

SECOORA 2020 Request for Proposals to Enhance Regional Ocean Data Sharing

Overview

The [Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association \(SECOORA\)](#) is the coastal and ocean observing system for North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Our mission is to observe, understand, and increase awareness of our coastal ocean; promoting knowledge, and economic and environmental health through strong regional partnerships.

Congress appropriated \$1.5M in both FY19 and FY20 for Regional Ocean Partnerships (ROPs), or in their absence the IOOS Regional Associations, to enhance capacity for sharing and integration of data from Federal and non-Federal sources to support regional coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes management priorities. Funding is intended to advance both foundational information (e.g. data deficiencies impeding management decisions, data sharing/management structure) and implementation activities (e.g. data products).

With FY19 funding, SECOORA worked with coastal zone management representatives from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, federal partners, and other regional stakeholders to improve coordination on sand resources in the Southeast.

In FY20, SECOORA is providing a competitive opportunity focused on data sharing in the Southeast. We are soliciting proposals that focus on ocean and coastal geospatial data required by states and regional organizations in addressing management issues. The scope of this opportunity is broad. Projects could focus on data collection, data rescue, data formatting, or data sharing. Projects should be regional in scope or contribute to a regional-scale enterprise and include measurable engagement with stakeholders.

Examples of work completed in other regions with this funding include:

- Developing a demonstration of how multiple data sources can be used concurrently to assist with oyster fisheries management, restoration, aquaculture, and research.
- Partnering with fishing industry representatives and organizations to determine the need and uses for fisheries data products, to design and review products, and to develop documentation and communications about the appropriate application and use of data products. [Learn more.](#)
- Updating marine species abundance and distribution data products that inform offshore project siting and also help describe a shifting ecosystem due to changes in climate.
- Creating a regional ocean health scorecard.
- Characterizing regional data sharing capabilities through a combination of surveys, workshops, meetings, and literature reviews that assess existing data platforms/applications being used for decision making by priority stakeholders.

Proposals are encouraged to incorporate relevant needs assessment information from within the SECOORA geographic footprint. Below are sample resources:

1. [Regional Coastal Ocean Observing System – Strategic Operational Plan](#)
2. [2018 Regional Data Scoping Study Report: Federal Data Needs](#)
3. State Coastal Zone Management Section 309 Assessment & Strategy documents

Total funds available are \$180,000. SECOORA intends to award between 1 and 5 proposals. Proposals are due **October 30, 2020 at 5 PM ET**.

Request for Proposals

Proposals must follow the required proposal format. Proposals that do not follow the required format will not be evaluated. The anticipated start date is **January 4, 2021**. Proposals will be scheduled to end on June 30, 2021, with the option to extend 6 months.

Maximum length is four (4) pages (not including budget or appendices). Text should be 12-point font, all margins 1-inch, and must include the following components:

1. Title Page (1 page)
 - a. Proposal title
 - b. Primary PI name, affiliation, email, and phone number
 - c. Co-Investigators (Co-PIs) Name, affiliation, email, and phone number
 - d. Total budget request
 - e. Short summary of proposal (1 paragraph)
2. Description of Project (3 pages)
 - a. **Addressing management issues with ocean data:** Document the specific data and coastal and ocean management decisions that will be addressed with this project.
 - b. **Methodology:** Summarize the protocols/methods you will use to conduct the project. This could include data collection methods, assessment methods, iterative product development methods, etc.
 - c. **Distribution Mechanism:** Provide specific details on how data or products will be made accessible to stakeholders (website, SECOORA data portal, etc.) and how you will promote continuous stakeholder engagement and awareness of project activities.
 - d. **Project deliverables and timeline:** Identify specific deliverables and a timeline for accomplishing this project.

Note: SECOORA recognizes that some proposals may build on existing products. Proposals that plan to use existing resources must demonstrate the incorporation of new data and/or enhancements to the existing products in order to be funded.

The following proposal appendices are required but do NOT count towards the four-page proposal limit:

3. Literature Cited.
4. A one-page CV or resume for the lead PI and co-leads.

5. At least three signed letters of support from targeted stakeholders and end users of the data or products, preferably to include a regional user and state resource manager.
6. [Proposal endorsement form](#).
7. A [budget template](#) and [budget justification](#). Funds may be used for any purpose related to the project. SECOORA does not require matching funds or in-kind support, but please list any match or in-kind that are available to the project.

Eligibility

The lead applicant can be anyone from a school, organization, non-governmental organization, company, governmental agency, or institution located in the SECOORA region (North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida). Co-PIs and/or collaborators can be outside of the SECOORA region. Note: SECOORA cannot fund federal employee salary or travel.

Submission

Please submit the entire application package electronically in PDF format no later than **5:00 PM ET on Oct 30, 2020**. Those wishing to submit should go to egrants.secoora.org and complete the registration process in order to upload a proposal. This is a two part verification system (phone and email confirmations are required). Once you have registered, please complete the required fields and upload your proposal as a PDF.

Proposal Review Process

Anonymous reviews will be conducted for all applications. All proposals will be reviewed based on the adherence to the instructions provided in this request for proposals and outlined in detail in the Request for Proposal section.

1. SECOORA will convene a review panel of 3-5 participants. The panel may include SECOORA staff and other subject matter experts.
2. The review panel will review the submitted proposals and recommend recipient(s) and funding amount(s).
3. Funding will be allocated to awardees via contracts between SECOORA and the awardee.

The successful applicant will be notified in early December. This is an open and competitive process. SECOORA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this process. SECOORA reserves the right to request that respondents make modifications to their proposal at any time before a contract is awarded.

Questions Regarding Application Solicitation

For any questions related to this Request for Proposals, please contact Megan Trembl at mtrembl@secoora.org.