

SECOORA 2015 IOOS Proposal Development Expert Review Panel Terms of Reference

The SECOORA 2015 IOOS proposal development process will include an external expert Panel to review the SECOORA Letters of Intent (LOIs) and provide advice on the proposal framework. The Review Panel will be composed of three or five non-conflicted experts. SECOORA staff members (primarily Debra Hernandez and Vembu Subramanian) will have a supporting role with the Review Panel, will review the LOIs, and provide input to the Panel. Additionally, SECOORA LOI respondents will be asked to suggest non-conflicted expert reviewers and the Review Panel will seek additional expert reviewers if they feel it is necessary. The SECOORA Executive Director will facilitate the inclusion of these additional experts as needed. SECOORA members will be asked to nominate experts for the Review Panel; the Board will select final Panel members.

The Panel has the responsibility for ensuring that the LOIs comply with SECOORA key priorities and guidance outlined in the Request for LOIs issued by SECOORA, and with the requirements of the NOAA–NOS-IOOS Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO). The Executive Director will brief the Review Panel on SECOORA’s strategic priorities, provide background regarding ongoing SECOORA activities, and describe funding needs to be considered during the review of LOIs.

The charge to the Review Panel is two-fold: 1) to perform a comprehensive review and ranking of the submitted LOIs for inclusion in the IOOS proposal; and 2) to provide advice on a Proposal Framework that outlines the integration of selected LOIs and aligns with SECOORA’s mission and priorities. The results will be submitted to the SECOORA Executive Committee (non-conflicted members only) for review and approval.

Comprehensive Review and Ranking of the Submitted LOIs

The Panel will assess the scientific and technical merits of the LOIs, innovation and efficiency, stakeholder engagement, Principal Investigator (PI) expertise, budget and leveraging/integration potential. The Panel will use the LOI Ranking Criteria (included below) approved by the SECOORA Board.

The Panel will rank the LOIs and identify gaps and areas of overlap among submitted LOIs; where there is overlap and/or compatibility, the Panel will make recommendations to SECOORA regarding linking two or more LOIs in the preparation of the final proposal. If critical RCOOS functions are not adequately represented in the LOIs, the Executive Director may solicit additional LOIs. When the Panel review of LOIs is complete, their recommendations will be forwarded to the SECOORA Executive Committee for review and approval. Once final recommendations are approved, the Executive Director will issue invitations to lead PIs to serve on the IOOS Proposal writing team.

Proposal Framework

After the LOIs have been evaluated and selected, the Panel will meet to discuss and provide advice on a Proposal Framework. The purpose of the Framework will be to:

- provide a proposal structure that ensures the requirements of the FFO and the SECOORA Request for LOIs have been met,
- highlight the scientific and technical merits of the activities,
- ensure a comprehensive and cogent proposal, and
- confirm that the proposed activities can be accomplished within the available budget and allotted time frame.

After approval by the Executive Committee, it will be the responsibility of the proposal writing team to utilize the Framework to develop the full proposal and deliver the final proposal for review, comment and affirmation by the SECOORA Board.