



**CONNECTICUT SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM
CALL FOR PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS (RFP #1)**

2018-2020 OMNIBUS FUNDING CYCLE

You are invited at this time to submit preliminary proposals to the Connecticut Sea Grant College Program (CTSG) for the funding period of February 1, 2018 to January 31, 2020. Any investigator seeking support for this period must submit, as a single file, an electronic copy of their preliminary proposal by e-mail for receipt no later than **4:30 p.m. EST on Friday, February 24, 2017**. Specify "CTSG Research Proposal" in the subject line. The due date for full proposals is Monday, June 2, 2017. The first year of the funding period covered by this Call for Proposals begins on February 1, 2018.

Connecticut Sea Grant supports applied research, education, and outreach activities to achieve healthy coastal and marine ecosystems and consequent public benefits, focusing on Connecticut, Long Island Sound and its watershed. Applied projects with clear relevance to Connecticut's marine and coastal resources will be given priority.

Topic Areas

CTSG seeks natural and social science proposals for coastal/marine research, outreach, and education of the highest quality and relevance within the thematic areas¹ identified in the draft *Connecticut Sea Grant Strategic Plan for 2018-2021*, which will be posted on the CTSG website (seagrant.uconn.edu) by January 12, 2017.

Based on these thematic areas, additional strategic guidelines and priorities of NOAA and the National Sea Grant College Program (reflected in their respective strategic plans), and input from our external advisory committees, CTSG solicits preliminary proposals to conduct applied research to develop knowledge and tools in the following topic areas:

1. Coastal ecosystems and watersheds

- a. Changing coastal and marine ecosystems and effects on the services they provide
- b. Coastal and marine habitat and species conservation, management and restoration
- c. Watershed management, storm water management and low impact development measures that minimize impact on Long Island Sound

¹ Please note that the Strategic Plan recognizes that some topics (e.g. water quality, socio-economic value) extend across the focus areas, and are therefore considered cross-cutting. These cross-cutting topics are explicitly included in the research priorities for this request for proposals.

- d. Water quality impacts on Long Island Sound and relevant mitigation measures

2. Fisheries and aquaculture

- a. Management and changing environmental conditions related to fisheries, marine aquaculture or marine resources
- b. Public health and socio-economics related to fisheries, marine aquaculture or marine resources

3. Resilient communities

- a. Resilience of coastal and watershed communities in the face of changing climatic conditions, ecosystem services and land use
- b. Capacity of communities / stakeholders to prepare for and respond to coastal and watershed hazards of natural or human origin
- c. Resilience of maritime economies (defined broadly, including recreational and commercial opportunities) to changing socio-economic and environmental conditions

4. Environmental literacy

Educational research, assessment and evaluation strategies to develop and enhance the teaching and learning of ocean and coastal science content

CTSG seeks research projects that give serious consideration to the best means of sharing the results with a variety of audiences, including those outside the specific scientific discipline who may, nonetheless, be interested in the information. Therefore, it is required that proposals provide substantive evidence of the inclusion of an **effective outreach or education plan** that complements the research component. This outreach/education plan must be an integral part of the proposal development and not simply appended to an already completed proposal. The outreach or education component may involve collaborators whose expertise is in outreach or education, or may be carried out by the principal investigators. Connecticut Sea Grant staff members are available to provide input or assistance as appropriate on this aspect of the proposal; see “Outreach and Education as an Effective Component of a Research Project” (<http://web2.uconn.edu/seagrant/funding/fundpdfs/integrate.pdf>).

While CTSG requires proposals to integrate research with education and/or outreach, **all proposals must incorporate a central research component, and demonstrate the ability to produce new knowledge and further the goals of the Connecticut Sea Grant Strategic Plan within the time-frame of the two-year granting period.** For the purposes of this RFP, research is defined as scientific endeavors with **explicit and testable hypotheses** that strive to answer “why” and “how” questions. Research questions may be derived from either the natural or social sciences. Within the scope of this RFP, proposals that focus primarily on describing or monitoring conditions and do not identify or test a specific hypothesis will not be considered. Education and outreach activities that do not incorporate original research will not be considered. If you are in doubt regarding the suitability of a research topic for

CTSG funding, please contact Syma Ebbin, Research Coordinator, at the Sea Grant Office (see page 6).

Duration and Funding

Proposed activities may be one or two years in duration. In exceptional cases, and with specific justifications, a no-cost extension may be granted for activities that extend beyond two years, but initial funding is limited to the period between February 2018 and January 2020 and project methodologies should be developed with this time frame in mind. Proposal budgets should not exceed \$75,000 per year (\$150,000 total), including both direct and indirect costs. CTSG typically receives 18-30 preliminary proposals. We encourage approximately two times the number of full proposals we anticipate being able to fund with expected resources. For this cycle, CTSG expects to be able to fund up to approximately 5 proposals.

Eligibility

Sea Grant support is awarded on a competitive basis, and is available to researchers at all non-profit academic institutions, research laboratories, and extension/outreach facilities in Connecticut. The PI must be based at a Connecticut institution, although collaborators do not have to be located within Connecticut.

PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

A preliminary proposal, while not as detailed as a full proposal, should clearly outline the project objectives, rationale, and methodology, the potential benefits to be gained from the research, and the qualifications of the investigators who would perform the work. It is critically important in the pre-proposal to clearly and explicitly articulate how the proposed work addresses our CTSG strategic priorities identified in this document and in the CTSG Strategic Plan. Proposals involving multiple investigators are welcome. Proposals requesting funding that is complementary to that sought from other sponsors are also welcome; in this case, other funding sources and amounts should be disclosed.

A preliminary proposal should consist of a single file, which includes:

1. a preliminary proposal cover sheet;
2. a three-page project description;
3. a reference list;
4. a budget outline (not a detailed budget) for each year; and
5. a signed statement in which the PI indicates that he/she intends to follow the new NOAA Data Sharing requirement (outlined below).

No appendices or other attachments are permitted.

The preliminary proposal cover sheet should include:

1. For each of the principal investigators, co-principal investigators, and associate

investigators, provide:

- a) names,
 - b) affiliations,
 - c) contact information (telephone and email),
2. a brief project title,
 3. total (requested and match) project budget including direct and indirect costs broken out by year.

The preliminary proposal project description must not exceed three (3) single-spaced pages, including minimum 1-inch margins and 11-point font. The project description must include subsections which describe the:

1. hypothesis and objectives;
2. rationale and significance;
3. alignment with the topics outlined in the RFP and CTSG 2018-2021 Strategic Plan;
4. methodological approach;
5. expected outputs; and
6. outreach and/or educational component(s).

With respect to section 3 above, **relevance to CTSG's priorities and thematic areas listed on pages 1 and 2 of this RFP must be explicit.** In this section, note the specific RFP topic identifier (include number and letter). Illustrations and tables, if included, must be of legible size, and are *included* in the page limitation. References cited may be included as a separate section, and are *not included* within the stated page limits.

Investigators must submit by e-mail an electronic copy of each preliminary proposal. Electronic files *must* be a single file in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format and *must* be sent by e-mail to SeagrantResearch@uconn.edu for receipt no later than 4:30 p.m. EST on Friday, February 24, 2017. You must specify "CTSG Research Proposal" in the subject line. *Preliminary proposals that are not received by the 4:30 p.m. EST deadline will be returned without review.* Hard copy and faxed submissions, in addition to preliminary proposals that fail to comply with content, format and length requirements, will not be accepted. Unless otherwise required by your institution, we do not require that University (or institutional) sponsored programs offices formally approve preliminary proposals prior to submission.

Only those prospective principal investigators with the highest-ranked preliminary proposals will be encouraged to submit full proposals. Comments relating to the evaluation of each pre-proposal will be disseminated to each principal investigator on or before April 23, 2017. The deadline for full proposals is Friday, June 2, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. EDT.

Sea Grant is a matching funds program, which requires that at least 50% of the aggregate federal dollars received be matched by state or private funds. CTSG therefore requires that proposals include at least a 50% match, i.e. \$1 in non-federal match for every \$2 requested. CTSG also encourages the submission of proposals which make efficient use of requested

funds through leveraging with partner organizations and optimal use of new and existing data.

PRE-PROPOSAL EVALUATION

All pre-proposals meeting the specified requirements will be screened by a Review Panel convened by CTSG. Pre-proposals will be reviewed and ranked by the Panel on the basis of their:

1. significance and relevance to CTSG's strategic priorities and thematic areas listed on pages 1 & 2 of this RFP;
2. approach, including clarity of hypotheses, research questions and conceptual framing; novelty or originality of the proposed project, adequacy/feasibility of the methodologies as outlined; and
3. appropriateness of the outreach/education component.

NOTE ON THE SUBMISSION OF FULL PROPOSALS

Instructions for full proposal submission will be made available when full proposals are encouraged on or before April 23, 2017. Please be aware that CTSG is required to submit all final proposals electronically through the Grants.gov system. Hence, it is important that investigators follow forthcoming full proposal guidelines carefully, and be prepared to submit proposals electronically to CTSG in the required format. For those investigators encouraged to submit full proposals, the deadline is **Friday, June 2, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. EDT.**

Because proposals cannot be changed once selected for inclusion in the CTSG Omnibus (e.g., for funding), **CTSG requires that all full proposals be reviewed and approved by the appropriate University (or institutional) sponsored programs office prior to submission to our office.** If you have questions regarding this requirement, please contact Syma Ebbin, Research Coordinator (see page 6).

NOAA DATA SHARING REQUIREMENT (for all NOAA funded research projects)

NOAA regulations require that data and information collected and/or created under NOAA grants and cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, no later than two years after the data are collected or created, except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

To comply with this new requirement, in the full proposal stage, the Principal Investigator must complete the Sea Grant Data Management Form which includes the data management plan and describes how the project's data and metadata will be made available to others. Deposition of data in standard data archives (e.g., by discipline), in university archives, or in scientific publications are potential options. The proposed plan will be reviewed for compliance with NOAA requirements. If funds are needed for data QA/QC, archiving or

curation, they may be included in the project pre-proposal and full proposal budgets. **For the Preliminary Proposal, the Principal Investigator must simply agree in writing that they intend to follow these NOAA data sharing requirements.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See <http://web2.uconn.edu/seagrant/funding/grants.php>, or contact:

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RELATED FUNDING SOURCES

Researcher Listserv

To learn more about research funding opportunities, subscribe to CTSG's Researcher's listserv. Information on subscribing is available at <http://web2.uconn.edu/seagrant/funding/listserv.php> or contact Syma Ebbin, Research Coordinator.

Northeast Sea Grant Consortium

The Northeast Sea Grant Consortium periodically releases a separate RFP for regional research proposals. More information on any future calls and related submission guidelines will be made available at: <http://web2.uconn.edu/seagrant/funding/grants.php>.

Development Awards

Requests for smaller awards, typically less than \$3,000 but in rare cases as much as \$5,000, can be made at any time via the CTSG development fund. Contact the CTSG office for further details or see <http://web2.uconn.edu/seagrant/funding/grants.php>.

National Strategic Investment Initiatives

Calls based on Sea Grant National Strategic Investment initiatives will be announced as they become available.

Other Funding Opportunities

Other funding sources for activities addressing Connecticut coastal and marine resources include small and large grants from the EPA Long Island Sound Study (<http://www.longislandsoundstudy.net>).

Fellowship Opportunities

Announcements regarding fellowship opportunities such as the John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowships are distributed via our CTSG Researcher Listserv as they become available.

For more information on existing fellowships, refer to:

<http://web2.uconn.edu/seagrant/funding/fellowships/index.php>