

Background:

During three webinars hosted by the Science Program on September 12, 13, and 18, 2018, attendees had their questions answered by representatives from the Science Program. If the question and answer was already captured by a frequently asked question ([FAQ](#)) or substantially covered by text in the [funding announcement](#), it is not repeated here. All the remaining questions and answers are listed below where they have been edited for clarity.

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Q: Can collaborators or unnamed people (including people writing letters of support) receive small amounts of funding (e.g., travel support) without being listed as investigators?

ANSWER: Yes

Q: Can funding from this competition be used to maintain existing equipment?

A: If the existing equipment is being used for the proposed work, then the cost of maintaining that equipment can be covered by funding from this competition. Only maintenance commensurate with the scale of the proposed work will be covered. Deferred maintenance, non-routine maintenance (i.e., major repair), or maintenance not commensurate with the scale of the proposed work on the given piece of equipment will not be covered.

Q: How will the current and pending support information for investigators and collaborators be utilized when evaluating full applications?

A: The current and pending support information will be used to assess if the investigators and collaborators have enough time available to dedicate to the work they are proposing. It will also be used to assess the potential for duplication (i.e. a full application to this competition is similar to pending support being solicited from another competition or entity).

Q: For projects with a NOAA lead investigator, will the Science Program send funds directly to subaward institutions?

A: No, the responsibility for arranging funding of subaward institutions lies with the lead investigator's institution. If this presents a significant challenge to a federal lead investigator, the project team may consider whether a non-federal lead investigator would be more appropriate.

Q: Does the second five years of the decadal plan need to be as detailed as the first five years?

A: The decadal plan is where you outline your plan for ten years of work. It should not emphasize one five year portion over another. The decadal plan should explain why the work you are proposing can only be addressed with ten years of continuous funding, how you will keep the resource management community engaged for ten years, and how the first five years will relate to the second five years. The project narrative is where you will provide the details on the first five years of work.

Q: Would it be beneficial to include public outreach components in addition to the interaction with resource managers?

A: Public outreach and K-12 education is not a focus for this funding competition. The primary engagement focus should be with specific resource managers. Additional outreach activities that complement this primary engagement are acceptable. Applicants should review the Evaluation Criteria in Section V of the funding announcement for additional information.

Q: Are resource users, such as fishers, a primary target end user?

A: The primary target end user for this competition is resource managers. The Science Program defines resource managers and resource management broadly. A resource manager is an individual or group of individuals with decision-making authority over the use, conservation, or restoration of one or more living coastal or marine resources within the area they manage. Resource management can take many forms, including wildlife and fishery management, federal and state rule-making and permitting, conservation practices by private landowners, place-based management, and restoration planning. If a resource user is in the position of making or informing a decision about the use, conservation, or restoration of a living coastal or marine resource, then they could be an acceptable end user to target.

Q: Can you provide a definition of ‘archived datasets’ as it applies to the instruction to include ‘a list of up to five archived datasets most closely related to the proposed project and five other significant archived datasets’ in each investigator’s biographical sketch?

A: An archived dataset is environmental data or information that has been deposited with a long-term data repository which provides public access, archiving, discovery metadata, and a digital object identifier.

Q: Should the data management plan only address the first five years of data collection?

A: Yes

Q: When will applicants be notified if their application is not advanced to the panel review stage?

A: All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the merit review process after the panel review is completed. At that point, applicants will receive written reviews of their full application and learn whether or not their application was advanced to the panel review stage. Ultimately, the Science Program anticipates award decisions will be announced in June 2019.

Q: How exactly will the independent review panel be organized? How many of the panelists will be from NOAA?

A: The independent review panel will include experts in the research being proposed in the full applications, as well as experts in the application of this type of research and its use in resource management. Both federal and non-federal experts may be used in this process and the Science Program does not pre-determine how many federal or non-federal experts will serve on a panel. The list of collaborators provided in full applications (element 17) will be used to identify potential conflicts of interest and all panelists are required to sign a form indicating that they will not review any application for which they have a conflict of interest or appearance thereof.

Q: Does the indirect rate of 17.5% for awards made through a Cooperative Ecosystem Study Unit (CESU) agreement apply to all subaward recipients? Does it matter if the subaward recipient is a CESU member or not?

A: Yes, the 17.5% indirect rate applies to all subrecipients whether they are CESU members or not. In addition, when setting up a subaward, the lead institution can only apply its 17.5% indirect cost rate to the first \$25,000 of the sub-award amount.

Q: Is it possible for a non-federal lead institution to receive their funding via a Cooperative Ecosystem Study Unit (CESU) and a federal subaward recipient to receive funds via an inter/intra-agency agreement?

A: Yes. The non-federal lead institution can opt to receive their funding via a CESU and may indicate their intention to do so in a cover letter as part of their full application. When a subaward recipient is a federal agency, the Science Program will transfer funds to them through an inter/intra-agency agreement.

Q: Will the Science Program be extending the deadline for full applications because of Hurricane Florence?

A: The Science Program will continue to monitor the impacts from Hurricane Florence. At this time, the Science Program is not planning to extend the October 29 deadline for full applications.