SECOORA Policy Regarding Solicitation of Mini Proposals
April 7, 2011

SECOORA will at times have funds available to fulfill existing grant obligations that require expertise or time commitments beyond what the SECOORA staff have. As SECOORA's membership and stakeholders grow, it is critical to have a process by which funds are distributed throughout our network in a fair and transparent manner. The most equitable mechanism to make these decisions is through a proposal process. The following describes the mini-proposal process we currently use to distribute the available funding.

PROCESS
1. SECOORA will describe the funding source and determine 3-5 broad categories of focus based on the current grant requirements. Initial estimates of total funding available for each funding category will be presented to provide guidelines. These estimates are meant to provide rough guidance, and are subject to change during the review and contract finalization process.

2. SECOORA will develop a review panel of 3-5 participants. This could include SECOORA staff, SECOORA members, other subject matter experts, and/or a NFRA representative.

3. Solicitation for mini-proposals will be sent to SECOORA Membership. The turnaround time is typically 2-4 weeks, because of the relatively small level of funding.

4. The review panel will review the submitted proposals and meet via conference call to evaluate proposals, select recipients, and determine how available funding should be distributed among those proposing.

5. Funding will be allocated to awardees via contracts between SECOORA and the awardee.

6. Awardees will prepare summaries for the Annual Meetings regarding progress to date and timeline for final deliverables.

SUBMISSION OF MINI PROPOSALS
The project summary should be 1-2 pages of 12-point text and must include the following elements.
1. Title
2. Key personnel involved
3. Funding category addressed
4. Project Description
5. Overview of thematic areas addressed (including stakeholders engaged)
6. Deliverables and timeline
7. Brief budget summary and justification

NOTE: At least one user/stakeholder partner must be clearly identified for each project through a signed letter of commitment.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION
Submissions will be reviewed and ranked based on
1. Addresses one of SECOORA priority program areas (Ecosystems, Living Marine Resources, and Water Quality; Safe and Efficient Marine Operations; Coastal Hazards; and Climate Change)
2. Regional focus or contributing to a regional-scale enterprise
3. Inclusion of tangible stakeholder/end-users engagement in development process.