategies in raising awareness of the connection between a healthy environment and human well-being.

- Identify and analyze opportunities and barriers that state and local decision-makers face in using information about climate variability in planning and/or undertaking adaptation options, including initiating adaptation planning and mainstreaming adaptation to climate variability and change into decision-making processes (e.g., local comprehensive plans, hazard mitigation plans, beachfront management plans).

- Engage in meaningful information exchange and knowledge co-production with historically marginalized communities and neighborhoods in order to support science-based and place-based adaptation actions that enhance community resilience to climate change.

- Conduct case studies to examine climate hazard and adaptation scenarios within estuarine and shoreline environments and find solutions to implement adaptation measures in rural and low-capacity communities.

- Develop co-produced science-based timelines for climate change and sea-level rise impacts and effects to ecosystems and communities, outlining socioecological tipping points.

- Develop interdisciplinary approaches to weather and climate hazards that integrate findings from social and natural science to support effective policy and management decisions at all levels of government.

- Conduct and convey results from community-scale vulnerability analyses of South Carolina's infrastructure, resources, and people to weather and climate scenarios.

- Implement public education programs on short- and long-term climate variability and long-term hazards (e.g., sea-level rise).

Goal 2: Generate and distribute information, management tools, and technologies on beach, marsh, and dune systems that can help communities prepare for and mitigate the impacts of shoreline changes.

Priorities:

- Generate and deliver information materials on the risks of chronic and episodic events such as rip currents, beach hazards, and flooding to tourists, residents, and communities.

- Identify and convey information to coastal communities about beach nourishment and estuarine shoreline protection options, including permitting and funding issues.

- Assess and predict long-term and episodic trends in beachfronts and tidal marsh shorelines accounting for anthropogenic responses (e.g., nourishment, hard structures,

and dune alterations) under changing climate conditions, including shifts from high marsh to low marsh and feasibility of marsh to propagate into different types of inland systems.

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

More information can be found in our strategic plan, www.scseagrant.org/strategic-plan-24-27

Goal 1: Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture that balance the long-term ecological health of the resource and the social, economic, and cultural needs of communities.

Priorities:

- Document the relationships between fisheries production in estuaries and the quality and quantity of available habitat.
- Assess the effects of dynamic short-term and long-term processes related to changes in climate, hydrology, and wild fisheries recruitment and migration patterns and determine the impacts such changes have or may have on fishing effort, landings, and aquaculture production.
- Document the degree of the "Greying of the Fleet" in South Carolina commercial fisheries, the implications of the aging workforce and infrastructure, and explore strategies to mitigate these issues.
- Build upon proven technological advancements in fish population studies, such as molecular genetics, infrared spectroscopy, remote video and audio monitoring, and other methods as a means for fiscal efficiency and improved accuracy in estimating marine resource stocks.
- Assess and characterize the natural (e.g., climate change) and human (e.g., encroachment) threats to the long-term viability of wild fish populations and aquaculture species.
- Develop methods to estimate the level of recreational harvest of key shellfish and crustacean species in South Carolina (e.g., oysters, clams, shrimp, crabs) to inform sustainable fisheries management planning.
- Develop novel and alternative gear and system designs and materials to support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture industries.

Goal 2: A healthy domestic seafood industry that harvests, produces, processes, and markets seafood responsibly and sustainably.

Priorities:

- Identify value-added opportunities to diversify revenue streams for fisheries and aquaculture businesses.

- Document and assess changes in the demographic and socioeconomic dynamics of South Carolina's commercial, for-hire, and recreational fisheries, including examination of (a) shifts in the average age of fishermen, (b) changes in operational expenses and regulations, (c) how the fisheries will change relative to offshore vs. inshore fishing, increased shore based fishing, targeting different species, etc., and (d) economic incentives and policy alternatives that could be implemented to reserve waterfront access for such uses.

- Investigate sustained technology transfer programming to commercial shellfish harvesters and shellfish aquaculture operators to ensure sustainable and economically viable businesses.

- Conduct research to identify economically viable and environmentally sustainable aquaculture practices and operations at a variety of scales, with an emphasis on novel commercial species such as finfish, baitfish, algae, and coastal plants.

SCIENTIFIC LITERACY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

More information can be found in our strategic plan, www.scseagrant.org/strategic-plan-24_27

Goal 1: Coastal and ocean K-12 education programs foster scientific literacy, stewardship, and exposure to ocean- and STEM-based careers in both formal and nonformal settings.

Priorities:

- Design, implement, and enhance K-12 student marine education and stewardship programs that incorporate the Consortium's priority research topic areas, are accessible and equitable throughout the diverse communities of the state, and align with the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready State Science Standards.

- Design, implement, and enhance professional development opportunities for formal and nonformal educators that provide content and resources for incorporating ocean sciences concepts into their place of instruction.

- Design, implement, and/or enhance environmental stewardship-focused programs that incorporate citizen and/or community science and are inclusive for youth and adults across a range of ages and abilities.

Goal 2: The next generation of coastal and ocean professionals is diverse and has the

scientific and technical skills needed to solve complex resource problems and support a robust coastal economy.

Priorities:

- Encourage the involvement of new faculty, professional staff, and students in Consortium-supported programs and activities.
- Provide educational and workforce development opportunities in coastal- and marine-fields of study to a diverse cadre of undergraduate and graduate students at South Carolina universities and colleges through research support and fellowship and internship experiences.
- Assess, predict, and communicate current and potential workforce needs and opportunities in the Southeast.
- Recruit and retain under-represented and underserved groups into the coastal and ocean sciences at the college/university level.

Goal 3: Improve public understanding about the coastal and marine environment and related community issues.

Priorities:

- Provide engagement opportunities for the interested public.
- Enhance the level of environmental health literacy, especially in high-exposure communities, to determine effective strategies in raising awareness of the connection between a healthy environment and human well-being.
- Ensure that Consortium communications and education programs are effective in providing science-based information that is delivered to target audiences in a timely fashion and in appropriate formats.

The Proposal Process

Nearly one year is required from the conceptualization of a proposal idea to the formal award of Sea Grant funds due to a two-phase proposal process and review. All Consortium member faculty are eligible to be Principle Investigators (PI) and may include investigators from non-member institutions, businesses, organizations, and communities as co-PIs and subawardees. The Concept Letters are reviewed for applicability to Consortium objectives, engagement (including planning), and commitment to inclusion, as found in the strategic plan, www.scseagrant.org/strategic-plan-24-27. Proposers are then encouraged or discouraged for submitting a full proposal. All Consortium member faculty who submit a concept letter can submit a full proposal though those discouraged are unlikely to be successful. The full proposal is reviewed for technical excellence, community impact, and likelihood of success in achieving the objectives. Selected proposals will be included in the Consortium's FY 24-27 Omnibus Request to the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. After review and pending approval, projects will

start February 1, 2024 unless otherwise notified. The start date of some approved one-year projects submitted by investigators in response to the Consortium's Sea Grant RFP may be deferred to the second year of a biennium. The Consortium's Sea Grant Program operates on a biennial cycle of project reporting on an annual basis.

Contact with Consortium management, research, extension, education, or communications staff is advantageous and required during the Concept Letter development process (see www.scseagrant.org/staff-directory for a listing of Consortium staff and contact information). Projects being considered for Concept Letter development should be discussed with respect to merit, applicability, and potential for funding support.

Proposal Guidelines and Review

Timetable for Proposal Submission and Review

(E-)Mail/postal mail Sea Grant FY24-FY26 RFP early contact-announcement	October 25, 2022
Disseminate Consortium FY22-FY25 RFP and Guidelines	January 17, 2023
PIs should register in eSeaGrant grants management system	Prior to February 15, 2023
Concept Letters Due COB in eSeaGrant system	**February 17, 2023**
Review of Concept Letters	February 20-March 16, 2023
Notification of *Encourage or Discourage* for Full Proposals	March 17, 2023
Full Proposal Development	March 17–May 19, 2023
Full Proposals Due in eSeaGrant, Signed and Endorsed by your SPO	**May 19, 2023**
Written Reviews of Full Proposals	May 20–June 20, 2023
Technical Review Panel Evaluation of Full Proposals	July 10-August 7, 2023
Selection of Final Set of Proposals to be included in FY24-FY26 Sea Grant Program Plan	August 8–12, 2023
Notification of Successful Proposers	August 13, 2023
Successful Proposers Prepare Written Responses to Peer Reviews; Complete NEPA Forms	August 13–September 15, 2023
Discussion of Omnibus Program Plan between Consortium Executive Director and NSGCP Program Officer	Late September 2023
Consortium Prepares and Submits Final FY24-FY26 Sea Grant Omnibus Program Plan	October 2023
Start Date for FY24 Projects	February 1, 2024

Concept Letters

The first step in the proposal process is the preparation and submission of a Concept Letter. PIs should register with the Consortium's eSeaGrant grants management system when you decide to submit a full proposal. It is important to do this ahead of the submission time as the Consortium will not be responsible for last minute user errors.

Sea Grant competitive research and outreach projects should be outcome-oriented, address societal problems, issues, and opportunities, engage users from the outset, support economic gains and/or savings, and result in the application of science-based information to foster decision-making. All projects should take an inclusive approach for diversity and equity of research participants and end users/communities. Prospective PIs are expected to contact the Consortium's Management, Extension, Education, and/or Communications staff for assistance identifying users/stakeholders and developing outreach plans as well as to engage Consortium staff in the proposed work.

Concept Letters will be reviewed and evaluated by an external advisory panel consisting of state, federal, and out-of-state scientists, outreach specialists, coastal community representatives as well as coast- and ocean-related organization leaders. The Concept Letters will be reviewed for:

- Reasonable approach to research question(s).
- Suitability to Consortium strategic plan and research priorities.
- Engagement of target audiences in developing research questions.
- Descriptions of how results from the proposed efforts will be translated into information, tools, and documentable outcomes for coastal decision-makers whether they be government officials, community leaders, businesses, organizations, or residents.
- Outreach and education.
- Commitment to inclusiveness.

Prospective investigators with Concept Letters will be notified by **March 19, 2023** of the review and evaluation results as well as the process for full proposal submission. PIs will be encouraged or discouraged to prepare and submit full proposals. Any PI that submits a Concept Letter is allowed to submit a full proposal; however, encouraged proposals have a much higher likelihood of being selected during the full proposal process.

Structure of Concept Letters

All Concept Letters are to be submitted through the eSeaGrant grants management system and are due by 5:00 p.m. on February 17, 2023. Concept Letters have a maximum of five pages; Up to three pages can be used for the following narrative:

Problem Statement: Describe in concise terms the problem and/or opportunity to be examined, identify the targeted stakeholders and constituencies involved in the issue and the project, and specifically reference the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium strategic objectives and program priority(ies) it addresses.

Objectives: Clearly list the overall objectives and hypotheses for the proposed project, and list specific objectives by year if proposing a two-year project. Most projects are expected to be completed within two years of implementation; however, if the project is anticipated to take more than two years to complete, PIs will have to submit a Concept Letter (and Full Proposal) for the two-year period beyond the initial biennium for competition.

Expected Outcomes: The PI should outline planned outcomes and the timeframes (on an annual basis, for each year of the proposed effort) in which they will be achieved. Expected outcome statements should address how the proposed project is expected to contribute to the economic, environmental, social, and/or educational sectors of South Carolina and the region. The following list provides some examples of the types of statements the Consortium is seeking:

- New tools/technologies to be developed for specific use by communities, decision-makers, and organizations.
- Number of jobs to be created and/or saved.
- Changes in community, government, and/or industry "behavior" (e.g., passage of new ordinances, adoption of new policies, etc.) that may result.
- Economic value (e.g., revenues and/or savings) of expected benefits to target audiences.
- Number of new or adapted curricula developed and used in schools.
- Number of patent applications to be filed.

In addition, PIs are strongly encouraged to support the careers of undergraduate and graduate students, and to publish project results in scholarly journals. Therefore, PIs should outline their expectations for both in this section.

Targeted Audiences, Outreach, and Education: Identify the users, organizations, and

groups that will be involved in the project and benefit from the work. Briefly identify the information products to be generated and the mechanisms that will be used to deliver resulting information to the target audiences. PIs are strongly encouraged to make contact with their target audiences prior to submission of Concept Letters to solicit their interest and seek their involvement (co-production) in the proposed project. Prospective PIs are expected to contact the Consortium's Sea Grant Management, Extension, Education, and/or Communications staff for assistance identifying users/stakeholders and developing outreach plans as well as to engage Consortium staff in the proposed work (see www.scseagrant. org/staff-directory for Consortium staff listing). *Note that Consortium staff may participate in a proposal if the work fits well into their planned activities and they agree to participate in the project if funded. There is no funding needed for staff participating in the proposal; however, you will still need to include funding for meetings, workshops, extended travel for Consortium staff collaborators and community partners, graphic arts, printing costs, etc. as usual for engagement and outreach activities.*

Inclusiveness: Describe how diversity, equity, and inclusion are integrated into the proposed work. The Consortium is committed to continuing efforts to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion among its staff and research partners. We welcome and encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds. The Consortium expects to fund research and outreach projects that respond to the needs of the diverse people and communities in our state. Engaging users early on in co-production of research needs and data makes for results that are readily applicable to the intended user. PIs are encouraged to provide details on how activities will contribute to the achievement of socially-relevant outcomes including but not limited to:

- Increased racial and ethnic diversity in coastal and marine-related sciences,
- Increased public scientific literacy and public engagement, and
- Improved well-being in rural, historically marginalized or under resourced communities.

Anticipated Results/Benefits: Outline the anticipated results and their potential application/implications for the intended users of the research.

Methods: Provide an overview of the research plan - reviewers should be able to make a preliminary determination about the appropriateness and innovativeness of the proposed approach for achieving the stated objectives. PIs must indicate their willingness to include a data sharing plan in their Full Proposals.

1. On a separate 4th page include:

Personnel, Collaborators, and Stakeholders: The Consortium strongly encourages PIs to include support for undergraduate and/or graduate students in their work, involve targeted stakeholders throughout the project, and include outreach specialists to assist with information exchange and delivery with stakeholders. PIs are encouraged to contact any of the Consortium's program staff for their assistance; the involvement of outreach specialists from other state institutions also is welcome. Outreach and education specialists should be included on the project team.

List the names and affiliations of all investigators, cooperators, senior staff, and students (if appropriate), and briefly describe their roles in the proposed effort. Also describe all stakeholder partners, user interactions, extension and/or education program staff involvement, and other details on those individuals who will contribute to the project. Both partners and investigators can be added after submission of a Concept Letter if the addition strengthens the work.

Budget/Duration: Include a rough budget estimate of requested funds, (broken down into salaries, wages, fringe benefits, travel, equipment (value of $5,000 or higher, supplies, and other costs) for each year of the project. Indicate the length of the proposed effort (in years one and/or two) that should look something like this. Note items that you would like reviewers to know such as a subaward to another university, participant costs, number of students supported, etc.

		Year 1	Year 2	Total	Notes
Wages	Faculty				
	Student(s)				
Fringe benefits	Faculty				
	Student(s)				
Travel					
Equipment					
Subawards or Contracts					
Supplies					
Other costs					
Totals					

2. Literature cited may be included on a 5th page.

3. Optional: Conceptual graphics are always appreciated and may be included on a 4th or 5th page if needed.

Preparation and Submission of Concept Letters

Please prepare your Concept Letter using the following guidelines:

- The narrative of the Concept Letter should be no longer than three (3) 8.5" x 11" pages.
- Do not use a font smaller than 11 point, or margins less than moderate, 1 inch top and bottom and 0.75 inches on each side.

All Concept Letters must be submitted to the Consortium by February 17, 2023 by 5:00 p.m. PIs should register with the Consortium's eseagrant submission system, eseagrant. scseagrant.org/index.php in advance of submission. It is important to do this ahead of the submission time as the Consortium will not be responsible for last minute user problems, however, staff will be available on submission day in case there are incompatibility or other system-related issues. Please contact Susannah Sheldon, susannah.sheldon@scseagrant.org for help with registration.

Evaluation of Concept Letters

RUBRIC FOR SCORING

The following criteria and rating scales will be used to rate Concept Letters. Please note that the Concept Letter evaluation is weighted to Rationale and Significance, Products and Impact, Education and Student Engagement, and slightly less to inclusion and diversity and project team. Those that score well will be invited to submit Full Proposals. Full Proposals will be weighted to scientific and technical merit, products and impacts, and budget. This scheme will allow us to select Full Proposals that meet the needs of quality applied research and adheres to the strategic plan, then to evaluate those Full Proposals for technical excellence. (Per National Sea Grant Office guidance, all proposals submitted as a Concept Letter can be submitted as a Full Proposal though those not encouraged for full proposals are less likely to be successful.)

100 points total	Exceptional (4-5 points)	Very Good (2-3 points)	Moderate (1-2 points)	Needs Improvement (0-1 point)	Score Weight
1. Scientific and technical merit	The proposed work is innovative, well-designed, and advances the field of collaborative coastal and marine science. The project design and objectives are clearly described with an effective timeline. Combined, the project has a high chance of success and applicability.	The proposed work is well-designed, and advances the field of collaborative coastal and marine science. The project design is clearly described but may need some improvement for the greatest opportunity of success.	The proposed work needs some design modifications in order to ensure a strong chance of success. While the work does not advance the field of collaborative coastal and marine science, it is applicable to S.C. coastal communities.	The proposed work needs significant design modifications. While the work does not advance the field of collaborative coastal and marine science, it is applicable to S.C. coastal communities.	1
2. Rationale and significance	The proposal includes a detailed description of how the proposed work strongly addresses the Consortium's priority needs and is likely to make a positive difference to coastal South Carolina communities and businesses.	The proposed work addresses one or more themes and goals of the Consortium's strategic priorities and is likely to make a positive difference to coastal South Carolina communities and businesses.	The proposed work broadly addresses one or more themes and goals of the Consortium's strategic priorities, but does not describe how these themes and goals are addressed through the proposed work.	The proposal is not strongly relevant to the Consortium's strategic priorities or the needs of South Carolina communities and businesses.	4
3. Education and outreach	The proposed work involves strong engagement with students and/or communities to create learning opportunities and drive co-produced solutions. Steps are taken to include historically marginalized stakeholders and document the potential impact of the research and results.	The proposal details specific plans to translate the research goals and outputs to raise public awareness and/or education about the problem and pathways for solutions. The authors show awareness of how the community may be impacted by the research and results.	The proposed work includes some messaging that can be accessed by the involved communities, but the proposal lacks specifics on how communities will be involved and/or impacted from the translation of the research.	The proposal does not include steps for direct engagement with the communities who are most affected by the topic of research. Research results are only disseminated through academic channels or technical organizations that can't be easily accessed by the public.	3

4. Products and impact	The proposed products are clearly described and are likely to make a positive difference to S.C. stakeholders and influence coastal and marine decision-making.	The proposed products are likely to make a positive difference to S.C. stakeholders and/or influence coastal and marine decision-making.	The proposed products may influence coastal and marine decision-making and move the field of science forward.	The proposed products are likely to impact those involved in the field of science.	4
5. Diversity and inclusion	The proposal team (including students) and project actions include and engage at the leadership level individuals from groups that are under-resourced, rural, or historically marginalized. These groups are involved with the interpretation and dissemination of research outputs and outcomes.	The proposal team (including students) includes diverse members in the project design and engages individuals from groups that are under-resourced, rural, or historically marginalized.	The proposed activity broadens the participation of under-represented groups in project team and/or engaged partners.	The proposal does not state how diversity, equity, and inclusion are considered within the project team and work with the S.C. coastal communities.	2
6. Budget	The proposed work takes a cost-effective approach that supports students and also values the time and expertise of stakeholders.	The proposed work takes a cost-effective approach that also values the time and expertise of stakeholders.	The proposed work is at a reasonable cost that also values the time and expertise of stakeholders.	The proposed work is at a reasonable cost with minimal support for stakeholders.	1
7. Student engagement	The proposed work will cultivate a new generation of diverse coastal- and marine-related professionals through significant student participation.	Student involvement is clearly described, and students will play a central role in the planned activities.	Student involvement is clearly described, yet students are not given a key role in the project development.	The proposal describes minimal student participation.	3

8. Proposal team	The project leadership team is a blend of subject-area experts, early-career members, and novel partnerships that achieves a diverse and productive team.	The project leadership team is composed of experts with high qualifications who will deliver results effectively in partnership with stakeholders.	The project leadership team is composed of experts with high qualifications, yet lacks novel partnerships and diversity of disciplines, career experience, and/or backgrounds.	The project leadership team does not demonstrate qualifications needed for a successful outcome and/or includes no diversity of field, career experience, and background.	2

Full Proposals

Full Proposals are due in eSeaGrant by 5:00 p.m. on May 19, 2023.

Full Proposals should be prepared carefully with respect to clarity and conciseness. The Full Proposal will be reviewed for:

- Suitability to Consortium strategic plan and research needs.
- Clarity of objectives.
- Approach and methods for obtaining results.
- Engagement of target audiences in developing research questions.
- Descriptions of how results from the proposed efforts will be translated into information, tools, and documentable outcomes for the intended audience.
- Dissemination of results.
- Commitment to inclusiveness.

It is particularly important to fully indicate the nature of the problem or opportunity being examined, the Consortium priority(ies) being addressed, the relationship of the work to problems or opportunities of interest to the state and region, the nature of the results and products of the study, how the results will be of benefit (impacts) and to whom (target audiences), how targeted audiences will be involved in the project, and how the results will be delivered to those targeted audiences through specified outreach approaches. In addition, sufficient detail should be given on the methodological approach to be used in conducting the study. Each of these factors, along with the evaluation criteria listed below will be evaluated during the peer- and panel-review processes.

Structure of Full Proposals

Sections and forms needed for proposal preparation will be found in the Consortium's

eSeaGrant online grants management system. All forms will be uploaded to the system. Instructions will be provided with the outcomes of the Concept Letter review.

The Full Proposal will include:

1. Proposal title, project leaders, and endorsement (Consortium forms)
2. Project Summary
3. Introduction/Background/Rationale
4. Objectives
5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
6. Detailed Methods
7. Engagement, Outreach, and Education
8. Expected Outcomes, Anticipated Benefits, and Products
9. Related Work
10. Data Sharing and Management Plan
11. References
12. Milestone Chart
13. Vitae (Consortium form, maximum two pages per PI)
14. Budget
15. Detailed Budget Justification (suggested form)

The **proposal endorsement** serves as the official cover sheet for the proposal. This page includes the project title, principal investigator's name and affiliation, and the total amount requested for the duration of the proposed effort. It also serves as the signature page for institutional endorsements; all Full Proposals should be reviewed by and endorsed, on the Proposal Endorsement page, by the Sponsored Programs office at your institution for accurate budget and matching funds commitment. Investigators are encouraged to submit their Full Proposals to their institution's research/business office for review and signatures well before they are due.

The **title** should accurately reflect the nature of the proposal project and be free of technical jargon. Choose words to which the designated users of the project can relate. The name(s) and affiliation(s) of the key project investigator(s) should follow underneath the title.

The **introduction/background** should be a well-developed rationale for the proposed and should emphasize the importance of the work to the target audience(s). The problem or need should be stated succinctly and should clearly define the audience who desires the

solution or will benefit from the work, and briefly describe how the audience will be engaged. If the proposed research and/or outreach effort has economic importance, state the nature of the potential economic payoff in an objective fashion. This section also should provide a summary of the current literature as it relates to the project; a demonstrated knowledge of the literature is a key component of a successful Sea Grant proposal. Finally, the Consortium priority(ies) that the proposal addresses should be identified.

The **objectives** section should begin with a statement of the overall goal of the project. The goal should be followed by a succinct set of measurable objectives and, for quantitative research proposals, one or more testable hypotheses. Proposals should include a set of concisely stated, measurable objectives for each year of work.

Objectives clearly state what the project will accomplish, and realistically identify the proposed outcome and application of project results. For example, "increase our knowledge of …" is not measurable language; rather "to determine the role of [X] in the [Y] system" is much more appropriate, and allows for the determination of whether or not the project, in fact, has done so. A short paragraph should follow each objective to support its rationale and a protocol to determine success.

The **diversity, equity, and inclusiveness** section should describe how these ideas are concretely addressed in the proposed work, including in the project team (faculty, students, and partners) and in selecting end users for engagement and outreach. Engaging users early in the co-production of research needs, data sharing, and product outputs makes for results that are readily applicable to the intended user(s). PIs are encouraged to provide details on how activities will contribute to the achievement of socially-relevant outcomes. If appropriate, describe how you will approach rural, historically marginalized or under-resourced communities including how will you value their time. How will local knowledge be equitably utilized in the research? How does this project contribute to scientific and/or environmental literacy? PIs should include their proposed budget for engaging target audiences and sharing information.

Technical procedures and the development and analyses of data should be fully detailed in the **methods** section. Use the objectives as subheadings and describe the procedures and methods to be used to ensure success. Provide, a timetable that identifies the sequence and duration by which objectives will be completed; refer to the guidance on milestone charts below. As identified in the Concept Letter, expand on the extent to which a proposal specifically identifies and involves its user groups and what outreach and education efforts will be used to develop and/or share project results. Identify information products that will be generated and the mechanisms, including outreach personnel, who will deliver resulting information to the target audience(s). Describe the **outreach plan and information products**

to result from the proposed project. These products will depend on the audiences to be reached as identified in the introduction. Journal articles and technical reports are geared to the professional community and are clearly expected to be generated by Sea Grant PIs; other forms of communication materials (e.g., website, social media, booklets, and brochures) are geared to community stakeholders and the end users of the research. Please consider whether translation into your audience's primary language would be appropriate and, if so, dedicate funds for this purpose. If Consortium Extension, Education, or Communications staff will play a role in the proposed effort in terms of disseminating resultant information, describe the participation. *Note that Consortium staff may participate in a proposal if the work fits well into their planned activities and they agree to participate in the project if funded. There is no funding needed for staff participating in the proposal, however you will still need to include funding for meetings, workshops, extended travel for Consortium staff collaborators and community partners, graphic arts, printing costs, etc. as usual for engagement and outreach activities.*

Any workshops and meetings proposed should adhere to the Sea Grant Association policy for meetings, which has been adopted by the Consortium: www.scseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/SGA-meetings-policy.pdf

The PI should identify specific **expected outcome(s)** for each year of the proposed work. The PI should outline planned outcomes and the timeframes (on an annual basis, for each year of the proposed effort) in which they will be achieved. Expected outcome statements should address how the proposed project is expected to contribute to the economic, environmental, social, and/or educational sectors of South Carolina and the region. The following list provides some examples of the types of statements the Consortium is seeking:

- New tools/technologies to be developed for specific end users.
- Number of jobs created and/or saved.
- Changes in community, government, and/or industry "behavior" (e.g., passage of new ordinances, adoption of new policies, etc.).
- Economic value (e.g., revenues and/or savings) of benefits to target audiences.
- Number of new or adapted curricula developed and used in schools.
- Number of patent applications to be filed.

In addition, *PIs are strongly encouraged to support the careers of undergraduate and graduate students, and to publish project results in scholarly journals.* Therefore, PIs should outline their expectations for both in this section.

Please note that all PIs will be expected to document and report their outputs and outcomes in their initial ninth (9th) month, then annual and final reports. The Consortium will collectively use these statements in order to: (1) report on progress in achieving its

performance targets as outlined in its strategic plan as required by the National Sea Grant College Program and (2) evaluate the progress of each Sea Grant project on an annual basis based on, among other things, success in achieving outcomes.

The **anticipated benefits** section should concisely state how the results of the proposed project would improve or change the current situation based upon the information and products produced. How will the target audience(s) and stakeholders benefit from the work, and to what degree? What economic benefits might result from the successful completion of the proposed work? The Consortium and National Sea Grant College Program will determine whether the proposed effort is conceptually sound based on the arguments made in this section. Stay in touch with the Consortium staff on your progress and programs. We would like to share your work with others and provide other opportunities to you and your students.

Finally, relationships to other studies and programs being performed both by the PIs and others related to the proposed work should be described in a brief **related work** section. This section should identify other ongoing and related work in the proposed area of study and state how the proposal complements and/or augments this other work.

DATA SHARING PLAN

All environmental data and information collected and/or created under NOAA grants and cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge, and in a timely manner (typically no later than two years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy, or by security requirements. Please review the NOAA Sea Grant data sharing directive (link below) prior to preparing your plan.

To comply with this requirement, prospective Principal Investigator(s) must include a **Data Sharing and Management Plan** in the Full Proposal stage, explaining how data and metadata will be offered and shared. Funds may be budgeted in the Full Proposal for this task.

The Sea Grant Data Management Policy and Framework is available (www.scseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/NOAA-Data-Sharing-Directive.pdf) for guidance in developing the data management plan and includes a fillable template for submission with the Full Proposal. Please keep in mind the following when drafting your plan:

- The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, may be posted with the published data.
- Environmental data and information produced under this award and which are made

public must be accompanied by the following statement: "These environmental data and related items of information have not been formally disseminated by NOAA and do not represent and should not be construed to represent any agency determination, view, or policy."

- NOAA may at its own discretion use information from the Data/Information Sharing Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a catalogue to indicate the pending availability of new data.
- Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

References citing appropriate background and method-based literature should be listed according to the standards established in the field of study.

Milestone charts must be completed to illustrate the timetable for the completion of all tasks necessary to meet the proposed objectives. This will allow the Consortium to track progress of the project. www.scseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/Milestone-Report.pdf

This schedule should include a mechanism for interacting with users, such as the engagement of an advisory committee or presentations at appropriate professional meetings. Time for preparing the final report must also be included.

Reporting schedule if federal funding occurs in normal timeline:

Initial 9-month report	October 31, 2024	This can be short.
1st annual report	January 31, 2025	
2nd annual report	January 31, 2026	Additional reports will be required if no cost extensions are granted.
Final Report	January 31, 2026	Additional reports will be required if no cost extensions are granted.

Biographical data should be provided on the **vitae form** (two pages maximum) for each principal and associate investigator. Please be sure to include your phone number and email address as part of your professional address. Long resumes in lieu of this form are not acceptable as substitutes. www.scseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/Vitae-Form.pdf

The **budget** should detail and accurately reflect the actual annual and cumulative costs of carrying out the project. Therefore, **an individual budget form for each year** as well as **a cumulative budget form spanning the duration of the project** must be provided. An

inadequate budget causes just as many problems as one that is inflated; please plan the budget request carefully. There are several federal provisions to be aware of - these are presented in the budget justification section below.

The **budget justification** should detail the need for Sea Grant funds for each and all line items, and outline matching fund use. It must explain the major duties of personnel and percentages of time for all participants, including undergraduate and graduate students. All capital and permanent equipment requests must be itemized along with the cost and specific justification of need. Permanent equipment requests of more than $5,000 should be made on a 50-50 match basis. Funding for construction and the purchase of vessels and vehicles are not eligible for Sea Grant funding. Requests for travel funds must be described via the formula used for calculation (e.g., number of miles at cost per mile for so many trips to some destination). If you are requesting travel funds for a national meeting, indicate the importance of the meeting to the proposed work. In the same regard, provide a detailed list of the types of supplies to be purchased. It is important that the funds requested truly reflect the costs of the project and be thoroughly justified. A budget justification must be completed for each budget year of proposed work, and submitted as separate documents from the main body of the proposal. We suggest that you use the budget justification template (www.scseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/Budget-Narrative-Template.docx) provided to ensure that all figures are included.

REVIEWER SUGGESTIONS

Submit the names, institutional affiliations, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of five or more prospective peer **reviewers** from outside the state of South Carolina you feel are highly qualified to make substantive comments on the technical and conceptual merits of the proposal. They may or may not be requested to provide reviews.

Preparation and Submission of Full Proposals

Suggested forms can be found at www.scseagrant.org/proposal-and-reporting-forms. Please prepare your full proposal using the following guidelines:

- Do not use a font smaller than 11 point, or margins less than moderate, 1 inch top and bottom and 0.75 inches on each side.
- The page limit for the narrative is 8 pages which includes:
    1. Proposal title, project leaders, and endorsement (Consortium forms)
    2. Project Summary

3. Introduction/Background/Rationale

4. Objectives

5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

6. Detailed Methods

7. Engagement, Outreach, and Education

8. Expected Outcomes, Anticipated Benefits, and Products

9. Related Work

10. Data Sharing and Management Plan

11. References

12. Milestone Chart

13. Vitae (Consortium form, no more than two pages per PI)

14. Budget

15. Detailed Budget Justification (suggested form)

16. OPTIONAL: OMB-approved demographic question

The final total should be no more than 15-21 pages depending on the number of PIs and length of budget justification. (The narrative is capped at 8 pages.)

Prior to initial submission, all Proposals *must* be reviewed by the sponsored program office and endorsed (on the Proposal Endorsement form) by the designated signatory authority at your institution for accurate budget and matching funds commitment. We strongly suggest that the Proposal be sent to your institution's research/business office for endorsement and signatures well before it is due to eSeaGrant. Instructions for submission via the Consortium's online proposal and project management system will be provided when Concept Letter reviews are sent to investigators.

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by external reviewer researchers and an external advisory panel. These will consist of in-state and out-of-state government and organization researchers and outreach specialists as well as out-of-state university scientists and government officials. A standard professional **review form**, below, provides a listing of the criteria used in the review process covering both conceptual content appropriate to Sea Grant and technical merit of the plan of work, however in this review the weighting is towards technical merit. The reviews are then evaluated and proposals are either accepted or rejected and rankings discussed. The S.C. Sea Grant leadership team will conduct a final review of the proposals and consider the review panel's recommendations. The Sea Grant director has final discretion to recommend projects based on the panel recommendations, diversity and balance of proposals, availability of funding, and programmatic objectives, needs, and priorities.

Evaluation of Full Proposals

The following criteria and rating scales will be used to rate Concept Letters and Full Proposals:

Programmatic Justification – The degree to which the proposed project addresses the priorities outlined in the guidance provided by the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium.

Excellent (10)	Very Good (8)	Good (6)	Fair (4)	Poor (2)

Rationale – The degree to which the proposed project addresses an important state and/or regional issue, problem, or opportunity in the development, use, and/or conservation of marine or coastal resources.

Excellent (13)	Very Good (8)	Good (6)	Fair (4)	Poor (2)

Clarity of Objectives – The degree to which the proposed objectives address the problem or opportunity identified in the Rationale and Programmatic Justification sections and, in the case of research proposals, the relevance of the hypotheses upon which the objectives are based.

Excellent (12)	Very Good (8)	Good (6)	Fair (4)	Poor (2)

Scientific/Outreach Methods – The degree to which (1) the feasibility of the proposed methods and design of the proposed project will address stated objectives, (2) the use and extension of innovative, state-of-the-art methods to be used in the proposed project will advance the scientific or outreach discipline, and (3) the data sharing plan will meet the needs of the public.

Excellent (20)	Very Good (12)	Good (9)	Fair (6)	Poor (3)

Expected Outcomes – The degree to which the planned outcomes are clearly defined, in terms of interim and final measurable results and products, and with a reasonable timeframe for completion and delivery. Outcomes should be identified for each year, be measurable, and have a positive impact on the systems, technology, or management practices under study (e.g., cost savings, revenue generation, jobs created, new products/tools developed, workforce development, etc.).

Excellent (10)	Very Good (8)	Good (6)	Fair (4)	Poor (2)

User Engagement – The degree to which targeted users of the results of the proposed activity have been brought into the planning of the activity, will be brought into the execution of the activity, and will be kept apprised of progress and results, the adequacy of the methods to be used to engage the users, and whether resources have been allotted for

stakeholder engagement.

| Excellent (10) | Very Good (8) | Good (6) | Fair (4) | Poor (3) |

Dissemination of Results – The degree to which the proposed project includes specific strategies for information delivery to and product development for identified targeted users (e.g., through the scientific literature, Sea Grant Extension and Communications products, educational efforts, etc.).

| Excellent (10) | Very Good (8) | Good (6) | Fair (4) | Poor (2) |

Equity and Inclusion – The degree to which the investigators have provided equity and inclusion in the research team, students, community engagement, and outreach.

| Excellent (10) | Very Good (4) | Good (3) | Fair (2) | Poor (1) |

Adequacy of Budget – The degree to which the proposed budget will adequately support the proposed work and provide the necessary and appropriate amount and distribution of funding across budget categories.

| Excellent (5) | Very Good (4) | Good (3) | Fair (2) | Poor (1) |

Funded Projects – Responsibilities and Reporting

Successful full proposals that address Consortium program priorities and meet constituent needs; formally engage targeted stakeholders/users; have a strong technical, scientific, methodological approach; and fit within the available budget are included in the Consortium's proposed program plan. Investigators will be asked to prepare and submit a letter addressing reviewers' comments during early September. The proposals themselves cannot be revised. PIs will also be required to complete NEPA forms during this time.

Additional Content Needed

1. Prospective investigators whose proposals are accepted will be asked to address reviewers' comments by preparing a statement that will be attached to the original proposal; no revisions to the proposal itself will be allowed. Any subsequent revisions in the budget MUST be endorsed by the investigator's institutional signatory official. **The due date is September 14, 2023.**

1. **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**
   NEPA requires that Federal agencies consider the environmental impacts of major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human or natural environment. All research projects must furnish sufficient information to assist Sea Grant in assessing the environmental consequences of supporting the projects. Applicants will be required to cooperate with Sea Grant in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. An abbreviated **environmental compliance (NEPA) form** will be required if the application is selected for funding. **The due date is September 14, 2023.** www.scseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/NOAA-Environmental-Compliance.docx

Reporting

The Principal Investigator of a Sea Grant project is responsible for all technical reporting and, in conjunction with the institutional business office, all fiscal reporting to the Consortium. In turn, the Consortium is responsible for technical and fiscal reporting to the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP). Consortium professional staff frequently communicate with Sea Grant PIs to discuss project progress and needs. Questions regarding budgetary matters and programmatic requests should be directed to the Consortium's Assistant Director for Administration Ryan Bradley and Research Coordinator Susannah Sheldon. (See www.scseagrant.org/staff-directory).

This Section includes information on the following policies and procedures:

- Formal Award Agreements
- Changes in Project Scope, Duration, or Budget
- Disposition of Permanent Equipment
- Patent Policy
- Prior Approval of Survey Instruments and Brochures
- Reimbursement Conditions
- Fiscal Reporting
- Project Reporting
- Submission of Publications
- Citation and Acknowledgement Requirements

These and other conditions of the grant award are stipulated in the formal award announcements and agreements sent to the Institution's Sponsored Programs Office. We will cc: the PI; please read through these documents carefully.

FORMAL AWARD AGREEMENTS

The Sea Grant fiscal year begins February 1 with formal award announcements sent to the investigators and their respective institution's business office. The Award Agreements must be read and endorsed by both the appropriate signatory authority and the Principal Investigator of the Sea Grant project. The institution must then forward copies of the executed documents back to the Consortium for its records. The project can formally begin on the date listed in the documentation.

CHANGES IN PROJECT SCOPE, DURATION, OR BUDGET

Among the provisions of the Agreements is a set of special conditions of which the investigators should be aware. Significant changes in projects subsequent to the formal awards, whether budgetary or programmatic, require prior formal approval by the Consortium and, in some cases, the NSGCP as well. If you are unsure, please contact your Sponsored Programs office or the Consortium's Assistant Director for Administration for clarification. Any proposed changes affecting the following categories require prior written approval:

- Any budget changes across line items that exceed ten (10) percent of the total federal budget amount.

- The purchase of any item of permanent equipment (any single item costing $5,000 or more) not specifically identified, justified, and approved in the proposal and budget.

- Any foreign travel not previously identified, justified, and approved in the proposal and budget.

- A change in the Principal Investigator.

- Significant change in Engagement and End Users/Collaborators (for instance, a Key Partner).

- Significant changes in time devoted to a project by a PI.

- Any change in the scope of objectives of the approved project.

- Principal Investigators must obtain such approval before making any substantive changes in project objectives, methods, budget, or schedule. Requests for changes must be submitted in writing through the institution's Sponsored Programs office to the Consortium. Recipients are not authorized to proceed with any changes until final written approval is received from the Consortium.

Requests for no-cost time extensions must include sufficient justification and be submitted at least 30 days prior to the end of the grant year, along with a budget for all remaining funds to be expended. Such extensions may be approved when any one of the following applies:

- Additional time beyond the established expiration date is required to ensure completion of the original approved project scope or objectives; or

- Continuity of Sea Grant support is required while a competing application is under review; or

- The extension is necessary to permit an orderly phase-out of a project that will not receive continued support.

Approval of no-cost time extensions by the Consortium is based on an adequate reason for not meeting the project deadline. Unexpended funds are not, by themselves, justification for an extension. In addition, all projects supported with federal funds must comply with the following:

- The recipient is subject to the provisions of the Fly America Act and must comply with the Act when scheduling transportation for travel paid for with federal funds.

- The recipient is encouraged, to the greatest extent practicable, to purchase American-made equipment and products with funding provided under a Sea Grant award.

- The Consortium must have on file a copy of each institution's approved indirect cost rate (IDC) agreement for proposals submitted for funding that include IDC costs as match (per Consortium policy).

PURCHASE AND DISPOSITION OF PERMANENT EQUIPMENT

The Consortium strongly encourages joint funding support for the purchase of permanent equipment. Thus, any PI who is requesting one or more items of permanent equipment (defined as any single object costing $5,000 or more) should seek to match such purchase with an equal amount of funding from her/his institution.

Permanent equipment purchased under a Consortium project is and remains the property of the Consortium, but can remain with the investigator's institution pending approval from NSGO. The Consortium does reserve the right to transfer use of this equipment upon completion of the project. However, if the investigator and/or institution desires to obtain title to equipment purchased under an existing agreement, a formal written request must be made to the Consortium Executive Director at the end of the project. Final disposition of the equipment will then be determined under existing statutes.

PATENT POLICY

The policy and procedures set forth in the U.S. Department of Commerce regulations (37 CFR 401), "Rights to Inventions made by Nonprofit Organizations and Small Business Firms Under Government Grants, Contracts, and Cooperative Agreements," published in the Federal Register on March 18, 1987, shall apply to all grants and cooperative agreements made for which the purpose is experimental, developmental, or research work.

The Consortium's Assistant Director for Administration also should receive with the final expenditure report a completed **final invention statement** if anything patentable was developed during the course of the project. Three copies of the statement should be submitted within six months after conception or first actual reduction to practice during the course of work. These forms are available from your institutional research/business office.

REIMBURSEMENT CONDITIONS

Final reimbursement to institutions for expenses incurred under a Sea Grant project award may not be made until the Annual/Final Project Report is received from the PI and accepted by the Consortium office. The final invoice or at least ten (10) percent of the funds of any project will be held until the Annual or Final Report (whichever applies) is received and deemed complete.

FISCAL REPORTING

In addition to the official Award Agreement, fiscal documents that reflect the approved

budgets are mailed to the respective institutional fiscal officers. The **federal and match expenditure report** should be provided upon submission of every reimbursement request or annually (if no such requests have been submitted) and accurately reflect expenditures. Reports must be sent to the Consortium's Assistant Director for Administration by the institutional business office, with the appropriate endorsement. All payments by the Consortium are handled on a reimbursement basis. Future funding to the institution and/ or investigator may be withheld if annual or final project reports are not received on a timely basis. If any problems concerning expenditure reporting arise, contact the Consortium's Assistant Director for Administration.

Final Fiscal Reports are due 60 days after the close of the project.

Project Reporting

There are three categories of **project reports** that are required by the Consortium:

- **Initial Report** – 9th month, several paragraphs,
- **Annual Reports** – prepared by the Principal Investigator, summarizing annual progress of a project which is proposed for continuation, and
- **Final Reports** – prepared by the Principal Investigator at the end of a project, providing a concise summary of results of the entire project.

The **project reporting form** will be provided in the Consortium's online proposal and project management system. A project report "reminder" is sent to all PIs 30 days prior to the due dates of the reports, which are as follows:

- **Annual Reports** are due 30 days after the end of the current grant year.
- **Final Project Reports** are due 60 days after the close of the project grant period.
- If a Principal Investigator requests and receives a no-cost time extension for her/his project, (s)he must submit an Annual Report 30 days after the original end date of that project year. A Final Report will then be required 60 days after the last day of the extension period at the end of the project.

SUBMISSION OF PUBLICATIONS

Principal Investigators must furnish to the Consortium a PDF copy of all publications, technical reports, all thesis and dissertation abstracts, and other formal documents that are based on information generated through Sea Grant projects and intended for publication and/or public distribution. Complete electronic PDF copies of any theses or dissertations should be submitted along with the other materials.

CITATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

All PIs must note and adhere to the following:

The financial assistance award number (provided in the Award Package) will be acknowledged in writing as the basis for funding the publication.

For journal publications and videos that are produced based in whole or in part on the work funded by the Award Agreement, the PIs should ensure that the publication (including websites) bears the following notation:

"This (report, video, website) was prepared ('in part' if appropriate) as a result of work sponsored by the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium and the State of South Carolina through National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Sea Grant College Program, U.S. Department of Commerce financial assistance award [number to be provided]. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, NOAA, U.S. Department of Commerce, or the State of South Carolina. Additionally, the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium and NOAA may copyright any work that is subject to copyright and was developed, or for which ownership was purchased, under financial assistance number [to be provided]. The South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium and NOAA reserve a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for Federal purposes, and to authorize others to do so."

All non-journal article publications or reports shall bear the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), S.C. Sea Grant Consortium, and State of South Carolina logos on the cover of the first page, and include the following: "A publication (or report) sponsored by the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium and the State of South Carolina pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award [number to be provided]." These requirements do not apply to routine reports submitted to the Consortium and which are not intended for public distribution, such as project progress reports and financial reports.

Contacts

About the RFP and submission of documents: contact Research and Fellowships Manager, Susannah Sheldon, susannah.sheldon@scseagrant.org.

About research and co-production of knowledge: contact Interdisciplinary and Partnerships Lead, Brita Jessen, brita.jessen@scseagrant.org.

About community engagement, question identification, and extension: contact Extension or Education staff, www.scseagrant.org/staff-directory or Assistant Director for Development and Extension, Matt Gorstein, matthew.gorstein@scseagrant.org.

About budgets and university finance questions: contact Assistant Director for Administration, Ryan Bradley, ryan.bradley@scseagrant.org.

Other questions: contact Executive Director, Susan Lovelace, susan.lovelace@scseagrant.org.

NOAA Guidance for Completing Budgets and Justifications

See Appendix A: www.scseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/noaa-budget-guidance.pdf.