

California Sea Grant College Program

Call for Preliminary Proposals – 2018



The California Sea Grant College Program is now soliciting preliminary proposals for projects to begin on/after February 1, 2018. Faculty and academic staff from universities and scientists from research institutions throughout California are invited to apply.

California Sea Grant continues to focus on the following integrated themes (or Strategic Focus Areas):

1. Healthy Coastal Ecosystems
2. Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture
3. Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies

**Applications are due by
5:00 pm Pacific Time, March 23, 2017**

submission only via eSeagrant
<http://eseagrant2.ucsd.edu>

Late applications will NOT be accepted

OUR ALTERNATING YEAR POLICY: CA Sea Grant is managing its core research proposals and awards under an “alternating year plan.”

(1) For proposals submitted in odd-numbered years (in effect this year, for FY2018 funding consideration), we solicit proposals for “Standard Core Awards” of 2-years duration and at levels of funding up to a maximum of \$125,000/year, plus (optionally) one graduate trainee.

(2) For proposals submitted in even-numbered years (e.g. last year’s call), we solicit requests for comparatively small, 1-year awards. These smaller awards will be issued as Special Focus Awards.

CURRENT CALL: This year we are soliciting applications for Standard Core Awards. Applicants may propose to conduct research falling under any area of relevance to California Sea Grant. We encourage proposals that would carry out research to address any of our primary goals under one of our three Strategic Focus Areas:

Healthy Coastal Ecosystems (HCE)

HCE Goal 1: Support research and provide information to understand the dynamics and functioning of coastal and marine ecosystems. Prioritize obtaining information valuable to the conservation, restoration and management of these ecosystems to ensure their long-term health and productivity.

HCE Goal 2: Understand sources and sinks of, and help reduce, water and sediment contamination, and their impacts, on the coastal and marine environment.

HCE Goal 3: Support research to understand the impacts of climate change on coastal and marine species and environments

HCE Goal 4: Support research to understand and forecast harmful algal blooms (HABs) and their impacts on coastal ecosystems and coastal communities.

HCE Goal 5: Document the introduction and spread of invasive, non-native plants and animals in estuarine and coastal marine environments, their impacts on local ecosystems, and help manage established invading populations

Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture (SFA)

SFA Goal 1: Provide information to promote the sustainable use of living coastal and marine resources and associated communities

SFA Goal 2: Provide science-based information to support and grow a sustainable California aquaculture industry to help meet the growing demand for seafood, and minimize negative socio-economic and environmental impacts of aquaculture

SFA Goal 3: Obtain and provide science-based information on probable anthropogenic impacts, including climate change, on key commercial and recreational fish and shellfish populations, and associated human communities

Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies (RCCE)

RCCE Goal 1: Support communities and stakeholders to sustainably use, and policy makers to effectively manage, coastal and marine resources.

RCCE Goal 2: Work with communities to improve coastal environmental quality and the quality of human life on coasts

RCCE Goal 3: Assist communities in reducing vulnerability to coastal hazards

RCCE Goal 4: Work with communities and partners to plan for and adapt to the effects of climate change, including changes in the frequency and intensity of storms and waves, sea-level rise, ocean acidification and hypoxia.

Applicants are encouraged to look at the full Sea Grant Strategic Plans for more information on California Sea Grant and National Sea Grant research priorities, and then focus on the specific issue(s) of interest to them.

Draft 2018-2021 California Sea Grant Strategic Plan:

https://caseagrants.ucsd.edu/sites/default/files/StrategicPlan-2018-21-DRAFT-RFP_o.pdf

2014-2017 National Sea Grant Strategic Plan:

http://seagrants.noaa.gov/Portals/o/Documents/global_docs/strategic_plan/2014-2017_National_Sea_Grant_College_Program_Strategic_Plan_v2.pdf

A potential applicant is welcome to contact California Sea Grant personnel to receive more specific feedback concerning particular research issues (see below for contact list).

We anticipate issuing approximately 8-10 Standard Core Awards for FY2018, contingent upon receipt of anticipated funds from NOAA.

PRE-PROPOSAL AND PROPOSAL PROCESSING SCHEDULE:

March 23, 2017 (5:00 pm Pacific time) – Pre-proposals due

April-May 2017 – Review of pre-proposals

Mid-June 2017 – Pre-proposal applicants notified of recommendations

August 1, 2017 (5:00 pm Pacific time) – Full proposals due

July–September 2017 – Peer review and project selection

Early October 2017 (approx.) – Proposal applicants notified of funding recommendations

On/after February 1, 2018 – Projects begin

Preliminary Proposal Guidelines

The California Sea Grant College Program emphasizes innovative applied research on ocean and coastal resources and processes. Research with a strong theoretical basis that encompasses clear, testable hypotheses is desirable. In contrast, low priority is given to survey or inventory studies. Research that has national or international application, or that addresses important regional issues, problems, and opportunities is appropriate. Potential applicants are encouraged to check the “[Research Projects](#)” section of our website for examples of projects currently funded.

The duration of a project request is typically two years, though requests for a 1-year award are fine. A maximum of three years of support may be requested if circumstances and the quality/importance of the research are exceptional (there will be a “high bar” applied to judging the need for and value of a project exceeding 2 years duration). Project extramural budgets may not exceed \$125,000 per year. Above this limit, a researcher may request funds to provide a stipend for one graduate student per year (up to a maximum of \$27,500, as appropriate to the student and institution – see “Traineeships,” below). The average project budget excluding the graduate stipend is approximately \$100,000 - \$110,000 per year.

We use the eSeagrant system for submission of pre-proposals and proposals. If applicants have not registered for the new eSeaGrant system, you will need to register via the on-line submission “portal” (<http://eseagrant2.ucsd.edu>). Once you register, if you do not receive a “welcome” email with login credentials, please contact Miho Ligare at migare@ucsd.edu or 858-534-1160.

Once you login, you can change your password if you would like. To change your password, click on your name in the upper-right corner of the screen, and select “My Profile”.

To start a proposal, or revisit/edit an existing proposal, click on “RFP (Request for Proposals)” on the banner head. Then click on the green arrow to the right of the line labeled “2018 Core Awards – Preliminary Proposal”.

In order to submit a pre-proposal you must work down the sequence of sections (“Instructions” through “Submission Preview”) listed on the left side of the pre-proposal window.

eSeaGrant is used to enter basic required information (e.g. PI, co-PI, additional personnel, contact information and CVs), and to upload the pre-proposal Project Narrative. For pre-proposals, eSeaGrant allows only a single Project Narrative file (in pdf format) to be uploaded. We are imposing strict page limits on certain sections of the preliminary proposal Project Narrative, and any narrative file exceeding those size limits will not be reviewed. The pre-proposal requirements and size limits are as follows:

1) Cover page – provides basic summary information regarding the project. Proposers should download and use a fillable Excel spreadsheet (<http://go.ucsd.edu/2jSzXd2>) to enter this information, and upload this document as a PDF in eSeaGrant. Budget requests are here considered only to be good-faith estimates – itemized budgets are not required in a pre-proposal. Pre-proposals do not require signatures or institutional endorsements.

2) Main Project Narrative (maximum 3 pages of text in 12-point font, not including figures, tables and references) – the Main Project Narrative must lead with a brief Project Summary or Abstract. Thereafter the format is flexible, but we recommend you list project goals or objectives, provide a brief background justifying the project, briefly describe methods and state the likely value of project outcomes (to science, specific communities, regulators or the general public). We encourage the use of headers to delimit appropriate sections of the narrative.

3) (Optional) Tables, Figures and References – the Main Project Narrative may refer to tables or figures, and may cite references. These items (with legends) should be placed immediately after the 3-page Main Project Narrative. Do not embed tables and figures in the 3-page Main Project Narrative. You may also include the CVs of additional personnel that are not listed as PI or Co-PI (Investigators). There are no page/size limits to tables, figures and the list of references, and references can be reported in any format.

Technical staff of the California Sea Grant Program, in conjunction with the California Sea Grant Committee (outside panelists selected for disciplinary expertise) and, separately, the RASGAP (Resources Agency Sea Grant Advisory Panel – a review committee composed primarily of scientists associated with California state agencies), will review all preliminary proposals. Prospective investigators who submit preliminary proposals that are deemed promising and most likely to contribute to California Sea Grant objectives will be encouraged to submit full proposals. Please refer to the section “California Sea Grant Proposal Review Process” (below) for more information.

The procedure for selection of new California Sea Grant projects involves the following four steps:

1. Evaluation of preliminary proposals (April-May).
2. Submission and evaluation of formal proposals (August-September).
3. Final adjustments, if necessary, to conform to budget allocation (October).
4. Inclusion of recommended individual proposals in the California Sea Grant College Program Omnibus Proposal submitted to NOAA (November).

Please note that although California Sea Grant allows multiple submissions of preliminary proposals by a principal investigator, only one preliminary proposal per PI will be allowed to advance to the formal proposal stage.

The National Sea Grant College Program is a partnership between the nation’s universities and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, and is authorized by the United States Congress. California Sea Grant is the largest of 33 university-based programs nationwide that form the core of the National Sea Grant network. The network, in cooperation with federal and state agencies, and/or marine industries, involves some 300 universities and colleges.

Traineeships

Sea Grant graduate student research traineeship stipends, if requested, must be included in estimated total project costs. A Sea Grant Research Trainee is a full-time registered graduate student who is working toward an advanced degree related to marine or coastal sciences. Typically, to justify inclusion of a traineeship, the project will provide the trainee with the basis of a thesis. The traineeship stipend does not cover graduate student tuition and fees. Tuition and fees, if requested, should also be included in project costs and must be included within the \$125,000 per year limit of project costs. The traineeship stipend, graduate student tuition or fees are not subject to indirect

costs per Federal Regulation 15CFR917.11.

Supporting Coastal Data and Data Management

Proposers whose projects could benefit from access to coastal oceanographic data should be aware that a wide variety of data on the physical, biological, and chemical properties of California coastal waters are collected by and made available by the two integrated ocean observing systems that cover the entire California coast: the Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System (SCCOOS - <http://www.sccoos.org/>) and the Central and Northern California Ocean Observing System (CeNCOOS - <http://www.cencoos.org/>). These two programs also are potential recipients and managers of environmental data that might be collected by researchers, and this could aid researchers in fulfilling data accessibility requirements (see section labeled **NOAA Data Sharing Requirement**, below). Proposers are encouraged to contact staff at SCCOOS or CeNCOOS, as appropriate, to discuss availability and access to data, and data management, that might bear on the proposed research program.

Matching Funds

A unique aspect of the Sea Grant Program is the matching funds requirement. According to the 1976 founding legislation, a project leader is required to match each \$2 received in NOAA/Sea Grant funds with \$1 from nonfederal sources.

Examples of allowable items for matching Sea Grant federal funds include existing salaries and benefits of investigators and others paid from non-federal sources, costs of using expendable supplies and equipment already in inventory, costs of boat time supplied by non-federal sources, industry participation, and donated supplies, service, space, or equipment. You may also contact the Sea Grant Business Officer, Rose Madson (rmadson@ucsd.edu), with questions about various sources and types of match. However, your institution remains the final approver for all match included in the proposal.

NOAA Data Sharing Requirement (effective for all NOAA funded research projects)

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 or at minimal cost, 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. The requirement has two basic parts: (1) environmental data generated by a grant project must be made available after a reasonable period of exclusive use, and (2) the grant application must describe the plan to make the data available (Principal Investigators are expected to execute the plan).

If your project produces environmental data, it must conform to NOAA's Data Sharing Directive for Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts. For detailed guidance, you can view the current version of the policy, including a definition of environmental data (which can include socioeconomic and model data), download any updates and access additional implementation resources at the following permanent URL (Appendix B outlines requirements): https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0.pdf.

If funding is required for data curation and archiving, please make sure that funds are budgeted in the project proposal for data management. All data generated through Sea Grant funded projects are required to be completely QA/QC'ed (Quality Assurance and Quality Control) and made publicly

accessible **by two years after the end date of the project.**

No action by proposers regarding this policy is required for submission of preliminary proposals. However, proposers should understand that in the Full Proposal stage, the Principal Investigator will be required to address this requirement explicitly and explain how data and metadata will be stored and provided, upon request.

Submission of Preliminary Proposals

Preliminary proposals must be submitted via eSeaGrant **by 5:00 pm Pacific Time on March 23, 2017.** Late pre-proposals will not be accepted! If you have technical problems with completion and submission of your pre-proposal, please contact Miho Ligare, California Sea Grant's Research and Fellowship Coordinator, at (858) 534-1160 or mligare@ucsd.edu. Upon submission of the pre-proposal you should receive a reply via email indicating we have received the preliminary proposal. If you do not receive an email reply within a few hours, please contact us via telephone to confirm the status of your preliminary proposal submission.

Submission Questions

Miho Ligare, Research & Fellowship Coordinator
mligare@ucsd.edu
(858) 534-1160

Budget Questions

Rose Madson, Business & Fiscal Officer
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California Sea Grant Management Team

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California Sea Grant Extension Specialists

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Areas of Expertise: Marine Ecology, Transport of Marine Larvae, Coastal Oceanography

Mariska Obedzinski, Specialist Santa Rosa
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Areas of Expertise: Resilient Coastal Communities, Healthy Coastal and Marine Ecosystems, Climate Change and Wetlands

Jennifer O’Leary, Specialist San Luis Obispo
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Areas of Expertise: Healthy Coastal and Marine Ecosystems, Marine Conservation, Subtidal Marine Ecology

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If your area is not represented in the above list, and you wish to speak to an extension specialist, please call the Extension Director at (858) 822-2708 for guidance.

California Sea Grant College Program Proposal Review Process

The California Sea Grant College Program solicits proposals for a variety of funding opportunities. The process described below is for submission to this year's Standard Core Award research competition. In addition to the Special Focus and Standard Core Award competitions, the program administers National Sea Grant College Program competitions that include a variety of fellowships, National Strategic Investments, and special one-time funding opportunities; the process described below does not pertain to these other special competitions.

Each year a call for preliminary project proposals is widely distributed throughout California. For Standard Core Awards, which are of 2-year duration typically, we expect a large pool of submissions (perhaps \approx 100 pre-proposals).

Preliminary proposals are reviewed by California Sea Grant technical staff plus the California Sea Grant Committee (outside panelists selected for disciplinary expertise). At this stage, screening is based on the project's innovative approach, uniqueness of the idea, importance, quality of science, and appropriateness to Sea Grant. Each pre-proposal is considered on its own merits without regard for campus or institutional affiliation. In addition, the Resources Agency Sea Grant Advisory Panel (RASGAP) also will review preliminary proposals. Input from RASGAP is directed toward identifying and meeting priorities for funding according to the needs identified by state resource protection and management agencies. Full proposals are encouraged on those topics that rate highest based on scientific value and state need.

Full proposals are distributed to external merit reviewers who are chosen for their expertise relative to the topic of each proposal. The California Sea Grant Committee meets to evaluate full proposals with the benefit of the written merit reviews. Criteria for selection at this step include: (1) rationale; (2) scientific merit and impact or outreach quality; (3) innovativeness; (4) programmatic justification; (5) practical impact and user relationships; and (6) relationship to Sea Grant priorities. Merit reviews, user collaboration, expected impact (scientific and practical), and letters of support from potential users help determine whether these criteria are met. The RASGAP also meets again to evaluate full proposals and provide advice to Sea Grant.

When all the input is received from the external merit reviewers, the California Sea Grant Committee, and RASGAP, the California Sea Grant Management Team and Director of California Sea Grant make the final recommendations regarding approval of proposals for funding. The National Sea Grant Office then reviews and approves those recommendations.

New and continuing proposals are compiled by the California Sea Grant College Program into an institutional proposal containing: project and program summaries, budget pages, full proposal narratives, curricula vitae, and letters of support. The institutional proposal, called the California Sea Grant College Program Omnibus, is submitted to the National Sea Grant College Program for funding and implementation starting February 1 of the following year.

Discouraged preliminary proposals may still be submitted as formal proposals. That choice is up to the proposers. However, discouragement represents the collective opinion of California Sea Grant and its advisors that any proposal submitted, based on that pre-proposal, has a low probability of being funded.

If you have any questions, or desire more information about this process, please do not hesitate to call the California Sea Grant office at (858) 534-4440.