

# FY 2021 MIT Sea Grant Proposal Process

MIT Sea Grant provides competitive funding opportunities for Massachusetts university-based research scientists who seek to address marine issues in ways that benefit the Commonwealth as outlined in MIT Sea Grant's current Strategic Plan. Lead scientists on a proposal must have Principal Investigator standing at their own institutions to be eligible for funding and must not be the recipient of other MIT Sea Grant funding during the period of the grant (i.e., 2/1/2021 to 1/31/2023).

Our mission is to conduct and support research and develop technology to enable scientific investigation into problems surrounding the ecosystem health and human use of coastal and marine environments. Efforts in research, education, and outreach are designed to address critical marine and coastal issues at the state, regional, national and global levels that have been identified by Massachusetts constituents and are within the areas of focus for the National Sea Grant College Program. Four focus areas were identified as central to addressing the core of the Sea Grant mission and vision:

- Healthy Coastal Ecosystems
- Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Resilient Communities and Economies
- Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development

The following are examples of topic areas that may be considered during the 2021 MIT Sea Grant RFP process. Focusing on these topic areas takes advantage of MIT Sea Grant's ability to address issues impacting coastal and marine waters through the development of tools, platforms and technologies as well as conducting innovative research to increase the capabilities of industry and resource managers and ensuring that communities have access to science, tools, and technologies to support informed decision-making for the conservation of sustainable marine resources. The goals of the focus areas shape priorities for our annual solicitation to fund new proposals, and they guide us in both the short-and long-term toward projects whose success can best serve our constituents. The four topics presented below support focus areas described in the [2018-2021 MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan](#). Please review the [2018-2021 MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan](#) for detailed information regarding the goals and desired outcomes relative to these two focus areas.

1. **Offshore aquaculture:** The focus is on novel technologies to enable offshore installation and operation. We particularly encourage submissions within three topic areas:
  - a. "Intelligent nets" capable of sensing changing environmental parameters, controlling water flow, and monitoring fish movements for monitoring at-sea conditions, infrastructure, and operations.
  - b. Autonomy for surface and underwater craft for inspection and maintenance of offshore farms – autonomy algorithms should be open, extensible, and applicable to a wide variety of platforms and missions
  - c. Very low power physical, chemical, or biological sensors for farm monitoring

2. **Ocean acidification:** The focus is on ocean monitoring using physics-based data inference, fusing diverse sources of data with a focus on, but not limited to, computer monitoring systems for Boston Harbor or the Gulf of Maine. Data from drifters, buoys, and satellite sources are all of interest.
3. **Technology for observation and underwater manipulation:** Focusing particularly on shallow water applications, this area builds on past topics in underwater wireless power transmission and data communication. Principal obstacles in underwater monitoring and manipulation include:
  - a. Re-charging rapidly and effectively
  - b. Transferring data reliably at high rates
  - c. Equipping underwater and surface vehicles with manipulation capabilities targeting aquaculture applications
4. **Machine Learning for Fisheries Management:** Monitoring and assessment of fisheries resources is a timely, costly, and resource intensive process. Advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning for computer assisted image recognition, quantification, and real-time monitoring of target species is a need expressed by a variety of stakeholders, including local, state, and federal resource managers, industry participants, and local communities. Development of user-friendly systems for commercial, recreational, and species of concern to assist in monitoring and assessments would support the MIT Sea Grant Focus Area, Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture. This technology can be applied to both wild and aquaculture fisheries.

An informational meeting for the FY2021 RFP was held at MIT Sea Grant on Thursday, January 23, 2020 to provide guidance for interested applicants. Meeting slides are available for download [here](#).

## Proposal Schedule

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The current RFP Schedule is provided below.

This is a multi-step process, so please be aware of each due date.

FY2021 RFP Open House invitation announced	January 16, 2020
RFP Open House, 12 – 2pm at MIT Sea Grant	January 23, 2020
RFP announced and details will be available on this website	February 10, 2020
Review the materials presented at the <a href="#">Informational Open House</a> that took place on January 23, 2020 and select a research topic. You are <b>STRONGLY ENCOURAGED</b> to contact MIT Research Program	<b>Prior to</b> March 4, 2020

Coordinator Mary Newton Lima ( <a href="mailto:mnewlim@mit.edu">mnewlim@mit.edu</a> ) with any questions you have about selecting a topic.	
Pre-proposals due by 5:00 pm local time	March 4, 2020
Pre-Proposals distributed to MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee	March 23, 2020
MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee pre-proposal review meeting	April 23, 2020
Encouragement/non-encouragement of Full Proposal submissions sent to Principal Investigators	May 1, 2020
Full proposals due by 5:00 pm local time	June 1, 2020
Full Proposals distributed to peer reviewers	June 8, 2020
Peer reviewers' evaluations of full proposals due to MIT Sea Grant	July 8, 2020
Blinded peer reviewer comments sent to Principal Investigators	July 15, 2020
Optional PI rebuttals due by 5:00 pm local time	August 14, 2020
Proposals, reviews and rebuttals sent to Technical Review Panel and to MIT Sea Grant Program Officer	August 21, 2020
Technical Review Panel Meeting	September 22, 2020
MIT Sea Grant Advisory committee second meeting and full proposal funding recommendations	September 24, 2020
Letter of Intent detailing funding selections sent to the National Sea Grant Office for approval	October 2, 2020
Beginning of FY 2021 funding	February 1, 2021

## Funding and Duration

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The maximum annual research project budget request to be considered is \$100,000 for a total of \$200,000 for a two-year project. This does not include the required matching funds provided by the PI, which amount to at least 50% of the figure requested from Sea Grant. Matching funds must be from non-federal sources and can include cash, salaries, equipment, supplies, ship-time, etc.

Projects last for up to two years. The PI will submit a project timeline as part of their full proposal.

## **Proposal Process and Instructions**

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The proposal process is initiated in January of each year when the Request for Preliminary Proposals (RFP) is announced. Project work begins on February 1 of the following year. The rules governing NOAA/Sea Grant deadlines are strictly enforced and the contents of proposals must be complete by the dates and times given in the Proposal Schedule above.

### **Basic Rules and Assumptions:**

- The Principal Investigator is eligible to submit an external proposal according to his/her home institution.
- The appropriate authorities at the home institution approve budget figures, including matching fund estimates.
- The Principal Investigator agrees to the review process described.
- The Sea Grant Director may, at his/her discretion, remove a proposal from further consideration at any point in the process if an investigator has overdue obligations to the MIT Sea Grant College Program under a previous research contract.
- The budget amount requested from Sea Grant will not increase by more than 10% in the course of the submission process.

Both Preliminary and Full Proposals must be submitted through our eSeaGrant [online proposal system](#).

A multi-step process has been established for evaluating and selecting proposals.

### **Step One - Select a Research Topic (prior to March 4, 2020)**

MIT Sea Grant issues an annual Request for Proposals (RFP) for research projects that contribute to improved understanding, utilization and/or management of coastal and marine resources related to our four Focus Areas: Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development; Healthy Coastal Ecosystems; Resilient Communities and Economies; and Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture. Applicants should carefully review and understand these focus areas as presented in the [2018-2021 MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan](#).

Review the materials presented at the [Informational Open House](#) that took place on January 23, 2020 and select a research topic. You are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to contact MIT Research Program Coordinator Mary Newton Lima ([mnewlim@mit.edu](mailto:mnewlim@mit.edu)) with any questions you have prior to submitting, and contact [seagrantinfo@mit.edu](mailto:seagrantinfo@mit.edu) for login and access to eSeaGrant, MIT Sea Grant's submission portal.

## **Step Two – Submit Pre-proposal (March 4, 2020)**

Preliminary proposals must be submitted to MIT Sea Grant through eSeaGrant by 5:00 pm local time on March 4, 2020.

A preliminary proposal submission requires the following information and documents. There is a separate tab in eSeaGrant for each aspect of the submittal.

### *1. General Proposal Information*

You will be asked to assign a title to your proposal and to provide some topical keywords. The initiation date for FY2021 Sea Grant projects is Feb 1, 2021 and the completion date is Jan 31, 2023.

### *2. Principal Investigator Information (Resumes / CVs)*

Fill out the requested information for each Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Investigator(s) and attach/upload a curriculum vitae (resume) for each individual. Note the CV will not be uploaded until the Save button is clicked on.

### *3. Additional Personnel*

List additional personnel such as graduate students, post docs and staff that will work on the project. Resumes or CVs are not collected for these individuals.

### *4. Project Narrative*

The project narrative can be up to six pages, not including a brief list of bibliographic references. The narrative should address the following questions:

- What is the marine-related problem, issue, need or hypothesis requiring this work?
- What will be your approach? Include theoretical studies, laboratory analyses, and/or fieldwork, and the approximate amount of time needed for these activities.
- Who will use and benefit from your research? How does the work address stakeholder-driven needs? How will results be made available to the user?
- What is the project's relevance to the [2018-2021 MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan](#) and how does the proposal incorporate the emerging issues outlined during the Director's presentation of the RFP?
- Identify the goals and objectives of the [2018-2021 MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan](#) that the proposal supports or will advance.
- How does this project contribute to the basic scientific discipline involved?
- What about this project demonstrates support, cooperation and/or collaboration with industry, government and community groups (e.g., sources of non-federal matching funds?)

Format Specifications: The project narrative should not exceed six (6) one-sided, double-spaced pages, in 12 pt Times New Roman font. References/bibliography are not included in the page count and can be added at the end of the document.

#### *5. Preliminary Proposal Funding Request for Years One and Two*

Enter the first and second-year MIT Sea Grant requested funds, and the matching funds you will provide. Note that matching funds must be at least 50% of the funds requested from Sea Grant and the matching funds must come from non-federal sources.

#### *6. Suggested Reviewers*

You may give us contact information for suggested peer reviewers. Reviewers should be scientific peers who are qualified to provide independent and knowledgeable reviews of your project in the full proposal phase. MIT Sea Grant peer reviewers should not be from Massachusetts institutions. **DO NOT INCLUDE** individuals with whom you have had any of the following relationships:

- All co-authors on publications within the past three years, including pending publications and submissions.
- All collaborators on projects within the past three years, including current and planned collaborations.
- All persons in your field with whom you have had consulting/financial arrangement/conflicts-of-interest in the past three years, including receiving compensation of any type (e.g. money, goods or services.)
- It is also best to omit former mentors, advisors, or students. If your recommendation falls into one of these categories, please indicate this in your submission.

#### *7. Final Submittal*

Once you are satisfied with your submittal, you may submit by clicking SUBMIT on the last tab in eSeaGrant. Clicking SUBMIT on the last page will time-stamp your submission and generate an acknowledgement email for your records. **If you have not pressed the SUBMIT button by the deadline, your preproposal will not be processed.** No exceptions can be made.

#### *8. Pre-Proposal Evaluation*

All pre-proposals submitted to MIT Sea Grant through eSeaGrant by 5:00 pm local time on the due date (March 4, 2020) will be evaluated by the MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee. The MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee is comprised of a diverse group of academic, industry, and professional stakeholders with interest and expertise in the MIT Sea Grant focus areas, and advises the Director on program initiatives relevant to stakeholder needs and the Sea Grant mission. The MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee is selected by the MIT Sea Grant Director to ensure that conflicts of interest are kept to a minimum, and all members are required to sign a Non-Conflict of Interest form as part of agreeing to serve. The MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee will read all proposals, categorize them for research and education on the basis of

rationale, innovativeness, and responsiveness to the RFP, and come together in a meeting to identify those proposals that will receive a recommendation to submit a full proposal. At this stage, MIT Sea Grant Advisory Services staff who are not listed as a collaborator or PI on proposals in the competition may also review proposals for education, outreach, and stakeholder engagement components, and relevance to the [2018-2021 MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan](#). MIT Sea Grant will then inform all PIs as to whether or not they are encouraged to submit a full proposal. These notifications will be emailed to each PI on May 1, 2020.

### **Step Three – Full Proposal (June 1, 2020)**

Principal Investigators whose projects are scientifically sound and are aligned with the goals of the [2018-2021 MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan](#) will be encouraged to write a full proposal. Note that all PIs who submitted a pre-proposal are allowed to submit a full proposal.

A full proposal submission requires the following information and documents. There is a separate tab in eSeaGrant for each aspect of the submittal.

#### *1. Proposal Information*

Provide a proposal title and topical keywords. The project initiation and completion dates are Feb 1, 2021 and Jan 31, 2023 by default.

#### *2. Principal / Co-Principal Investigators and Project Personnel*

Enter information for the Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Principal Investigators. The PI is accountable for the content of the proposal, the future conduct of the proposed work and disbursement of project funds, accuracy of reporting, etc. Attach a CV/resume (PDF, 2-page maximum, page numbers, headers, or footers) at the bottom of the forms for each. When entering phone numbers, omit all spaces and non-numeric characters. Only CVs submitted as PDFs and that are two pages or less will be accepted.

#### *3. Additional Personnel*

List additional personnel such as graduate students, post docs and staff that will work on the project. Resumes or CVs are not collected for these individuals.

#### *4. Objectives, Methodology, Rationale, Data Management Plan*

- Objectives: Concisely state what the investigator will undertake, for later comparison with project results. Begin with the word "To" followed by a verb. In keeping with Sea Grant's mission, more appropriate verbs are: test (the hypothesis), develop, provide, determine, isolate, characterize, identify, restore, implement. Less desirable but sometimes appropriate verbs are: promote, conduct, analyze, apply, investigate, examine, describe. Some, such as "study", "consider", and "continue" should not be used since failure to do these is not determinable.

- **Methodology:** Briefly state the methodology to be used. Specific questions should be answered such as, "Which heavy metals, which pollutants, which pathogens, what species of seaweed or shellfish, what kind of a model, etc." The reader should be left in no doubt as to the means you will use to achieve your Objectives.
- **Rationale:** Concisely state why you are addressing this problem or opportunity. Though the project need not promise to fully solve a problem, it should be shown to be a logical step towards a solution. Avoid long background statements; identify potential users and community benefits.
- **Data Management Plan:** Include a brief summary (one or two sentences) from the Data Management Plan. If the project will not generate any environmental data, include a sentence to that effect. If the proposal's Data Management Plan is short enough, you may repeat it in its entirety here. If not, you must indicate that a full data management plan is attached to the proposal, and provide a point of contact (name, phone number, email) for questions about the data.

## 5. *Project Narrative*

The project narrative should not exceed fifteen (15) one-sided, double-spaced pages, in at least 12 pt font, and with 1-inch margins. The 15-page limit for project narratives includes tables and figures. Narratives longer than 15 pages WILL NOT be accepted. References and literature citations should demonstrate your familiarity with the literature of your topic, may be single-spaced and do NOT count against the page limit. The project narrative should address the following questions as explicit sections:

- Introduction / Background / Justification
- Project objectives
- General work plan and milestones
- Anticipated outcomes
- Coordination with other program elements
- Outreach and Engagement Plan
- References and literature citations

## 6. *Budgets*

You will need to fill out an online budget worksheet for each year and each indirect cost rate set involved in your project. Please refer to the [NOAA Grants Management Division's \(GMD\) Budget Narrative Guidance](#) for complete guidance on developing your budgets with proper justification. You are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to review the budget preparation process early and contact MIT Sea Grant with any questions you may have.

By law, each Sea Grant program is required to match its award from NOAA with contributions from non-federal sources. This helps ensure the relevancy of Sea Grant activity to the marine community and potential users. Every investigator is required to provide 50% of the total cost for any proposed project, which must come from non-federal sources. For example, if you are requesting \$100,000 from MIT Sea Grant, you are required to provide in addition at least \$50,000 from qualified, non-federal matching sources.



The source of matching funds must be specified in the budget and may consist of up to one month's salary per year for the faculty adviser, waived tuition, equipment and supplies, and any other costs typically used as matching funds. Matching support may be provided in-kind as well as in cash. Examples of in-kind contributions include salaries, wages and benefits of investigators and students working on the project, expendable supplies and equipment, ship time, and donated supplies, space or equipment. Private foundation grants, state and local government contracts, and co-sponsorship by industry are some examples of matching support as they demonstrate the importance of the activity to the marine community and/or potential users. Foreign government funds also qualify, but funds from federal sources do not. Complete documentation of matching funds is required.

You will need to fill out a budget worksheet for each year of the proposal, and for matching funds.

**Salaries and wages:**

Senior Personnel include individuals entered in the proposal via the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigators and Additional Personnel form(s).

Assign Other Personnel to the appropriate type and identify them by name as indicated on the form. Use accurate current salaries as the basis for calculating salaries and wages for each individual. If requesting funds to support a vacant position, indicate *Vacant Position* as Name and use a salary rate appropriate to the position. Enter months of effort as full-time equivalents, regardless of how many calendar months the individual will work on the project for both Sea Grant and matching funds. *Mos. Effort* are based on a 12-month calendar, and *Mo. Salary* should be calculated in this context.

While salaries of Federal employees cannot be used as cost share, their contribution as Senior Personnel can be documented by completing the 'grantee mos. effort' field and setting the monthly salary and benefits fields to 0.

Fringe Benefits are those customarily paid by the grantee institution, following its usual practices in the payment of such benefits. Use your institution's recommended rates.

Sea Grant research proposals featuring strong research accompanied by meaningful engagement/extension components will be considered more competitive, whether or not Sea Grant Extension staff are formally involved. Involving Sea Grant Extension staff early in the proposal planning and preparation process increases the likelihood that they will be able to contribute value to the project and/or commit time and effort if needed. The level of effort required and/or availability of other funding help determine whether or not salary funds, as well as additional costs required for meetings, workshops, and outreach materials, will be needed from the proposed project for Extension staff. All Extension staff have experience designing, developing and implementing outreach/education projects. Most have experience conducting needs assessments and evaluations. Many conduct applied research themselves. Review our [website](#) to locate staff who might be able to help you or identify others who could help, which will inform your Extension budgeting needs.

Budget Justification: For Salaries and Wages, NOAA Grants Management Division (see [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#)) expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Is each individual identified by name and position?
- Are the total charges for each person listed along with an explanation of how the costs were calculated?
- Do the combined charges for all activities of any individual exceed 100% of their time?
- Do the time commitments and charges appear reasonable?
- Are all individuals employees of the applicant organization? (If not, explain)
- Is a cost of living increase built into the budget?
- Are salary increases justified for the grant period?
- Are any salary/personnel costs unallowable (i.e., Federal Employees or legislative personnel)

**Fringe benefits:**

Budget Justification: For Fringe Benefits, NOAA Grants Management Division (see [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#)) expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Are fringe benefits identified as a separate item?
- Are all the elements that comprise fringe benefits indicated?
- Do the fringe benefits and charges appear reasonable?
- Are the total charges for each person listed along with an explanation of how the charges were calculated?
- Are fringe benefits charged to federal and matching categories in the same proportion as salaries?
- Statement to the effect "Approved institutional rates"

**Permanent equipment:**

As described in the [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#) ('Equipment'), Equipment is defined as an article of tangible personal property that has a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. A recipient organization may classify equipment at a lower dollar value but cannot classify it higher than \$5,000. For example, a state may classify their equipment at \$1,000 with a useful life of a year.

Budget Justification: For Permanent Equipment, NOAA Grants Management Division (see [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#)) expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Is each item of equipment listed?
- If over \$5,000 is there a description of how it will be used in the project?
- If over \$5,000 has a lease vs. purchase analysis been completed? At least 3 vendors should be contacted for a quote. If none of these vendors provides leasing then a statement to that effect will suffice. Names and telephone numbers of the vendors and relevant contacts should be documented.
- For each item of equipment, is the number of units, cost per unit and total cost specified?

- Is each item of equipment necessary for the successful completion of the project?
- Are the charges for each item reasonable and realistic?
- Are disallowed costs excluded?
- Contingencies must be excluded!

**Expendable supplies:**

Enter the total cost of all expendable supplies involved in this project. Refer to [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#) (“Supplies”) for a complete description of this budget category. Expendable supplies and equipment must be described according to major categories, e.g., chemical reagents, computer paper and supplies, glassware, lumber, etc. Fuel for boats should be budgeted here rather than under travel. Fuel for vehicles should be budgeted under E. Travel. The justification may be based on historical costs (note as such).

Budget Justification: For Expendable Supplies, NOAA Grants Management Division (see [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#)) expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Are supplies itemized by type of material or nature of expense?
- For general office or business supplies, is the total charge listed along with the basis for the charge (i.e. historical use rates)?
- or other specific supply categories, is the number of units, cost per unit and total cost specified?
- Are the charges necessary for the successful completion of the project?
- Are the charges reasonable and realistic?
- Are disallowed costs (e.g. liquor, entertainment) excluded?
- Contingencies or miscellaneous charges must be excluded!

**Travel: Enter the total cost of all domestic and foreign travel involved in this project.**

Budget Justification: For Travel, NOAA Grants Management Division (see [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#)) expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- For foreign and domestic travel, is each trip listed along with the destination, estimated mileage, method of travel, cost per mile and duration, number of travelers, per diem rate for meals and lodging?
- If actual trip details are unknown, what is the basis for the proposed travel charges?
- Is the requested travel directly relevant to the successful completion of the project?
- Are the travel charges reasonable and realistic?
- International Travel: International travel must conform with the Fly America Act rules and regulations. Funding for unknown international travel may be approved but the travel itself is not authorized until an Award Action Request (AAR) is submitted and approved.

**Publications and documentation costs:**

Enter the total cost of all publications and documents produced by this project.

Budget Justification: For publications and documentation costs, NOAA Grants Management Division (see [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#)) expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- For each charge, is the number of units, cost per unit and total cost specified?
- Are the charges necessary for the successful completion of the project?
- Are the charges reasonable?

- Are charges which duplicate indirect cost items excluded?

**Other costs:**

For each Other Cost, select its type and provide a description or label (if required).

Budget Justification: For Other Costs, NOAA Grants Management Division (see [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#)) expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Are items listed by type of material or nature of expense?
- For each charge, is the number of units, cost per unit and total cost specified?
- Are the charges necessary for the successful completion of the project?
- Are the charges reasonable?
- Are disallowed costs (e.g. liquor, entertainment) excluded?
- Are charges which duplicate indirect cost items excluded?

**Sub-awards: To include a Sub-award in a worksheet, you must do the following:**

- Add the sub-award institution to the budget environment via the Budgets > Sub-Awards tab. Upon adding the institution, you'll be prompted to upload a Statement of Work (PDF only) for the sub-award. Ignore the "Subaward budget PDF" prompt.
- If you are requesting a sub-award for a recipient that already has an ACTIVE sub-award with MIT Sea Grant, then select 'Sub-award NOT subject to indirect' in the parent worksheet, G. Other Costs. Otherwise, select 'Sub-award'.
- Select the sub-award institution from the subsequent drop-down.
- Populate the corresponding Other Cost line in parent worksheet with the total values of the corresponding sub-award budget.
- Create a fully-justified sub-award budget worksheet for each funding year of the sub-award.
- Confirm that the total of the sub-award worksheet matches the corresponding entry in the parent worksheet's G. Other Costs.

**Budget Justification for Sub-awards:** For sub-awards, NOAA Grants Management Division (see [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#)) expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Is each sub-award listed as a separate item? (Separate budgets are required for sub-award regardless of the dollar value.)
- Are the products/services to be acquired described along with the applicability of each to the project?
- Do the costs appear reasonable and realistic?
- Are any sole source contracts contemplated?
- If yes, is a sole source justification included with the application which describes why the proposed sole source entity is the only source capable of meeting the applicant's project needs?
- Are disallowed costs excluded?
- Contingencies or miscellaneous charges must be excluded!
- Are there contracts with non-US organizations?
- Do you have a CD-512 on file for each of your sub-awards?

**Indirect costs: Indirect Cost is the granting institution's negotiated Facilities and**

**Administrative (Indirect) cost rate for those elements of the proposed grant budget to which that rate is to be applied.**

By default, the total Sea Grant and Grantee funds of a worksheet that incur indirect costs are auto-totaled and populate the 'IDC Subtotal' boxes. The total indirect costs are auto-calculated based on the IDC subtotal values and the IDC rates applied to each section via the IDC Rate Management Matrix.

Consult with your institution for the IDC rates to use in filling-out each worksheet's IDC Rate Management Matrix per funding year, as they normally change on an annual basis. To complete the IDC Rate Management Matrix, enter proper IDC rate in each of the 12 boxes. By default, you should enter the same rate for both the 'SG rates' and 'Inst. Rates' rows, unless a special agreement with your institution dictates otherwise. Rates should be entered as decimal values (e.g. 50% as 0.50; always start with a leading zero).

Only \$25,000 of a sub-award is subject to indirect cost, and the portion of a sub-award subject to indirect cost per fiscal year is managed by the parent worksheet, assuming that the sub-award institution is properly indicated in the drop-down of the G. Other Costs > Sub-award line. This amount can be monitored by placing the cursor over the Sea Grant (SG) portion of the sub-award.

Unrecovered indirect cost may be included as part of cost sharing and matching.

Budget Justification: For Indirect Costs, NOAA Grants Management Division (see [GMD Budget Narrative Guidance](#)) expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Are indirect costs requested?
- Is the correct rate being used? (If a lower rate than is authorized in the indirect cost rate agreement is being proposed you must explain why your organization is deviating from the approved rate.)
- Is the rate applied to the correct base?
- Are charges which duplicate direct costs excluded? (If no, explain/revise.)

## *7. Current and Pending Support*

Demonstrating that your project has other sources of support will strengthen your application. Enter information for relevant support awarded to each investigator. Make sure you complete every field - failure to provide complete information for these sources of support may delay consideration of your proposal.

## *8. Data Management Plan*

In order to align ourselves with the data management policies of NOAA, Sea Grant's parent organization, you must supply us with a Data Management Plan (DMP) covering the storage and dissemination of the raw data generated with funding received from MIT Sea Grant.

The function of the DMP is to ensure that "data will be visible, accessible and independently understandable to users, except where limited by law, regulation, policy (such as those applicable

to personally identifiable information or protected critical infrastructure information or proprietary trade information) or by security requirements." A typical plan is no more than two pages long (4600 characters), and includes the sections listed below:

- Description of data to be generated by the project, including file format, likely size, etc.
- A tentative date by which data will be shared
- Standards to be used for data/metadata format and content
- Policies on data stewardship and preservation
- Procedures for providing access, sharing, and security

If your university or institution has established data-sharing practices and policies, you may base your DMP on theirs. If your project does not generate datasets, a simple statement to that effect is all that is necessary to satisfy the DMP requirement. Please refer to the Sea Grant data sharing and management [guidance document](#) for more information.

### *9. Letters of Support*

Letters of support are optional. However, if other organizations are described as contributing to your project work in the narrative portion of your proposal, it is advisable to include a letter of support from them detailing their intentions and commitment. Upload as a PDF. In addition, letters of support from stakeholders that will benefit from the work may also be submitted.

### *10. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Short Form*

You are required to submit a copy of NOAA's Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (i.e., NEPA) form in order to receive funding for your research. You may ignore the field 'Grant number and/or Project ID (if applicable).'

Please download the form at the bottom of [this website](#) and fill it out and upload it in the module. Please address each question as completely as possible. If a question does not pertain to your work, state what you will be doing and how the work does not pertain to the question being asked, avoiding "no" or "N/A" where possible. The more detailed information you can provide will help with NEPA evaluations and determinations.

### *11. Focus Area(s) and Classification(s)*

Select a primary and (if relevant) secondary Focus Area to which your project contributes. Select one or two SG Classification Codes that are most appropriate for your project.

### *12. Suggested Reviewers*

You may give us contact information for suggested peer reviewers. Reviewers should be scientific peers who are qualified to provide independent and knowledgeable reviews of your project in the full proposal phase. MIT Sea Grant peer reviewers should not be from Massachusetts institutions. DO NOT INCLUDE individuals with whom you have had any of the following relationships:

- All co-authors on publications within the past three years, including pending publications and submissions.
- All collaborators on projects within the past three years, including current and planned collaborations.
- All persons in your field with whom you have had consulting/financial arrangement/ conflicts-of-interest in the past three years, including receiving compensation of any type (e.g. money, goods or services.)
- It is also best to omit former mentors, advisors, or students. If your recommendation falls into one of these categories, please indicate this in your submission.

### *13. Final Submittal*

Once you are satisfied with your submittal, you may submit by clicking SUBMIT on the last tab in eSeaGrant. Clicking SUBMIT on the last page will time-stamp your submission and generate an acknowledgement email for your records. You will continue to be able to access, edit and re-submit your proposal until the deadline; however, the system will shut down automatically at that time. You **MUST** click SUBMIT. If you have not pressed the SUBMIT button by the deadline, your preproposal will not be processed. No exceptions can be made.

### **Step Four – Full Proposal Review**

Full proposals must be submitted to MIT Sea Grant through the eSeaGrant online portal by 5:00 pm local time on June 1, 2020. The MIT Sea Grant Research Coordinator will assemble three peer reviewers for each proposal. Peer reviewers will be experts in the field(s) which are covered in the proposals and will be chosen to avoid any potential conflict of interest. In the event that an in-state reviewer needs to be used, the selection will be justified to the federal program officer. Reviewers will be tasked with evaluating the proposal package using seven criteria identified in the Evaluation Criteria section of this RFP. Each reviewer will be asked to rate their proposal and send their entire review to MIT Sea Grant.

The blinded peer reviews for each proposal will be sent to the PI of that proposal by July 15, 2020. The PIs then have until 5:00 pm local time on August 14, 2020 to respond to the reviewer's comments. Rebuttals are optional and not required of any PI.

The full proposal, reviewers' critiques, and the PI's rebuttals (if provided) are submitted to a Technical Review Panel which meets in September for extensive discussion and to make final recommendations. The Director, with the advice of the MIT Sea Grant Advisory Committee and the National Sea Grant Program Officer, and giving due consideration to the Panel's recommendations and the relevance of the proposed work to the Program's strategic goals, selects proposals to be funded. Funding authorization is finalized by the National Sea Grant Office within 60 days, and Principal Investigators are informed of the result.

## Evaluation Criteria

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Reviewers are asked to evaluate the proposals for content, technical proficiency, the novelty of research and technology proposed, project team experience, available resources, budget requests, partner and stakeholder support, outreach and engagement, relevance to the Sea Grant mission and focus areas, and general merit. Below are criteria applicable in evaluating proposals for projects in the National Sea Grant College Program. Reviewers will provide a written review of the proposal taking into consideration the National Sea Grant Office criteria listed below (from National Sea Grant College Program, Program Core Funding: Procedures for the Solicitation, Review and Approval of Proposals, Attachment A):

- 1. Rationale** - the degree to which the proposed activity addresses an important issue, problem, or opportunity in development, use, or management of marine or coastal resources.
- 2. Scientific or Professional Merit** - the degree to which the activity will advance the state of the science or discipline through use and extension of state-of-the-art methods.
- 3. Innovativeness** - the degree to which new approaches to solving problems and exploiting opportunities in resource management or development, or in public outreach on such issues will be employed; alternatively, the degree to which the activity will focus on new types of important or potentially important resources and issues.
- 4. Qualifications and Past Record of Investigators** - degree to which investigators are qualified by education, training, and/or experience to execute the proposed activity; record of achievement with previous funding.
- 5. User Relationships** - degree to which users or potential 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, or will be kept apprised of progress and results.
- 6. Relationship to Sea Grant Priorities** - degree to which the proposed activity relates to priorities in guidance provided in documents of the National Sea Grant Office or in descriptions of special focus programs.
- 7. Programmatic Justification** - the degree to which the proposed activity will contribute, as an essential or complementary unit to other projects, to reaching the objectives of a sub-program in a state, regional, inter-institutional, or national sea grant program or the degree to which it addresses the needs of important state, regional, or national constituencies.

Reviewers will then assign a proposal score by choosing one of the following:

**5 - Excellent** - Exhibits outstanding scientific quality; demonstrates research strategy and methods well-designed to address problem; contributes to basic discipline as well as more general Sea Grant goals in marine resource development, use, management; and has outlined a



meaningful engagement plan, including the identification of stakeholders and/or linkages to user groups

**4 - Very Good** - With careful consideration of recommended changes, would be rated Excellent

**3 - Good** - Routine but acceptable scientific quality; needs revision in some major part of the proposal; for example, the methodology, linkage to user groups, clarification of relationship to similar projects, or major budget changes necessary to achieve objectives

**2 - Fair** - Marginal scientific approach to a potentially interesting problem; limited understanding of how proposed research related to general Sea Grant goals; major deficiencies in problem definition, research strategy, and methods; inadequate institutional support

**1 - Poor** - Proposal has major deficiencies and should not be funded

## Questions?

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You are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to review the proposal submission process early and contact one of the following individuals with any questions you may have. We are eager to help you compile and submit a competitive proposal by the deadline, and wish to have as much time as possible to work with you.

If you have any questions regarding proposal preparation, please contact one of the following MIT Sea Grant representatives:

### **RFP PROCESS**

Mary Newton Lima  
Research Program Coordinator  
(617) 253-7138, [mnewlim@mit.edu](mailto:mnewlim@mit.edu)

### **BUDGETS**

Caroline Johnston Financial Administrator  
(617) 253-6916, [carolin@mit.edu](mailto:carolin@mit.edu)

### **ESEAGRANT**

Ben Bray, Web Developer  
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### **MIT Sea Grant Advisory Services Group**

(Click [here](#) for webpage)