

# SECOORA 2022 Request for Proposals to Support Harmful Algal Bloom Observing in the Southeast



## 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.

NOAA's Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®) is partnering with NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) to support sustained Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) observing activities by the IOOS regional associations. SECOORA has received \$200,000 for investment in HAB monitoring and observing in the Southeast.

SECOORA is soliciting proposals for a competitive opportunity focused on coastal and ocean HAB observing in the Southeast. The scope of this opportunity is broad, but applicants should use the [SECOORA Harmful Algal Bloom Plan](#) as a guide to SECOORA's priorities. Specifically, applicants should review the sections identifying HAB species of concern by state and areas of potential investment. Proposals should address how the effort can contribute to a regional--scale enterprise and include measurable engagement with stakeholders.

For selected projects that propose installation of new sensors or research cruises, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements will need to be met. SECOORA will work with the funded Principal Investigator (PI) to complete the required environmental compliance documentation required for NEPA. Applicants are responsible for identifying and obtaining any required local and/or state permissions or permits. NEPA and permit requirements must be met before any in water work can begin.

Projects that establish new HAB monitoring/observing stations may be eligible for future year SECOORA funding to maintain the station.

Examples of areas of future investments identified in the SECOORA HAB Plan include:

- Addition of biogeochemical and biological sensors to existing moorings
- Analysis of satellite data for HABs detection and tracking
- Expansion of water quality and HAB data products to meet targeted stakeholder needs (e.g. beachgoers, fishermen, aquaculture, coastal tourism).

The applicant is not limited to the above examples, rather these are potential areas for consideration.

Proposals are encouraged also to address regional HABs needs identified in the following resources:

1. [Framework for the National Harmful Algal Bloom Observing Network: A Workshop Report](#)
2. [Implementation Strategy for a National Harmful Algal Bloom Observing Network \(NHABON\)](#)
3. [2018 Regional Data Scoping Study Report: Federal Data Needs](#)
4. [State Coastal Zone Management Section 309 - For Florida Submissions Only](#)

Total funds available are \$200,000. SECOORA intends to award between 1 - 3 proposals that will be funded for a 2-year timeline. Proposals are due **September 15, 2022, at 5 PM ET**.

## Funding Opportunity Areas

Projects should focus one or both areas:

1. Observing - Funds can be requested to support the collection of data to better study HABs issues within the region. Funding can be used for fixed stations, mobile platforms (e.g., drones, AUVs), and ships.
  - Please coordinate with Axiom Data Science ([dmac@secoora.org](mailto:dmac@secoora.org)) to discuss the types of data that you will collect, metadata requirements, your data sharing plan, and whether Axiom will need additional funding to manage the data proposed for collection.
2. Products - Transform raw and/or processed data into useful and meaningful decision-making information and tools for HAB tracking and monitoring or forecasting HAB occurrence.
  - Please coordinate with Axiom Data Science ([dmac@secoora.org](mailto:dmac@secoora.org)) to discuss the types of data for which you may need access, product hosting requirements, your data sharing plan, and whether Axiom will need additional funding to manage products or tools.

## 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 **November 1, 2022**, and work should be completed within 2 years.

Maximum length is six (6) pages (not including budget or appendices). Text should be 12-point font, single spaced, 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 (5 pages)

- a. **Goals and Objectives and Project Geographic Area and HAB Species of Concern:**  
Describe the goals and objectives of the observing effort. Identify the geographic area and the HAB species of concern that your project will address. Define the coastal and ocean management decisions that will be addressed with this project.
- b. **Methodology:** Summarize the protocols/methods you will use to conduct observing effort. This could include data collection methods, assessment methods, iterative product development methods, etc.
- c. **Stakeholder engagement:** Describe how you will promote continuous stakeholder engagement and awareness of project activities throughout the course of the funded effort.
- d. **Data Sharing Plan:** Provide a 1-page data sharing plan that describes the types of environmental data and information expected to be collected or created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access (website, SECOORA data portal, etc.). Please refer to the SECOORA data sharing policy found on page 3 of the [SECOORA Data Management Plan](#) for more information on SECOORA's data sharing policies.
- e. **Project deliverables and timeline:** Identify specific deliverables and a timeline for accomplishing this project.

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

The following proposal appendices are required but do NOT count towards the 6-page proposal limit:

3. Literature Cited.
4. A two-page CV or resume for the Lead PI and Co-PI.
5. At least two signed letters of support from targeted stakeholders which could include a local or regional user of HAB data or products, such as state resource managers.
6. [Proposal endorsement form](#).
7. A [budget template](#) and [budget justification](#). Funds may be used for any purpose related to the project. Please contact Axiom Data Science ([dmac@secoora.org](mailto:dmac@secoora.org)) to discuss budgeting for data management support for your 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 PI 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.

## Proposal Submission

Please submit the entire application package electronically in PDF format through [egrants.secoora.org](https://egrants.secoora.org). The submission deadline is **September 15, 2022, at 5 PM ET**. You must complete the registration process in order to upload a proposal to [egrants.secoora.org](https://egrants.secoora.org). This is a two-part verification system (phone and email confirmations are required). Once you have registered, please select the RFP to which you are applying, complete the required fields, and upload your proposal as a PDF.

## Review Criteria

Evaluation criteria for proposals is as follows:

- Addresses priorities identified in the SECOORA HAB Plan (Relevancy/Need) – 25%
- Demonstrated Value to Stakeholders – 25%
- Technical/Scientific Merit – 30%
- Reasonableness of Budget - 10%
- Follows Proposal Guidelines – 10%

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

SECOORA is committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication, and education programs that serve people with unique backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives, and ways of thinking. We encourage diverse applicants from all backgrounds to apply for this competitive opportunity.

## Proposal Review Process

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. Proposal package is due by 5:00 PM ET on **September 15, 2022**.
2. SECOORA will convene a review panel of 3-5 reviewers. The panel will include SECOORA staff and subject matter experts.
3. The review panel will rank all submitted proposals based on the proposal review criteria.
4. Anticipated projects start date is **November 1, 2022**. All work in the proposal must be completed no later than two years after the project start date.
5. Data and products generated through this opportunity must be shared on the SECOORA website and/or data portal.
6. Provide a summary of the completed observing effort to include in an update to the SECOORA HAB Plan.

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 email [communications@secoora.org](mailto:communications@secoora.org).