



**To:** SECOORA Members and Interested Parties

**From:** Debra Hernandez, Executive Director

**Date:** March 23, 2020

**Subject:** Solicitation of Letters of Intent Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2021 Implementation of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®)

As we did in 2015, SECOORA will prepare and submit a single coordinated regional proposal in response to the funding opportunity referenced above. This approach will enable SECOORA to make substantive progress toward the implementation of an effective regional enterprise and demonstrates a genuine willingness of the members and end-users to collaborate within the SECOORA framework. We intend to submit a proposal with a five--year period of performance (June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2026). SECOORA is soliciting Letters of Intent (LOIs) to be reviewed and considered for inclusion in SECOORA's full proposal submission to NOAA. **These LOIs are due to SECOORA by 5:00 PM ET May 26, 2020. Any submissions that do not comply with the Letter of Intent requirements will be rejected and not considered for inclusion in the SECOORA IOOS proposal.**

Respondents are encouraged to work together across the region (i.e., through establishment of multi--sector and multi--component teams where appropriate) and submit ideas for regional activities for inclusion in this proposal.

## **I. SCOPE OF SOLICITATION**

SECOORA is basing our proposal development process on the recommendations of the SECOORA Board of Directors, as reflected in the [Review Panel Terms of Reference](#) and the [Weighted Criteria for Evaluation of Submitted LOIs](#). Scientific merit, innovation, leveraging, and end-user engagement are key factors that will determine successful responses.

Letters of Intent (LOIs) are requested that focus on observing platforms and sensors, modeling, products, and education and outreach that are consistent with [SECOORA Regional Coastal Ocean Observing System – Strategic Operational Plan](#). SECOORA seeks projects that:

1. Are regional in scope or contribute to a regional--scale enterprise. Note: SECOORA's scope is regional. However, LOIs that propose sub--regional scale activities will be considered provided they complement and support the overall regional system or are transferable, i.e. have broad application beyond the originating sub--region.
2. Leverage funding for the proposed activities,
3. Include measurable partnerships with end--users, and;

4. Address at least one of the following SECOORA priority theme areas:
  - a. Coastal Hazards and Climate Variability
  - b. Ecosystems: Living Marine Resources and Water Quality
  - c. Marine Operations

### **Federal Funding Opportunity Requirements**

Our response must address how the SECOORA enterprise will continue development of a Regional Coastal Ocean Observing System (RCOOS) by addressing the following subsystems: Governance and Management, Observing Platforms and Sensors, Data Management and Communications (DMAC), Modeling, Products, Outreach and Education. SECOORA staff will develop the Governance and Management and DMAC subsystems, so applicants should focus on the other four subsystems. Applicants should carefully read the Regional Coastal Ocean Observing System – Strategic Operational Plan for details regarding each subsystem and the solicited information and requirements. Additionally, the LOI template provides applicants with specific information on what must be addressed in their submittal.

### **Eligible Activities and Budget Targets**

SECOORA anticipates writing a 5-year proposal for \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000. However, funding levels will be determined based on annual Congressional appropriations and may be less than \$4-5 million annually. SECOORA's proposal will prioritize projects for funding based on the results of our review process. Applicants must demonstrate end-user needs for all activities and address at least one of SECOORA's theme areas. The breakdown below provides an estimate of subcomponent funding. Initial estimates of total funding available for each category are rough guidelines for LOI development and are subject to change during the proposal development process. Respondents should target their budget accordingly. Eligible activities may include one or more of the following:

1. Observing: \$2M – \$3M/yr - (~50%)
  - a. Maintenance and/or enhancement of observing components.
  - b. Installation of new observing components.
2. DMAC \$400 – \$600K/yr (~10%)
  - a. This was awarded via earlier solicitation to Axiom Data Science.
3. Modeling: \$400 – \$600K/yr (~10%)
4. Products: \$200 -- \$300K/yr (~5%)
5. Outreach and Education: \$200 -- \$300K/yr (~5%)
  - a. These projects should integrate observing data into tools for formal and/or informal education audiences and/or provide student opportunities. SECOORA staff will conduct a significant portion of SECOORA's education and outreach efforts, a portion of which will be funded as a part of the Governance and Management budget.
6. Governance and Management: \$800K - \$1.2M/yr (~20%)

- a. SECOORA staff will prepare the portion of the proposal that describes overall regional association management and governance. Governance includes funding for both product development and outreach and education.

## II. LOI PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

The 2020 SECOORA IOOS proposal development process will include a two-part LOI review: Subject Matter Expert (SME) reviews and a Comprehensive Review Panel. SMEs will conduct the initial review and scoring of SECOORA LOIs by June 30, 2020. [Weighted review criteria](#) (approved by the SECOORA Board of Directors, Dec. 19, 2019) will be provided to SMEs. The Comprehensive Review Panel will be composed of 5 non-conflicted experts. The Comprehensive Review Panel will receive all of the LOIs and SME reviews and they will provide final recommendations to the Executive Director regarding which LOIs are part of the SECOORA IOOS proposal. PIs of projects selected for inclusion in the overall proposal will be notified by the end of July. For more details on the reviewer role and process, please see the [Reviewer Terms of Reference](#).

Once LOIs are selected for inclusion in the overall proposal, the Executive Director will issue invitations to lead PIs to serve on the Proposal Writing Team. PIs from the selected LOIs will integrate proposed activities as members of the writing team for the full proposal. This process will ensure integration of any sub--regional activities into a cohesive regional proposal. It will be the responsibility of the Writing Team to complete the final proposal for review and approval by the SECOORA Board.

The LOI template is available on the [SECOORA website](#). Any submissions that do not comply with the LOI requirements will be rejected and not considered for inclusion in the SECOORA IOOS proposal. LOIs are due to SECOORA by 5:00 PM ET May 26, 2020. PIs of projects selected for inclusion in the overall proposal will be notified by the end of July.

PIs must complete this [Google form](#) for *each* LOI submitted. This will help SECOORA staff track LOI submissions. After completing the Google form, email your LOI as a PDF to Jennifer Dorton ([jdorton@secoora.org](mailto:jdorton@secoora.org)) and cc: Abbey Wakely ([abbey@secoora.org](mailto:abbey@secoora.org)). In the email subject line, type in SECOORA LOI.

The NOAA Notice of Funding Opportunity will be provided once it has been published. If you have any questions please contact either Debra Hernandez ([debra@secoora.org](mailto:debra@secoora.org)) or Jennifer Dorton ([jdorton@secoora.org](mailto:jdorton@secoora.org)).