

Proposal Development Policies and Procedures

BACKGROUND

Actions to be completed to implement this Policy:

1. Finance and Audit Committee Adopts '**Guidelines for SECOORA Engagement in Proposals**'
2. SECOORA identifies Members to serve as 'expert' reviewers (**Expert List**); and publishes this list. These members would be available as needed to review proposals confidentially and ensure benefits to SECOORA.
3. SECOORA informs members of the **Proposal Development Policies and Procedures**, as presented and revised below, and makes them publicly available.

CHARGE TO THE COMMITTEE

SECOORA is interested in diversifying its support to ensure long-term viability and relevance. The Diversification Work Group was created to develop and recommend a set of policies and procedures upon which SECOORA staff and members could pursue such opportunities.

BASIS FOR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Before delving into the details, the Work Group engaged in some discussion which provided a framework for policy development. A guiding principle to the Work Group was to ensure clarity and transparency in SECOORA's proposal development process. This resulted in the following conclusions:

1. SECOORA was initially created to support US IOOS and meet the requirements of the ICOOS Act for a regional information coordinating entity. This link remains the primary service of the RA. No actions should be taken that undermine the primary mission and focus of SECOORA.
2. SECOORA is encouraged to seek additional opportunities at NOAA and other possible funding partners to do enhance its activities in coastal observing for the SE USA.
 - There are a number of mechanisms that can be explored to make this happen, including the use of MOAs/MOUs, Cooperative Agreements, contractual mechanisms and grants with prospective partners. These can be either long- or short-term commitments depending on the particular circumstances.
 - Projects that compete directly with local private sector interests, in particular small and medium size enterprises (SME) and businesses (SMB) should be avoided, if possible.
3. The scope of the SECOORA scale is a good mix of regional efforts, along with several strategically organized sub-regional/local efforts mixed in.
 - The sub-regional/local efforts must be such in scope that a connection to the larger regional context is clear. Local projects without the link to the regional context (i.e. for local projects' sake) should be avoided.

- SECOORA may provide services and assistance for sub-regional/local projects. SECOORA shall seek and receive funding support to cover the costs associated with such activities.
4. There exist two elements which should be factored into the funding strategy
 - Proactive, which will require a competitive process among interested member institutions
 - Reactive, where a competitive process may not be necessary, as the project can be completed by SECOORA core staff and/or when only a few member institutions that can all be accommodated in one proposal have expressed interest.
 5. The SECOORA Executive Director has the authority to pursue any and all opportunities that meet SECOORA's niche and interests, as defined by the mission statement, to identify expertise at SECOORA institutions to participate in such endeavors, and to move forward proactively on such opportunities when they arise.
 6. In order to participate in and ensure that the SECOORA staff are familiar with the capabilities and expertise that exist at each of its member institutions, each such member institution should provide to the SECOORA staff and periodically update concise documentation, prepared in a common format, that describes the relevant "portfolio of expertise" that each institution houses for their use in proactively and reactively responding to funding opportunities that fit SECOORA's niche.
 7. SECOORA is positioned to be able to offer, for a fee, a focused set of both operational and programmatic services.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. U.S. IOOS® 'core' RA and RCOOS Proposals

The process is established; details from the 2009 development process are available on the website. In summary, the steps currently in place are:

1. Establish and confirm procedure and evaluation criteria
2. Establish Expert Panel
3. Solicit Letters of Intent (LOI) from Members
4. Evaluate LOIs and select proposal team
5. Develop, approve and submit proposal

B. SECOORA-Initiated Proposals

This process refers to instances that SECOORA wants to take the lead role in submitting a proposal to any opportunity other than U.S. IOOS 'core'.

1. Executive Director explores interest in the membership to respond to an opportunity by announcing the opportunity and explicitly stating the interest by SECOORA for initiating a formal response, and invites collaborators.
2. Members can provide input (with a justification) if they feel that this might not be an appropriate action for SECOORA.
3. If necessary, SECOORA staff design, announce, and initiate a review process to evaluate the submissions. This may include the development by interested members of 'expressions of interest,' "letters of intent," or "statements of qualifications" that would be submitted to SECOORA
4. Staff identifies partners based on expertise and interest, and organizes team.

5. Staff notifies those not selected to be on the proposal team.
6. Team develops letter of intent/proposal.
7. Team identifies roles and responsibilities of investigators and staff
8. Team develops budget and submits to Treasurer to confirm 'Guidelines' are followed.
9. Staff submits proposal.

C. Requests for SECOORA Services/Involvement

This process refers to instances where SECOORA's involvement has been requested by third parties (members or non-members) for services and assistance

1. Such services may take the form of:
 - a. Letters of support/endorsement
 - b. Fiscal management of grants/contracts
 - c. Programmatic services
2. Representative(s) of member and/or other organizations present request to Executive Director describing desired services from SECOORA.
3. Executive Director works with members/organizations seeking SECOORA services to confirm that the proposal fits within SECOORA's niche, and, if so, identifies SECOORA's role and potential benefits for SECOORA and the Member/organization.*
4. Executive Director notifies ExCom of pending request and anticipated role/impacts for SECOORA, and informs the membership for any feedback
5. Executive Director determines if SECOORA has existing capabilities within its core staff or if capacity would have to be added to participate/assist.
 - a. In either case, SECOORA staff will determine level of funding necessary to provide such service
 - b. If SECOORA needs to add capacity, a transparent process as in (B) should be adopted to provide the opportunity to any member to participate
6. Team develops budget and submits to Treasurer to confirm 'Guidelines' are followed.
7. Member/organization submits proposal

*Executive Director determines if potential COI exist (e.g. multiple SECOORA submissions to same opportunity). For example, in the instance where several groups of members approach SECOORA for the same RFP AND the number of proposals that can be submitted is limited, each group will be asked to submit a one-pager (following a template TBD) which will then be evaluated by a Member from the Expert List. This member will be selected by SECOORA staff in consultation the ExCom (as determined by the nature of the RFP --e.g. science, outreach, data management, etc).