

ESLR FY24 NOFO Q&A:

General:

- **Does the information regarding the Principal Investigators, ESLR Focus Area and approximate total cost need to be included in the body of the letter, or could this information go in a cover letter or in the email accompanying the LOI?**
 - The LOI should be no more than two pages (front only) in length, and must contain PI information, approximate project cost, and focus area(s) along with other items described in IV.B.1 of the Federal Funding Opportunity.

- **What if there is an unforeseeable interruption in program manager availability or an applicant's ability to work during the competition?**
 - Program Managers will aim to provide responses to applicant inquiries and LOIs on time, however in the event of an unforeseeable interruption in work, an extension of the final proposal due date in January may be considered. Related updates and guidance will be shared on the ESLR website:
<https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/science-areas/climate-change/ecological-effects-sea-level-rise-program/>. If there is a natural disaster or some other regional event, the competition deadline may be extended on a case by case basis. If you are impacted by an event, we recommend reaching out to the program managers as soon as possible (unfortunately personal events are not able to be considered).

- **Is there a URL for previously funded projects?**
 - The bottom of this page has links to prior project pages:
<https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/science-areas/climate-change/ecological-effects-sea-level-rise-program/>

- **Does NCCOS anticipate there being a FY25 ESLR funding opportunity?**
 - We do not expect to have an ESLR funding opportunity in FY25. We expect to fund proposals from this funding opportunity with some having start dates in FY24 and some having start dates in FY25. Based on the statement in the funding opportunity that approximately 4 million is expected to be dedicated to the first year of projects beginning in FY24 and FY25, approximately 8-10 projects could be funded at the full amount.

- **Do you have an idea of how many LOIs you anticipate to receive based on prior years?**
 - For past funding opportunities for the ESLR program, we have received more than 100 LOIs. The number of LOIs varies among competitions.

ESLR Topical Area and Project Scope:

- **Do you have a recommended SLR scenario to consider?**
 - SLR Scenarios we recommend using are included in the Sweet *et al.* [2022 Sea Level Rise Technical Report](#). Research teams should work with their advisory groups or collaborators to understand the timeframes for decision making, as different regions may focus on different scenarios and time frames for a given application.

- **Would mobile, temporary, coastal geo-technical protections systems be acceptable in the Alaska item 3 requirement in lieu of grey solutions where desirable, applicable?**
 - This funding opportunity supports scientific approaches that are able to inform planning, policy changes and actions, but does not directly provide support for the installation of a system. Please see the funding opportunity for a definition and description of nature-based solutions (NBS). Additionally, the funding opportunity states: “all proposals must consider NBS approaches, and results should be used to inform the use of NBS in mitigation and adaptation solutions.” It’s possible that successful proposals could consider coastal geo-technical protections systems as one type of activity.

- **To my understanding, a proposal must consider NBS, but if there is no feasible NBS applicable to a study area, can I still submit a proposal with a justification of no NBS included?**
 - A project that does not include NBS and associated principles is unlikely to perform well in the competition given the priorities and requirements identified in this funding opportunity. The funding opportunity also states: “all proposals must consider NBS approaches, and results should be used to inform the use of NBS in mitigation and adaptation solutions.”

- **Would this include the installation of jetties, bulkheads, sand replacement etc.**
 - The emphasis of this funding opportunity is on advancing science to inform holistic coastal planning that includes a range of actions (e.g., spanning green to grey), with a focus on long term resilience and nature-based designs. These science improvements also are designed to be able to inform multiple actions across policy or land management and to evaluate their performance over short and long time periods. While evaluating the installation of jetties, bulkheads, and sand replacement are within the scope of the ESLR program, the funding opportunity states that "all proposals must consider NBS approaches, and results should be used to inform the use of NBS in mitigation and adaptation solutions." This funding would not cover installation.

- **The RFP mentions that “Priority will be given to proposals with direct relevance to informing projects that are, or could be, funded by programs including FEMA BRIC, NFWF NCRF, DOT PROTECT, and the NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge.” Does this mean that groups that have submitted proposals to these RFPs are more likely to be considered for funding? Some of these proposals are still under development. So could you elaborate what you mean by this sentence?**

- We emphasize these groups as these are major funders of coastal resilience projects and there is a need for the type of science that ESLR supports to reach the individuals typically supported by these other programs. Submission to these RFPs is not required, but the outputs of projects funded by this NOFO should have relevance for proposals to programs like those listed.
- In general, descriptions of how the science you propose to complete will support individuals that are able to then make better decisions or get support for projects that apply the science, are useful additions to the proposal. This type of statement helps reviewers determine the likelihood of the science being applied.
- **Are you interested in funding proposals that build off previous ESLR awarded projects?**
 - We value projects that leverage science and this could include science from prior ESLR projects. However, the funding opportunity does not need to be related to previously funded projects, and that will not be factored into our consideration criteria for funding.
 - One caveat to this point, if we have substantial investment in a region, we may avoid funding additional work in that region for programmatic reasons.
- **For the General Coastal Resilience focus area, does meeting the first two priorities have to include specific coastal regions or specific projects, or can this be interpreted as projects needing to develop a modeling-based approach to develop actionable information and products?**
 - For the General Coastal Resilience focus area, projects can be proposed within any coastal region and projects can cover a number of topics related to SLR and inundation. A flexible modeling-based approach to inform action is also applicable to the priorities, however, if no specific region is identified, it can be difficult to express applicability and demonstrate connections to those that could use the science at the proposal stage.
- **Is there a “right” balance of field based methods and modeling?**
 - Project teams can engage in both activities, but we encourage data collection to clearly drive towards final outputs and the usefulness of those outputs. There’s no golden rule on the balance of modeling and data collection; previous projects have combined basic science and modeling coastal processes with producing actionable, applied science. Just make sure there is a clear connection point to coastal decision making and coastal resilience.
- **Are projects that combine monitoring and specific sites, and incorporate remote sensing for a larger scale regional coverage, along with a modeling component encouraged?**
 - If the work meets the required priorities and leads to informing the use of NBS and improved coastal resilience in a region, then we would encourage submission of an LOI and full proposal. Incorporating concepts that increase transferability of work at specific sites is encouraged.

- **Would you fund the development of a data or decision support dashboard accessible to local decision makers? If these were developed to be paid access, would that still be okay?**
 - NOAA and ESLR have funded projects that developed dashboards. Federally-funded science must be made publicly available. If a dashboard is developed by an ESLR project, it will need to be made publicly available. The program does recognize that maintenance of a dashboard is necessary for it to be relevant, and that this can be expensive. It is important to describe how federal funds will lead to the development of the dashboard, how the product will inform application, and how it will be maintained. It should also be clear how any future public versus private access will be handled.

- **Are there existing NCCOS ESLR data capture technical and functional requirements written for complimentary in-situ marine coastal water, wave pressure , wind, spray, erosion, sediment transport, digital camera,/lighting, etc., etc, monitors and sensors deployments? Do you have your NCCOS ESLR acceptable data specifications for coastal marine data capture?**
 - There are no requirements around technology, including sensors. Similarly there are no specific model requirements. Details of technology and models should be paired with the types of applied and basic questions the projects aim to inform.

- **We are asking if the NCCOS ESLR has a list of ruggedized IoT monitors and sensors (for water, wave heights/ pressure, wind speed, spray, sediment particulars/transport, etc, etc., (ALL highly complementary data) that have already been through rigors of your acceptance testing, qualification processes?**
 - The funding opportunity and program do not have technology requirements for sensors.

Funding:

- **For the LOI budget, should we provide a single number, general spending categories, or an itemized list?**
 - Just a number is appropriate. You will not be held to this number in the full proposal stage.

- **If some of the funding is going to federal partners, is that a cost that needs to be a part of our budget number?**
 - Transferring funds directly from NOAA to federal partners via an Interagency Agreement (IA) can increase the time it takes to get those collaborators money, but there is no additional overhead being charged for the funds to go through the lead-PI's institution. Important to note is that salary and travel for federal partners can be covered only if the federal collaborator is not receiving a federal salary.

- **What is the criteria for funding projects that will begin in FY25 versus those in FY24?**

- The projects funded in FY24 are usually higher scoring based on the panel score. In some cases, projects could be delayed if there is existing effort in the region, or a clear benefit from waiting one year.
- **Will project funding depend on the chosen start date? Is there a reason other than feasibility to choose FY25?**
 - We recommend writing a proposal that could be executed beginning in FY24.
- **Is only the lead PI not allowed to include a fee, or subawardees on the grant as well?**
 - If you're referring to indirect support, page 34 of the funding opportunity discusses details on indirect rates for sub awardees.
 - If you're referring to salary, please refer to page 30 of the funding opportunity: Personnel costs should be broken out by named PI, number of months, and percentage of time requested per year per PI. Support for each PI should be commensurate with their stated involvement each year in the milestone chart (see Required Elements: (6) Milestone Chart). Any unnamed personnel (graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, technicians) should be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to PI personnel costs. The contribution of any personnel to the project goals should be explained.

Collaborators and MTAG:

- **Does ESLR plan on match-making proposals with similar goals?**
 - No. We do not have an approach for connecting project teams in an equitable manner at this time.
- **Is MTAG a NOAA-specific term? If so, where can we learn more? I'm not finding anything through internet search**
 - MTAG is a NOAA/ESLR term referring to Management Transition Advisory Group. This is a group of individuals that can use the science and are in position to use the information to guide coastal policy and planning, decision making, and project execution. Projects should have an iterative approach for engaging this group, and, at the proposal stage, some understanding of who these individuals may be.
- **For MTAG, can the existing group be a STAC or workgroup that also has a NOAA participation?**
 - Yes, we encourage the leveraging of existing advisory groups whenever applicable groups exist.

- **Related to the MTAG, it could be that the group, or certain individuals in the group cannot be funded by federal funds. How would we go about working with a group under such circumstances?**
 - If a collaborator or MTAG (advisory group) member can not receive federal funds, then the individual can either be listed as an unfunded team member or, if the design is to enable participation in meetings, the applicant may be able to offer an honorarium in some cases. Please reach out with specific questions.

- **Is reaching out to stakeholders and having them listed at the PI level on an LOI acceptable?**
 - There is some flexibility at the LOI stage. If you have a PI who is contributing to the LOI, they should be included. The LOI stage is mostly for feedback on whether or not the proposal meets our Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) objectives and does not typically include feedback on collaborators.

- **Should prospective subcontractors be listed on the project team?**
 - Contractors can be listed as full team members, though it is not required to list all collaborators, this is optional depending on their involvement in the project. It is important to know the financial considerations for the inclusion of the subcontractor. As written in the FFO: The lead institution is responsible for sending funds to the other subaward institutions. A separate budget narrative is required for each subaward (including Federal collaborators) and must be provided to the lead institution for submission. Signed approval from each identified subaward institution is required. For acquisition contracts, the purpose and cost or price must be fully justified and the contract must fully comply with 2 C.F.R. 200.317-.327.

- **Do you typically anticipate private sector participants being substantial contributors to successful proposals?**
 - We do not value one type of contributor over another and a private sector applicant could be a lead investigator. In several prior ESLR awards private sector participants have been key co-investigators.

- **If a team is seeking to include a team member who works for NOAA, how would this work from a budgetary standpoint?**
 - There is no advantage given to including NOAA scientists, as there is a separation between internal and external NOAA scientists during the competition. Money will be moved via internal NOAA processes if a NOAA scientist is funded as a collaborator, however the NOAA scientists should understand this process and details around budget details, like overhead. Please reach out to us with specific budget questions if your sponsored program office or other budget support is unsure on how to handle a detail on the budget.

- **Can a team include scientists working at a local government?**

- Yes.
- **Can federal agencies or employees (EPA ORD, USGS, Sea Grant, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, etc.) be a lead PI on a project or receive project funding?**
 - Yes. Interagency agreements can be used to fund other federal agencies. Project start dates may be delayed by the time it takes to establish an interagency agreement. An important exception is that NOAA NCCOS researchers cannot be the lead PI on the application. Furthermore, federal salaries will not be paid; this means that salary and travel for federal partners can be covered only if the federal collaborator is not receiving a federal salary.
- **Who are the top W. Alaskan coastal research university Ph.D.s that NCCOS ESLR team currently works with or has in the past?**
 - We are not able to recommend collaborators.
- **Who are your recommended coastal research Ph.Ds or other experts that will have access and use of the LIDAR and VDatum geospatial datasets resources you require?**
 - We are not able to recommend collaborators.
 - In terms of datasets, different areas have different datasets available for them. For example, recent high resolution lidar data for areas impacted by Typhoon Merbok can be found here: <https://www.usgs.gov/supplemental-appropriations-for-disaster-recovery-activities/lidar-typhoon-merbok>.
 - NOAA's lidar data can be accessed from the [Digital Coast Data Access Viewer](#). New lidar data will be added as it becomes available and is anticipated to include additional coverage in Alaska.
 - VDatum can be accessed here: <https://vdatum.noaa.gov/vdatumweb/>. Statewide Alaska Vdatum is expected to be completed by the end of FY24 or beginning of FY25; currently, only Vdatum for Southeast Alaska is available.
 - The following report may help explain the state of mapping for state of Alaska: https://iocm.noaa.gov/about/documents/strategic-plans/Implementation+Plan+for+the+Alaska+Coastal+Mapping+Strategy_June+2022.pdf.
- **One of my teammates is international. What are the rules around international collaborations as part of this funding call? Are there financial considerations that I need to be aware of in terms of international collaborations? Any specific cost share factors that are different from US colleagues?**
 - International collaborators are allowable as a sub contract. Per page 23 of the funding opportunity, "Foreign researchers must apply as subawards or contracts through an eligible U.S. entity." So, yes, an applicant may have a foreign organization as a subawardee, unless there is a restriction in SAM.gov Responsibility/Qualifications (formerly FAPIIS).

- Page 11 of the funding opportunity references project geography, but this relates to the focus area of the project, not parties eligible to participate in the project. Projects must focus on a United States state or territory.
 - There is really nothing different from our perspective. The international collaborator will still have a negotiated overhead, which is likely comparable to US institutions. We do not require cost share.
- **Would a Great Lakes-focused project be eligible for funding?**
 - Activities in the Great Lakes would be fundable under the General Coastal Resilience focus area so long as they address the priorities of this funding opportunity.
 - The proposal should include consideration of water level change even though it is not associated with sea level rise.