National Estuarine
Research Reserve System
Science Collaborative

2023 REQUEST FOR CATALYST/ SCIENCE TRANSFER PROPOSALS

Targeted investment for advancing collaborative science and knowledge transfer

Please note: This opportunity includes styles of projects that were once solicited separately under our catalyst and science transfer requests for proposals. In combining them into a single RFP, we are providing applicants with a broader set of options to pursue project ideas.

RFP Release: **October 6, 2022**

Letters of Intent Due: **December 12, 2022**

Proposals Due: **February 17, 2023**

Note (11/8/22):

The deadline for Letters of Intent has been extended from December 7 to December 12, 2022.

No other changes have been made to this request for proposals.

FUNDING CONTEXT AND FUTURE SUCCESS

This call for one-year catalyst and science transfer proposals is designed to position applicants for future success, whether it be in applying for NERRS Science Collaborative grants or pursuing other funding opportunities. With new funds becoming available, for example as a result of the 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, opportunities are numerous, as are ways to leverage Science Collaborative resources to maximize impact.

Here are just a few examples that demonstrate how applicants might imagine catalyst or science transfer activities that meet a reserve management or science transfer need and serve as a stepping stone to a subsequent opportunity:

- Surveys/interviews/focus groups that enhance understanding of climate change impacts to the community surrounding a reserve to inform the focus of a future climate adaptation and/or coastal resilience proposal;
- Field study and/or surveys that are critical precursors to accessing PAC funds that help a reserve meet a management need;
- Outreach and engagement activities that invite nontraditional partners to the conversation to ensure a future coastal adaptation or resilience project provides benefits to the entire community;
- Building relationships with other coastal entities, e.g., Sea Grant, NEP, that offer similar programs and developing methodology for a future evaluation across programs to better understand strengths and weaknesses and in which contexts they work best;
- Consensus building activities around larger projects happening in the community, e.g., renewable energy siting, restoration, etc, to bring reserve perspectives related to a management need;
- Testing of novel technologies and/or equipment before pursuing a full scale research project that employs them; and
- Basic study and testing to inform site selection and study design with proper temporal and spatial scaling for a future research project.

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Science Collaborative is soliciting proposals for one-year grants that advance collaborative science and knowledge transfer by

- Facilitating the development of new collaborative science ideas;
- Amplifying or enhancing existing collaborative research; or
- Promoting the use of science through transfer activities.

All proposals must adopt a user-driven[1] approach, be grounded in reciprocal relationships[2], and meet a **reserve management or science transfer need**[3]. For all three of the above objectives, applicants are encouraged to integrate data from the NERRS System-Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP)[4]. Applicants may draw on the natural, social, and physical sciences to meet the goals of this request for proposals (RFP).

Funding Amount

The Science Collaborative is interested in funding a variety of one-year projects with awards ranging between $45,000 and $200,000. Budgets of $200,000 are expected to be most appropriate for projects involving three or more reserves.

Eligibility for Funding

Projects funded under this RFP must be developed in collaboration with staff from at least one of **NOAA's 30 National Estuarine Research Reserve sites** and address current **management or science transfer needs** of the reserve(s) involved in the project.

This funding opportunity is open to applicants from United States (U.S.) academic institutions, non-government organizations, and non-federal public sectors working in partnership with NERRS staff. Federal employees and agencies are not eligible to receive funding from the Science Collaborative but may participate as unfunded project team members.

Each proposal must designate a fiduciary institution and a fiscal lead[5] that will receive and manage the award, if granted. Researchers from institutions outside the U.S. cannot serve as the fiscal lead, but may be included in the project and funded by sub-awards through an eligible U.S. entity.

Using Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units

If your fiduciary institution is a member of a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) of which NOAA is also a partner, and the proposed project fits within the objectives of the National CESU Network Program and the intent of the CESU's existing cooperative and joint agreements, you may elect to use the CESU as the

platform for your award administration. If you choose to use the CESU, you will submit your application per these RFP guidelines, however you will prepare your budget using the approved CESU indirect cost rate; all other administrative matters will be addressed if your proposal is selected for funding.

Two-Step Proposal Submission Process

Applicants should review the process as outlined in this RFP and follow directions to submit both a letter of intent (LOI) and a proposal using the timeline outlined below.

The LOI is mandatory and will be used to inform reviewer recruitment. LOIs are one page in length and outline the project lead, planned team members, reserves expected to participate in the project, a draft project title, and a one-paragraph description of the project. Proposals submitted without a LOI will not be considered. Applicants should not expect a response or comments to the LOI other than confirmation of receipt.

Proposals include a ten-page maximum narrative that describes the user need(s) that will be addressed, outputs and outcomes, approach, team members, budget, and appendices. Applicants must submit their application through an online form accessible via the Science Collaborative website. All applicants will receive proposal feedback when notified whether their proposal has been selected for funding.

Key Dates

Date	Activity
December 12, 2022 by 11:59pm EST	Mandatory letter of intent due
February 17, 2023 by 11:59pm EST	Proposals due
June 2023	Funding notifications
October 1, 2023	Anticipated project start date

Supporting Documents

All supporting documents and access to the online application form can be found at: https://nerrssciencecollaborative.org/catalyst-science-transfer-2023.

ABOUT SCIENCE COLLABORATIVE CATALYST / SCIENCE TRANSFER PROJECTS

A range of activities could be supported by this opportunity, and all activities require a user-driven approach, grounded in reciprocal relationships. This section can help applicants decide if their idea is appropriate for this opportunity and provides guidance for selecting the appropriate primary RFP objective for a proposal.

RFP Objectives and Eligible Activities

Proposals ***must*** address at least one reserve management or science transfer need and provide an actionable plan to achieve ***one*** of the following objectives:

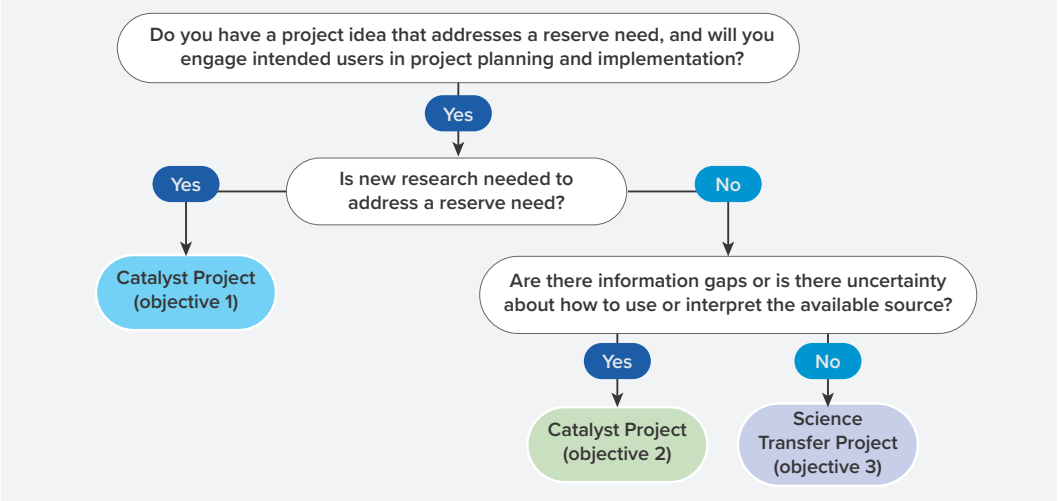
- **Objective 1:** Facilitate the development of *new* collaborative science ideas;
- **Objective 2:** Amplify or enhance *existing* collaborative research efforts; or
- **Objective 3:** Promote the use of science through transfer activities.

Proposals ***must*** include ***at least one*** of the following core activities that align with your objective:

- Collecting and analyzing new data;
- Compiling and analyzing existing data;
- Developing new or refining existing tools or products to maximize utility; and/or
- Transferring existing information, approaches, and/or techniques to others in the reserve system or external partners.

For all three of the above objectives, applicants are encouraged to incorporate data from the NERRS System-Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP). Applicants may draw on the natural, social, and physical sciences to meet the goals of this RFP.

2023 Catalyst / Science Transfer Decision Tree – Use this decision tree to help you decide whether this opportunity is right for your idea and, if so, which objective type is the best fit for your idea. Then read more about each objective type and elements required for all proposals.



Objective 1: Develop New Collaborative Science Ideas

To achieve objective 1, proposals must engage users to address a reserve *management* need and develop a clear and actionable plan for pursuing future research funding opportunities via the Science Collaborative or other programs.

Example activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Collection of preliminary data and analysis to refine and focus a research question;
- Synthesis of existing data, e.g., from the NERRS System-Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP), to identify gaps that can be filled, or trends that can be explained by a future research project; or
- Partnership building and engagement activities that foster reciprocal relationships paired with data gathering and analysis in order to understand user needs and identify a collective set of research priorities.

Objective 2: Amplify or Enhance Existing Collaborative Research

To achieve objective 2, proposals must engage users to address a reserve *management* need and build on prior research accomplishments to advance their application to coastal management. This work must be distinct from prior or existing collaborative research projects. Funds cannot support ongoing work already funded by the Science Collaborative or another funding source.

Example activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Additional data collection and analysis to answer a critical follow up question from a user;
- Assessment of policy or management options based on a synthesis of existing science (similar to an integrated assessment – see below);
- Development of a new decision support tool to make existing products or data accessible to a broader and relevant user group; or
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of an existing product and refinement to maximize use by current and/or additional users.

The principles and methods of integrated assessment (IA) could serve as a useful guide for projects that are evaluating options for addressing a specific management or policy question, and may be applicable for projects that fall under objective 2 of this RFP. The IA approach is most useful for situations where considerable information exists but has yet to be synthesized in ways that allow people to assess options for effectively tackling the issue. Most IAs use a combination of technical analyses and stakeholder engagement activities to examine the focal issue. Applicants interested in applying the IA approach are encouraged to take a customized approach, adopting elements that are most useful to their situation to ensure that activities are achievable within the one-year timeframe. Additional resources about IAs, such as the **Integrated Assessment Primer**, are available on the **Science Collaborative's Applicant Resources webpage**.

Objective 3: Promote the Use of Science Through Transfer Activities

To achieve objective 3, proposals must engage users to address a reserve *science transfer* need and share existing information, approaches, and/or techniques with others in the reserve system or external partners. Projects may focus on cross-reserve collaboration and knowledge-transfer, or transfer of ideas across programs within a single reserve or between reserves and key partners.

Note: Science transfer does NOT include new data collection, except for the purpose of a needs assessment, refining a method, training, or evaluation as part of a transfer activity.

Example activities include but are not limited to the following:

- The development of K-12 educational resources that help transfer new research to students and teachers, for example, in support of Teachers on the Estuary (TOTE) programs;
- The aggregation, analysis, and synthesis of scientific information, including existing monitoring datasets, e.g., NERRS System-Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) data, and stakeholder perspectives, to address a specific transfer need identified by a reserve;
- The transfer of a successful outreach, training, communications, or educational initiative from one reserve to another reserve(s);
- The development of outreach and training that support the transfer and application of research to a new group of decision makers to inform, for example, local land use planning, coastal management, or climate change adaptation;
- The creation of information transfer and dissemination frameworks and networks within and between reserves and stakeholders; or
- Refining novel technologies and/or use of equipment developed in another setting before pursuing a full scale restoration or research project that employs them.

Examples of outputs and outcomes associated with catalyst and science transfer activities can be found in Appendix B.

Required Elements

All proposals must:

1) Directly involve at least one reserve site and address a current management or science transfer need for reserve(s) that will be engaged in the project;
2) Clearly identify, engage, and be responsive to the interests and needs of users;
3) If collecting new data, plan for the costs associated with implementing a Data Sharing Plan.

See Appendix A which describes these elements in further detail and provides guidance to support the development of your proposal, including how to meet these requirements within a one-year project.

See Appendix C to learn how proposals will be evaluated.

LETTER OF INTENT REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are required to submit a Letter of Intent by 11:59pm EST on December 12, 2022. Proposals submitted without first submitting an LOI by this deadline will NOT be considered.

Information gathered through LOIs will be used exclusively to guide recruitment of appropriate reviewers and will not influence the proposal evaluation process. No feedback will be provided to applicants on the content of their LOI.

Letters of Intent (LOI) must be provided as a single, one-page pdf file using 12-point, Times New Roman font, no less than single spaced, and with one-inch margins. LOIs should include the following information and be organized using the following headers:

1) **Project Title**

2) **Project Lead / Fiscal Lead*** – Name, institution, telephone, and e-mail address *In most cases, the project lead is also the fiscal lead. However, recognizing that reserves sometimes work with Friend Groups who serve as fiduciary organizations, there may be instances where the project lead is not employed by the institution that will receive and manage the grant. In these cases, a project team member from the fiduciary institution must serve as lead, and should be listed here. The contract would be issued to the fiduciary organization under the responsibility/authority of this individual and they would have ultimate responsibility of ensuring that the proposed scope of work is completed. In these cases, the project lead should be listed under "Team Members" below.

3) **Team Members** – Names, institutions and anticipated role (e.g., project lead, collaborative lead, team member, user). Team roles are defined in the team section of the proposal narrative requirements below. Note: Team members may be added or removed and roles may shift at the proposal stage, but the project lead should remain the same.

4) **Name of Reserve(s)** – Identify a lead reserve for the project. If relevant, identify any additional reserves that are directly engaged in the project.[6] Multiple reserves may collaborate on a proposal but a single, lead reserve must be identified here.

   a) Lead reserve[7]

   b) Any additional reserves

   Note: Reserve partners may be added or removed and the lead reserve can be updated at the proposal stage.

5) **RFP Objective** – Indicate the RFP objective (objective 1, 2 or 3) to which your project idea relates.

6) **Project Topic** – Provide no more than one paragraph describing the planned work.

How to Submit Your Letter of Intent

Letters of Intent must be submitted by 11:59pm EST on December 12, 2022.

You will need a U-M Friend Account to start an application and submit your proposal. Information on how to create an account can be found here. You will be prompted to login when you access the application page.

Once you have logged in, you will need to complete an online form, upload your LOI, and "save" your application. The form mirrors some of the same content in the LOI.

You will receive a single confirmation email when you have successfully saved your LOI for the first time. ***Save this email; it will include a link you may use to return to your LOI and make edits until the deadline, and will be the same link you will use to submit your proposal.*** Your saved LOI will be automatically submitted at 11:59pm EST on December 12, 2022.

If you do not receive a confirmation email after the first time you have saved your application, your LOI was not saved properly and you should resave or contact us directly at nerrs-info@umich.edu.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted by 11:59pm EST on February 17, 2023.

All of the proposal requirements are detailed in Appendix B. Proposals not meeting these requirements, including budget and header requirements, will be removed from the competition without further review.

The proposal structure is as follows:

1) **Title Page**
2) **Project Narrative**
    a) Statement of Need and Response to User Needs
    b) Project Approach
    c) Outputs and Outcomes
    d) Team
    e) Data Accessibility
3) **Appendices A-J:** These include items such as timeline, budget table and narrative, letters of support, resumes, references, etc.

How to Submit Your Proposal

Proposals must be submitted by 11:59pm EST on February 17, 2023 at the unique application URL emailed to applicants when submitting their Letter of Intent.

Please note that you will be required to log in using the same credentials as those used to submit your LOI.

Your proposal must be uploaded to your original application (the one you started at the LOI phase). To submit your proposal, follow your unique URL which will prompt you to log in to your account (using the same credentials as the LOI phase). You can then edit your application.

Submitting your proposal will consist of uploading a single PDF of your proposal (including the budget in the appendices) and a separate Excel spreadsheet of your budget to your online application. Once logged in, you will need to do the following:

1) Expand the **"Project Information"** section to access the proposal upload field and then upload your proposal PDF (including the budget in the appendices);
2) Upload your budget spreadsheet as an Excel file under the **"Budget Table (Excel file)"** field. Please be sure to include the overall budget spreadsheet along with sheets for any subcontracts;
3) Review and update the other fields in the online application form as needed, including reserves and team members involved in the proposal; and
4) Click the **"save"** button.

You will receive a confirmation email the first time you successfully upload and save your proposal. The email will include the link you may use to return to your proposal submission and make edits until the deadline. Your saved application will be automatically submitted at 11:59pm EST on February 17, 2023.

If you do not receive a confirmation email after the first time you save your application, your proposal was not saved properly and you should resave or contact us directly at nerrs-info@umich.edu.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES REVIEW

NOAA requires that, prior to award, every Science Collaborative project recommended for funding undergo review for potential impacts to the environment and/or cultural resources. **This initial review completed by NOAA takes a minimum of 30 days.**

Projects that are identified by NOAA as potentially impacting the environment and/or cultural resources, e.g., involve field work, and/or are conducted in areas where historic or archeological artifacts might be present, will require further review by the agency. NOAA will review for compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act related to essential fish habitat (EFH). If the proposed project is placing fixed structures in the environment, consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may also be required. **NHPA, ESA, MMPA, and EFH reviews take a minimum of 30 days to complete, but can often take 60 to 90 days.**

Guidance to Applicants

NOAA's environmental and cultural resources review process will be initiated immediately after funding notifications. To conduct the environmental compliance review, NOAA will need a detailed description of field sampling methods along with a map showing the location of each field site, including each field site's latitude and longitude. Please note that **information for NOAA to conduct the environmental and cultural resources review is NOT a required element of your proposal at this stage**. However, if you do have detailed site maps, latitude/longitude information, and any compliance documents associated with sites, please include them in Appendix J. If you do not provide this information in your proposal and it is recommended for funding, NOAA will contact you to obtain the information required for the environmental compliance review. If there are existing compliance documents, NOAA will request them at that time.

Questions regarding this requirement should be directed to NOAA Program Manager Doug George (Phone: 510-210-3952, Email: douglas.george@noaa.gov).

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Applicants should be aware that the disclosure of patentable ideas, trade secrets, and privileged, confidential, commercial, or financial information can hinder an applicant's chances to secure patents, trademarks, or copyrights.

Proprietary information of this kind should only be included in proposals when it is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project. Applicants must mark proprietary information clearly in the proposal with appropriate labels, such as, "The following is (proprietary or confidential) information that (proposing entity) requests not be released to persons outside the NERRS Science Collaborative, except for purposes of review and evaluation."

Please protect your intellectual property rights at the proposal preparation stage as appropriate. This will allow you to speak freely about ideas and avoid the inadvertent loss of intellectual property rights. You should contact your institution's technology transfer or intellectual property office to determine the best way to protect your intellectual property.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Question and Answer Record: Responses to all questions, without reference to project specifics, will be posted on a rolling basis for all interested applicants to view online at https://nerrssciencecollaborative.org/catalyst-science-transfer-2023.

Overview & Common Q&A Video: The Science Collaborative will share an informational video that provides an overview of the opportunity and answers common questions we have received. This video will be posted to the funding opportunity page by mid-November 2022..

Email: The Science Collaborative will reply to written questions regarding this request for proposals. Questions should be submitted to nerrs-info@umich.edu.

Phone: The Science Collaborative team is also available to discuss questions over the phone. We suggest emailing us at nerrs-info@umich.edu to set up a time or leaving a voice message for Maeghan Brass (734-763-0727) or Jane Ballard (734-763-0056).

ABOUT THE NERRS SCIENCE COLLABORATIVE

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Science Collaborative's primary goal is to support the co-development and application of relevant and usable knowledge to address critical coastal management issues identified by the NERRS in order to improve the long-term stewardship of the nation's estuaries. The Science Collaborative works to achieve this goal through regular funding opportunities, project support and management, and an adaptive approach to program implementation that fosters ongoing learning and improvement.

COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE SCIENCE

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System's Science Collaborative program is committed to practicing and supporting responsive and inclusive collaborative science. Our work is grounded in the **Collaborative Science Mindset and Principles** we co-developed alongside our partners in the NERRS and NOAA.

The NERRS strives to recognize and affirm the existence, value, and validity of different knowledge systems, and the complementary role that longstanding and evolving knowledge in all forms holds alongside institutional science. In building reciprocal relationships with partners, the NERRS and the Science Collaborative acknowledge knowledge systems and ways of knowing that are different yet equivalent to institutional science.

All elements of our program encourage project teams to examine the unique diversity and complexity of the socio-ecological systems in which they work. Doing the best work possible in these environments requires authentic collaboration grounded in reciprocal, equitable, and inclusive relationships. This includes awareness of and integration and elevation of different systems of knowledge so that all participants benefit and feel empowered to bring their experiences to solving coastal and estuarine issues.

Key program elements emphasize our commitment to improving how we practice and support collaborative science. Some examples of how our program activities support diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility:

- **Requests for proposals** – Value and elevate other systems of knowledge, such as Indigenous knowledge, alongside institutional knowledge.
- **Proposal review** – Guidance documents recognize all knowledge systems as equally valid and explicitly instruct reviewers about what this might entail when conducting a review.
- **Data sharing** – Guidance documents include language defining traditional ecological knowledge and Indigenous knowledge, acknowledge differences in the ownership of data across knowledge systems, and specify how these data must be handled.

- **Accessible collaboration resources** – Tools, advice, and case examples are publicly available in multiple formats via our Guide to Collaborative Science and Resource Library.

The Science Collaborative is managed through a cooperative agreement between the University of Michigan and NOAA.

Endnotes

Click the endnote number to return to the main text.

1 Users are defined as individuals or groups in a position to apply the information or tools being produced, evaluated, or transferred through a Science Collaborative project in a way that is of direct consequence to the ecological, social, or economic integrity of a reserve(s) and/or surrounding watershed(s). Examples of users include, but are not limited to, reserve staff, and public, private, or non-governmental decision/policy makers, including Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities, landowners, regulators, resource managers, land use planners, leaders of impacted communities, and educators at all levels.

2 In collaborative science projects, reciprocal relationships are exemplified by being non-extractive and by participants receiving the resources they need to participate in the work. All parties (researchers, partners, intended users) collaboratively identify roles and commit to an approach to working together. The project team bears the responsibility of ensuring everyone has the resources they need to participate, ensuring everyone benefits, and avoiding potential harms. Learn more: **Collaborative research to inform adaptive comanagement: a framework for the He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve**.

3 **At this site**, you will find key words and full details about the current management and science transfer needs of the NERRS. Needs are submitted by reserve managers to NOAA and are updated on an annual basis. There may be situations where an emerging need is identified with reserve partner(s) after the annual list is developed, and these can be accommodated by this RFP. See **Reserve Engagement** for more information.

4 Data from the NERRS System-Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) are available here: **cdmo.baruch.sc.edu** and **coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/nerr.html**

5 In most cases, the project lead is also the fiscal lead. However, recognizing that reserves sometimes work with Friend Groups who serve as fiduciary organizations, there may be instances where the project lead is not employed by the institution that will receive and manage the grant. In these cases, a project team member from the fiduciary institution must serve as lead. The contract will be issued to the fiduciary organization under the responsibility/authority of this individual and they will have ultimate responsibility of ensuring that the proposed scope of work is completed.

6 See the **Reserve Engagement** for additional guidance on reserve involvement. Managers of each listed reserve will have an opportunity to provide any concerns about the reserve's engagement in the proposal and their anticipated contribution to the project directly to the Science Collaborative program.

7 The lead reserve is the reserve most engaged in project planning and execution. If a proposal is led by a non-reserve entity, the lead reserve may serve as an additional point of contact for reserve and NOAA partners.

APPENDIX A: REQUIRED ELEMENTS

1) Reserve Engagement

All proposals must be developed in collaboration with at least one of **NOAA's 30 National Estuarine Research Reserve sites**, address a current management or science transfer need of the reserve(s) involved in the project and demonstrate a plan for collaboration with relevant reserve staff.[1]

Proposals must offer a clear and specific explanation of how the proposed work will inform and address a current management or science transfer need for one or more reserves. Applicants should consult the **Annual Summary of Reserve Management and Science Transfer Needs** that was generated by each reserve and compiled by NOAA as a reference for this RFP. Each reserve has designated a point of contact to field inquiries and offer more background on the reserve's current needs. There may be situations where a need is identified with reserve partner(s) after the annual list is developed, particularly for multi-reserve projects. These needs can be accommodated by this RFP. In such cases, the process used to identify the need should be clearly articulated in the proposal narrative, e.g., describe iterative conversations with a reserve, and confirmed by relevant reserve(s) in a letter of support in Appendix F.

Relevant reserve managers and staff must be engaged in the development of project plans and given an opportunity to offer feedback on the proposal, particularly sections that explain the project's relevance to reserve programs, local management and science transfer needs, proposed project roles for reserve staff (whether serving as users, project advisors or team members), and any reserve resources to be provided to the project.

The proposal title page must identify a lead reserve as well as any additional reserves that will be participating in the proposed work. For each proposal that engages their reserve, managers will be asked to confirm that:

a) The proposing team engaged reserve staff sufficiently during the proposal development process; and

b) The reserve manager agrees with plans for how the reserve would contribute to the work (e.g., staff roles in the project) and any resources allocated to support those contributions.

Reserve managers will have an opportunity to identify any related concerns through a proposal assessment form that is submitted directly to the Science Collaborative, separate from the proposal. If a reserve is not directly engaged in the proposed work, that reserve should NOT be listed as a partner on the project title page. ***It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the relevant reserve manager(s)***

1 Reserve staff have played a variety of roles in Science Collaborative projects, including serving as project, technical, or collaborative lead, providing critical contributions to the technical work, and participating as users and project advisors. Roles should match the expertise and interests of the individuals involved and the scope of a particular project, and be clearly explained in the proposal.

is adequately consulted during project development and receives a copy of the final proposal.

2) Collaboration and User Integration

Proposals must clearly identify, engage, and be responsive to the interests and needs of the intended users of the project outputs.[2] Proposals should identify a set of primary users, including groups or individuals invested in the proposal topic that are in a position to apply the information or tools being produced or transferred through the project.

Because this grant program is meant to address reserve needs, it is appropriate to think of the reserves as one of the project's users, even if the project is led by reserve staff. Applicants should be explicit about which aspects of the reserve program will benefit from the project (i.e., land stewardship, training, education, monitoring, etc.) and will use project outputs.

It is important that the collaborative process engages users in project development and implementation in order to produce usable outputs and achieve desired outcomes. This includes specific mechanism(s) for soliciting users' input and feedback *during* the project in order to enhance the team's ability to confirm and/or adapt the outputs. Examples of these mechanisms include questionnaires, individual consultations, workshops to refine scope and provide feedback, or structured processes for user review of draft products. Proposals should indicate when feedback will be solicited and what decisions will be impacted by that input.

The collaborative process should be designed with specific users in mind, customized so that it contributes to building reciprocal relationships[3] with users. The collaborative approach should provide the support necessary and accommodate the range of user abilities to participate in all aspects of the project where the team intends them to be involved. The approach should also ensure that all participants benefit from participating in the project. For example, a workshop might be designed to include a service component of significance to your user group to help strengthen relationships while also providing time for discussion about how to refine a project's scope and provide feedback. There are a variety of mechanisms for soliciting feedback that can be tailored to meet your user community's unique perspectives.

2 Users are individuals or groups in a position to apply the information or tools being produced, evaluated, or transferred through a Science Collaborative project in a way that is of direct consequence to the ecological, social, or economic integrity of a reserve(s) and/or surrounding watershed(s). Examples of users include, but are not limited to, reserve staff, and public, private, or non-governmental decision/policy makers, including Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities, landowners, regulators, resource managers, land use planners, leaders of impacted communities, and educators at all levels.

3 In collaborative science projects, reciprocal relationships are exemplified by being non-extractive and by participants receiving the resources they need to participate in the work. All parties (researchers, partners, intended users) collaboratively identify roles and commit to an approach to working together. The project team bears the responsibility of ensuring everyone has the resources they need to participate, ensuring everyone benefits, and avoiding potential harms. Learn more: **Collaborative research to inform adaptive comanagement: a framework for the He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve**.

For projects addressing objective 3 (science transfer), it is often the case that the work will be designed to meet the needs of an audience that extends beyond a primary set of users. This broader set of users should also be clearly identified and the proposal should demonstrate responsiveness to their needs; however, the level of collaboration and mechanisms for soliciting input may vary for different groups of users. For example, a project may involve a close collaboration between researchers and educators to develop a new K-12 teacher training module that builds on recent research. Reserve educators may be considered the project's primary users because they will be delivering the training, but the proposal also should explain how the needs of K-12 teachers informed the project design and how their feedback will be incorporated.

The one-year time frame of these grants will require an efficient, targeted process for engaging users. For example, close collaboration with a single, highly relevant user group may be sufficient to develop a strong proposal. Or it may be appropriate to identify and engage individual users as representatives of critical groups to engage, rather than designing a process that engages all potential users. ***The goals and type of work proposed should dictate the approach to engagement as well as the breadth and depth of engagement planned during the project.***

All proposals must:

- Identify the primary user(s) and their needs;
- Describe how the user's input helped to shape the project;
- Describe a clear process that will ensure iterative engagement and contributes to reciprocal relationships with the users identified in the project scope;
- Provide evidence of the user's interest in the project, e.g., letter of support (all proposals must include at least one letter of support from project user(s));
- Identify an individual who will be responsible for leading the collaborative process—the collaborative lead[4]—and describe their relevant experience and skills. For science transfer proposals, the project lead has frequently served in this role, leading coordination and collaboration with users; and
- Demonstrate that sufficient time and resources are dedicated to support user engagement, and this is reflected in the budget, personnel, and timeline.

The Science Collaborative has developed the **Guide to Collaborative Science** with resources that can help you design your user engagement process, including key considerations for engaging users effectively and efficiently.

4 The collaborative lead is responsible for the full engagement of users by helping to develop and manage a process that ensures meaningful user input, including mechanisms for being adaptive and responsive to their input. This person should have the appropriate experience and skills to design and implement a collaborative process that provides the team with the user input necessary to produce outputs that are responsive to their needs.

3) Data Management

NOAA requires that environmental and social science data collected and/or created under NOAA grants and cooperative agreements be made visible, accessible, quality controlled, documented, and independently understandable to general users. It should be available free of charge or at minimal cost, and made available in a timely manner (typically no later than two years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy, or security requirements.

Applicants that propose the collection of new data, including receiving or incorporating sensitive data such as Traditional Ecological Knowledge, are required to develop and include a Data Sharing Plan as a part of their proposal package. This plan must address elements such as methods and protocols for data collection, data quality control/quality assurance procedures, metadata, data access, and data archival. Applicants must account for the costs associated with implementing a Data Sharing Plan in their budget and project narrative.[5] Science transfer activities typically do not include new data collection and therefore do not typically need to adhere to federal data sharing requirements. See the **Data Sharing Plan Requirements and Outline** for definitions and a more detailed explanation of what types of data collection require a data sharing plan.

Applicants partnering with Indigenous communities and who may be accessing Traditional Ecological or Indigenous Knowledge in their projects should also be aware of requirements regarding their use. The **NOAA Consultation Handbook**, defines Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) as "a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment." As detailed in the **Data Sharing Plan Requirements and Outline**, NOAA provides specific guidance about use and communication of TEK which applies to any grant awarded under this RFP.

The NERRS Centralized Data Management Office (CDMO) is the coordinating entity for Science Collaborative data management activities. CDMO personnel will provide data management guidance during proposal development and technical support for projects. In addition, CDMO can help teams archive and make accessible their project datasets using CDMO's access and archival services and standard protocols.

Teams are encouraged to identify long-term data archival portals that make sense for their type of data and potential users of that data. If teams would like to use CDMO for data access and data archival, their standard process for making data accessible would be as follows:

- The Science Collaborative will create an entry about a project's datasets in the Science Collaborative online resource library, as well as in national

5 As a general rule of thumb, approximately 10% to 15% of a project's budget should be allocated to data management activities, including processing and quality checking data and preparing datasets for archival and public access.

data catalogs (**InPort**), outlining the scope of the datasets and making them discoverable; and

- Potential users of the data will have an option to complete a data request form. The form will generate an email response with a data download link connecting the user to the package of data and metadata files that have been archived with the CDMO.

If this archival/access process meets a project's needs, applicants may include it as part of their proposal's data sharing plan without consulting with CDMO in advance of proposal submission. More involved data or information sharing ideas, such as development of an interactive user interface for a database, are not part of CDMO's typical support for Science Collaborative projects. Project teams should plan for this kind of activity within their project scope and budget.

Additional guidance for developing a Data Sharing Plan can be found in the **Data Sharing Plan Requirements and Outline**, examples provided on the **grant opportunity webpage**, and details in **Appendix B: Proposal Requirements**.

APPENDIX B: PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted by 11:59pm EST on February 17, 2023.

Proposals must be provided as a single, one-page pdf file using 12-point, Times New Roman font, no less than single spaced, and with one-inch margins, and be organized using the headers below. Proposals must include a title page, ten-page maximum narrative, and appendices as outlined below. **Proposals not meeting these requirements, including budget and header requirements, will be removed from the competition without further review.**

Title Page

The title page should include the following information and headers:

1) **Project Title**
2) **Project Lead / Fiscal Lead***
    a) Title / Position
    b) Institution
    c) Telephone Number
    d) Postal Mailing Address
    e) E-mail Address

    *In most cases, the project lead is also the fiscal lead. However, recognizing that reserves sometimes work with Friend Groups who serve as fiduciary organizations, there may be instances where the project lead is not employed by the institution that will receive and manage the grant. In these cases, a project team member from the fiduciary institution must serve as lead, and should be listed here. The contract would be issued to the fiduciary organization under the responsibility/authority of this individual and they would have ultimate responsibility of ensuring that the proposed scope of work is completed. In these cases, the project lead should be listed under "Additional Team Members" below.
3) **Additional Team Members** (anyone receiving project resources or contributing significant resources to the project) – Name, institution, telephone, email, and role, e.g., project lead, collaborative lead, technical lead, user, team member, etc. **Note: Project and collaborative leads are required.** One person can serve multiple roles. See team section for definitions of these roles.
4) **Fiduciary Information** – Indicate the institution that would receive and manage the grant contract. Please provide a point of contact, including email address, to receive fiscal questions. The fiduciary institution is responsible for managing any project subcontracts, tracking grant-related spending, and submitting invoices to the University of Michigan for reimbursement on behalf of the grant.

5) **Name of Reserve(s)** – Identify a lead reserve for the project. If relevant, identify any additional reserves that are directly engaged in the project.[6] Multiple reserves may collaborate on a proposal but a single, lead reserve must be identified here.
   a) Lead reserve[7]
   b) Any additional reserves
6) **RFP Objective** – Indicate the RFP objective (objective 1, 2 or 3) to which your project idea relates.
7) **Budget Request** – Requested dollar amount. Total request must fall within the range of $45,000 to $200,000. Budgets of $200,000 are expected to be most appropriate for projects involving three or more reserves.
8) **Project Duration** – Projects should start October 1, 2023 and end no later than September 30, 2024.
9) **Project Summary** – Provide a 200-word summary of the proposed project that is suitable for a non-technical audience. Include the project's objectives, responsiveness to user needs, planned outputs, and anticipated outcomes.

Project Narrative (10 page maximum)

The proposal narrative should be written in a way that will be compelling to a diverse set of reviewers, including individuals with expertise in natural and social sciences, collaborative processes, coastal management, outreach, education, and training. Reviewers may not be familiar with specific reserve programs.

The project narrative should not exceed ten pages and should be organized using the following five headers in this order.

1) **Statement of Need and Response to User Needs** – It is particularly important that project partners from participating reserves are consulted in the development of this section. Be sure to include the following information, using an organizational structure that best suits the proposal topic.
   - Provide a concise statement of the catalyst / science transfer activity being proposed (2-3 sentences) and be explicit about which RFP objective you seek to achieve.
   - State the need for the activities being proposed and what the project will accomplish. Discuss the importance and context, with particular emphasis on how the project will address one or more reserve management or science

6 See the **Reserve Engagement** section for additional guidance on reserve involvement. Managers of each listed reserve will have an opportunity to provide directly to the Science Collaborative program any concerns about the reserve's engagement in the proposal and their anticipated contribution to the project.

7 The lead reserve is the reserve most engaged in project planning and execution. If a proposal is led by a non-reserve entity, the lead reserve may serve as an additional point of contact for reserve and NOAA partners.

transfer need(s).[8] If you are building on existing work, explain how the proposed work is distinct and addresses user needs. If relevant, share what resources and relationships you are bringing to bear to support the project.

- Clearly identify the project's primary user(s),[9] their current needs, and their connection to the proposal topic. Describe how the user's input helped to shape the project and how they anticipate applying project findings and using outputs in their work. You may find it helpful to organize this information in a table in order to convey individual users' specific interests in the project, and how their participation is being supported.

2) **Project Approach** – The approach should describe integrated technical and collaborative processes, opportunities for meaningful input from users, and effective coordination of project team members. It should be clear how the specific activities will produce outputs that are responsive to user needs. **Note:** ***The proposal must include one or a combination of the*** **core activities of this RFP**. Be sure to include the following information, using an organizational structure that best suits the proposal topic.

- Describe the specific methods, data sources, and/or tools you will use to develop the planned outputs.
- Describe the collaborative process you will use to ensure iterative engagement and contribute to building reciprocal relationships with the users identified in the project scope.
    - This process should include specific mechanisms for being adaptive and responsive to their input, and an explanation for why the chosen approach is appropriate (e.g., tightly linking to an existing working group because it is an efficient way to engage the identified users, or integrating individuals into a project team because those users have a skill or expertise directly relevant to completing the project)
    - It should also reflect an understanding of support they may need to participate in the project as you intend them to be involved and demonstrate how they will benefit from involvement in the project.
- Provide a short statement that describes what success would look like at the end of the project.

3) **Outputs and Outcomes** – Provide a list of the planned outputs and anticipated outcomes, clearly distinguishing between the two. (**See definitions and examples in the box below**.) Describe these briefly, clearly stating how the outputs meet the user and the reserve management or science transfer need(s) discussed in the "statement of need" and how the outputs will help lead to the anticipated outcomes.

8 There may be situations where an emerging need is identified with reserve partner(s) after the **annual list** is developed, and these can be accommodated by this RFP. In such cases, the process for identifying the need should be clearly articulated here in the narrative, and confirmed by relevant reserve(s) in a letter of support in Appendix F.

9 Primary users are those most instrumental in developing the project, most directly engaged in the project, and who stand to benefit the most from the outputs.

Outputs

Project outputs are specific products that are developed during or upon project completion. Outputs must address user and reserve needs. Examples of project outputs include, but are not limited to the following:

- A detailed and actionable strategy for pursuing future funding opportunities, including those offered by the Science Collaborative or another source (objective 1);
- A refined collaborative research question informed by preliminary data collection and analysis and user engagement (objective 1);
- A new dataset or synthesis of existing data to meet a user need (objectives 1, 2);
- An analysis of policy options to address an issue, such as those generated through an integrated assessment (objective 2);
- Specific product(s) or tool(s) that translate and/or apply information in a way that addresses the identified user's needs, e.g., decision support tools, implementation guides, management recommendations, curricula, and technical or non-technical reports (objectives 1, 2, 3);
- A suite of integrated, user driven communication strategies and products, such as factsheets, informational websites, technical reports, visuals, or interactive communication tools (objectives 1, 2, 3);
- Development and implementation of a targeted training module, e.g., teacher workshop, technical training for land managers or other local decision makers (objective 3).

At least one output must include an activity that shares the project approach and results with the broader NERRS community, such as a system-wide webinar, or a poster or session at the NERRS/NERRA Annual Meeting.

Outcomes

Project outcomes are the expected impacts of the project process and outputs. Examples of project outcomes include, but are not limited to the following:

- Stronger collaborative relationships among reserve staff, partners, and users;
- A team that is well-positioned to pursue future collaborative research funding opportunities, e.g., additional technical capacity at reserves to advance their collaborative science agenda;
- New or refined decision making and/or management processes;
- Enhanced programs that can better address a current management need based on new data, analyses, or tools;
- SWMP data integrated into products used to address local, Tribal, regional, or national management needs;
- Changes in the level of awareness, knowledge, or behavior among user audiences;
- Application of lessons learned in one reserve to another reserve or set of reserves;
- Creation of sustainable information/knowledge networks; and
- Greater alignment and impact of reserve programs, such as through the application of common outreach approaches at numerous reserves.

4) **Team** – Identify each team member and explain how the team and its expertise are well qualified to implement the project, including the collaborative approach. Describe the role(s) of the various team members, e.g., project lead, collaborative lead, technical lead, user, team member, etc. Two-page resumes for all team members must be included in Appendix G.

   Note: Project lead, fiscal lead, and collaborative lead must be specified. One person can serve multiple roles. Team member roles are defined as follows:

   - The **project lead** is the primary contact for the project, coordinates the project team, and ensures all elements of the project are implemented. In most situations, the project lead is also the fiscal lead.
   - The **fiscal lead** manages the grant award and will have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the proposed scope of work is completed. The fiscal lead must be employed at the fiduciary institution that will receive the grant contract. In rare cases where the project lead is not employed by the fiduciary institution, a project team member from the fiduciary institution must serve as lead. The contract would be issued to this individual and they would have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the proposed scope of work is completed.
   - The **collaborative lead** is responsible for the full engagement of users by helping to develop and manage a process that ensures iteration with them, including mechanisms for being adaptive and responsive to their input.
   - The **technical lead** serves as a content area expert within the team, coordinates technical aspects of the project, and ensures the quality of the science.

5) **Data Accessibility** – For projects using existing datasets, identify who owns them, and how the project team will access them. Projects that propose using SWMP or Sentinel Site data must indicate which specific SWMP or Sentinel Site data will be used. If a critical dataset is not publicly available, demonstrate permission for accessing the data by including letters of support in Appendix F. Projects that anticipate receiving or incorporating sensitive data, such as Traditional Ecological Knowledge, should indicate that their data sharing plan details how they will protect it.

Appendices

1) **Appendix A: Timeline** – Using the required **timeline template** found on the grant opportunity webpage, provide the following:

   a) Project start and end dates. Projects should start on October 1, 2023 and end no later than September 30, 2024.

   b) A schedule with key tasks and deliverables. This schedule must:

      i. Identify significant tasks, including user engagement opportunities that are realistic for the planned users and partners and allow time for integrating input;

      ii. Specifically cite and link directly to the outputs identified in the project narrative; and

      iii. Indicate completion of all final project outputs.

      Note: For projects working with students, please keep in mind that the project start date (Oct 1) follows the federal fiscal year, not the typical school year. You may need to anticipate a winter term start date for the student or an alternative way to cover the first month or two of support.

      Note: Project leads are required to check-in with their Science Collaborative program officer at project kickoff and quarterly over the course of their project via a one-hour call. At project closeout, a final written report and call is required. Project leads will also be expected to participate in a virtual workshop series about collaborative science (approximately 8 hours total). Please plan in advance to allocate time and any necessary resources to complete these tasks.

2) **Appendix B: References** – Up to 2 pages of references may be included.

3) **Appendix C: In-Kind Contributions (Optional)** – There is no cost-share requirement for these projects. However, to help reviewers fully understand all contributions to the project, we recommend that applicants who have planned in-kind contributions detail them in this appendix as follows.

   The in-kind contribution of personnel to specific project tasks should be explained in this appendix, and corroborated by a letter of support in Appendix F as described below. Be certain to confirm that the supporting letter has the same details, e.g., FTE estimate, as provided in this appendix. In particular, all reserve staff time anticipated for the project must be accounted for, even if funds are not being requested to support that time. Other major in-kind contributions to the project should be explained here as well.

   a) For all personnel time being contributed to the project but not receiving support directly through the grant, provide the following:

      i. Full-time equivalent (FTE) estimate;

      ii. Explanation as to why the personnel time is not being requested through the grant; and

iii. Which of the funded team members will ensure accountability to the project. For example, if the Collaborative Lead is being supported by other funds: "The Project Lead will ensure that the Collaborative Lead (0.3 FTE of person Y provided by Reserve X) will be fully engaged in the project."

iv. Explain any other significant in-kind resources that will be brought to bear in support of the project, e.g., boat time, use of facilities, equipment, etc.

4) **Appendix D: Budget, Budget Narrative & IDC Rate Agreement** –

a) **Budget Table(s)** – Use the **budget template** found on the grant opportunity webpage to provide an itemized estimate of all project costs. **Budget tables (including subcontracts) should be submitted as an Excel file and also included as an appendix within the proposal PDF.**

Total request must fall within the range of $45,000 to $200,000. Budgets of $200,000 are expected to be most appropriate for projects involving three or more reserves.

The overall budget must include a separate budget for each subcontract, using the **budget template**, with a narrative explanation provided either as a separate section within the overall budget narrative or as a separate narrative document. Multi-institution and multi-reserve projects are complex and require an efficient subcontracting process to ensure project teams are able to begin their work quickly. Applicants are encouraged to work closely with their fiscal point of contact to ensure they have mechanisms in place to facilitate the sub-award process effectively. There is no cost-share requirement for these projects.

b) **Indirect Rate Agreement** – The Science Collaborative will reimburse overhead costs up to an institution's federally negotiated indirect cost (IDC) rate agreement. Unless otherwise noted in the IDC rate agreement, indirect costs may only be applied to the first $25,000 of each subcontract. **Applicants should provide a copy of the IDC rate agreement for the fiduciary institution that would manage the grant, if they have one.**[10]Subcontract budgets do not need to include IDC rate agreements.

i. **Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units:** If your fiduciary institution is a member of a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) of which NOAA is also a partner, and the proposed project fits within the objectives of the National CESU Notice of Federal Funding Network Program and the intent of the CESU's existing cooperative and joint agreement, you may elect to use the CESU as the platform for your award administration. If you choose to use the CESU, you will submit your application per these current RFP guidelines and use the approved CESU IDC rate (17.5%); all other administrative matters will be addressed if your proposal is selected for funding. Please use the approved CESU IDC rate in your budget table and budget narrative.

10 If a subcontractor does not have a federally negotiated indirect rate, they should use the *de minimis* rate of 10%.

c) **Budget Narrative** – Provide a budget narrative to justify expenses in all budget categories. Please note the following:

i. Personnel costs must be broken out by team member, including number of months and percentage of time requested.

Note: Project leads are required to check-in with their Science Collaborative program officer at project kickoff and semi-annually over the course of their project via a one-hour call. At project closeout, a final written report and call is required. Project leads will also be expected to participate in a virtual workshop series about collaborative science each year of the project (approximately 8 hours over the course of a year). Please plan in advance to allocate time and any necessary resources to complete these tasks.

ii. Any unnamed personnel, e.g., reserve staff, graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, or technicians, must be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained as described above.

iii. Equipment costs must describe the equipment to be purchased and its contribution to the achievement of project goals.[11] If a piece of equipment costs more than $5,000, a cost analysis will be required before contracting. It does not need to be completed as part of the proposal. This analysis will compare the cost of purchasing a piece of equipment against the cost of leasing the same piece of equipment. The benefits of leasing or purchasing should be addressed in this analysis as well.

iv. Travel costs must be broken out by number of people traveling, destination, and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Conference fees and any membership fees required to attend the conference must be explicitly stated in the budget justification. Domestic and foreign travel should be itemized separately. Foreign travel must comply with the Fly America Act which limits the use of foreign flag carriers. For more information, go to **http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103191**.

v. If collecting new data, proposals must include appropriate budgets to support required data management activities. It is anticipated that for projects proposing significant new data collection efforts, appropriate personnel time should be committed for data QA/QC and metadata development. For budget allocation guidance, it is anticipated that 10% to 15% of the overall budget should go to support data management activities.

vi. Overhead may be charged up to the fiscal institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate. Applicants should include a copy of their indirect agreement, if they have one, as part of the proposal PDF.

11 Equipment is defined as tangible, durable property with a useful life of more than one year and a purchase price of $5,000 and above per unit.

The budget narrative should explain the project's IDC rate and which project expenses are used for calculating the total indirect amount.[12]

A separate budget narrative is required for each subcontract, including the same detail as is required for the overall budget. As noted above, unless otherwise noted in the indirect cost rate agreement, overhead may only be applied to the first $25,000 of each subcontract.

If a proposal includes an estimate for a subcontract, for example, for work that will be competitively bid after the project is awarded, the budget narrative should include a summary of and justification for the subcontract services. Project leads should provide budget details to their Science Collaborative program officer as any new subcontracts are established during the project period.

d) **CESU Signature Page** – If you choose to use a CESU as the platform to administer your award, provide a copy of your institution's signature page. Your institution's Technical Point of Contact for the CESU should be able to provide you with a copy of this document.

5) **Appendix E: Subrecipient Statement of Collaborative Intent** – The fiduciary institution must complete this **Subrecipient Statement of Collaborative Intent form**.

6) **Appendix F: Letters of Support** – Provide letters from individuals and/or partners confirming contributions to and support for the project. Include letters from the following:

a) **From primary users:** Primary users who will be engaged throughout the project and will use the outputs. In their letters of support, users should describe in their own words: (i) how they have been engaged with the development of the proposal; (ii) how they see themselves continuing to inform the project if funded; and (iii) how they anticipate using project outputs. Reviewers will be looking for personalized, signed letters on an organization's letterhead to confirm user engagement and understand how the work will meet their needs. **All proposals must include at least one letter of support from a primary user.**

b) **From team members or partners providing in-kind contribution of personnel time:** Team members or partners included in the project approach but not funded in the budget. Be sure to specify an estimated full-time equivalent (FTE) for the individual's time (same as stated in **Appendix C**) and confirm that participation in the project would be part of their work commitment. FTE estimates aid the panel in assessing feasibility.

c) **From individuals, groups, and/or institutions providing access to resources:** Individuals, groups, and/or institutions that have agreed to provide data/

12 For example, applicants should indicate if the project will use their institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate, something lower, or a de minimus 10% rate. In addition, the budget narrative should indicate which project costs (e.g., salaries and travel but not tuition) the IDC rate is being applied to for the calculations of the total indirect amount.

access to data or other resources necessary for the project not otherwise accounted for in the budget.

7) **Appendix G: Resumes** – Two-page resumes for each team member are required. Resumes will be used by reviewers to determine whether the team has the requisite technical and collaborative skills and experience to undertake the project successfully.

8) **Appendix H: Data Sharing Plan** – All Science Collaborative proposals must address data management requirements in one of two ways:

   a) **For projects that propose the collection of new data or anticipate receiving or incorporating sensitive data, e.g., Traditional Ecological Knowledge:** Develop a Data Sharing Plan of two to five pages using the Data Sharing Plan Requirements and Outline.

   b) **For projects that do not propose the collection of new data:** Provide a statement that "no detailed Data Sharing Plan is needed," accompanied by a clear justification as to why, e.g., no new data are being collected.

   See the data management section for additional guidance.

9) **Appendix I: Other Supporting Documents** (optional; 5 pages maximum)

10) **Appendix J: Field Site Information** (optional; see Environmental and Cultural Resources Review for guidance on this appendix)

APPENDIX C: EVALUATION CRITERIA, REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals must comply with all submission instructions and guidelines to be considered for funding. Proposals not meeting these requirements will be removed from the competition without further review.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Each compliant proposal will be evaluated based on the equally weighted criteria listed below.

1) **Priority Issue**
   a) Does the proposal clearly articulate how it achieves one of the eligible RFP objectives?
   b) Does the proposed work address at least one **reserve management or science transfer need**?

2) **Collaboration and User Integration**
   a) Does the proposal identify specific users and clearly articulate their needs?
   b) Is there evidence of the user's commitment to continued involvement in the project? Is this corroborated in letters of support from the user(s)?

3) **Project Approach**
   a) Is the approach appropriate for achieving the project outputs?
   b) Are the methods sufficiently detailed and technically sound?
   c) Does the approach incorporate an appropriate strategy for user input?
   d) Does the approach contribute to reciprocal relationships with the identified users?
      - Is there evidence of accommodating the range of user abilities to participate in all aspects of the project where the team intends them to be involved? E.g., when and where meetings occur, how meeting notes and materials are shared, how input is collected, etc.
      - Does the approach demonstrate how all participants will benefit from involvement in the project?

4) **Feasibility**
   a) Does the team have adequate expertise, experience, and well-defined roles to complete the proposed work?
   b) Is the timeline realistic for the proposed work, and does it include sufficient time for integrating user input and completing proposed project outputs?
   c) Is the budget appropriate for the proposed work and does it include sufficient resources for integrating user input? Does it include resources to support equitable and meaningful participation of project partners? E.g., travel support, honoraria, compensation for child care to attend a meeting,

provision of traditional food/gifts that have cultural significance when convening partners, etc.

d) Does the proposal demonstrate access to and/or availability of necessary resources, including data?

- Where relevant, is this corroborated in letters of support?
- Where relevant, is there evidence of sensitivity to ownership of privileged or cultural knowledge and demonstrated care to protect it? E.g., identified need for data sharing agreements or other means to protect data sovereignty.

5) **Potential Impact** – Are the proposed process and outputs likely to lead to the desired outcomes, including catalyzing collaborative science or knowledge transfer?

Review Process

The review process for proposals is as follows. A more detailed summary of the review process, including decision points, inputs to each decision, and a summary of process participants can be found here.

1) **Letter of intent** – Submitting a letter of intent is the first required step of the application process. Proposals not meeting this requirement will be removed from the competition without further review. LOIs will be used by Science Collaborative staff to inform proposal reviewer recruitment; they will not be used as an evaluative tool.

2) **Minimum requirements assessment** – LOIs and proposals must be submitted by the stated deadlines. Science Collaborative staff will review all LOIs and proposals to confirm that they meet the requirements as described in this RFP and the LOI/proposal guidelines, including adherence to proposal specifications (e.g., font size, page limit, title page, budget limit), and inclusion of proposal elements, specified headers, and appendices. Proposals not meeting these requirements will be removed from the competition without further review.

3) **Proposal review** – Proposals will be reviewed by a panel with diverse disciplinary expertise and practical experience in natural and social sciences, collaborative processes, coastal management, outreach, education, training, and broad geographic representation.

a) ***Written review*** – Each proposal will be assigned three non-conflicted panelists who will develop written reviews according to the evaluation criteria outlined above. In their written reviews, panelists will be asked to provide comments to explain their rating and, where possible, suggestions for improvement.

b) ***Applicant response to reviews (optional)*** – Applicants will receive their written reviews and be given the option to provide a written response (two page maximum).

c) ***Panel discussion –*** Panelists will convene for a virtual meeting to discuss the proposals. Panelists will consider the applicant's response to reviews and discuss strengths, weaknesses, and any discrepancies among the written reviews.

d) ***Recommendations for funding*** – Panelists will identify projects that are supportable in rank order as input to the final selection process as outlined in the following section.

Selection Process

Final funding recommendations will be based on the panel recommendations of supportable projects in rank order. In consultation with the NOAA Program Manager, the NERRS Science Collaborative shall award projects based on available funds in rank order unless a proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following secondary selection factors:

- Concerns identified by reserve managers related to their level of engagement during proposal development or the anticipated scope and level of support for reserve contributions to the project;[13]
- Availability of funding;
- RFP objective type, i.e.: Objective 1: Facilitate the development of new collaborative science ideas; Objective 2: Amplify or enhance existing collaborative research efforts; and/or Objective 3: Promote the use of existing science through science transfer activities;[14]
- Balance/distribution of funds geographically by NERRS regions; and
- No reserve will serve as the lead reserve on more than one catalyst or science transfer project, except in cases where a reserve is leading a project that involves three or more reserves.[15]

Funding notifications are expected in June 2023.

13 See section on **Reserve Engagement** for additional details. Managers of participating reserves will have an opportunity to share any concerns about a proposal directly with the program. If concerns are not easily addressed, they could affect the proposal selection process.

14 Application of this selection factor would mean that one project of each objective type would be selected before funding another of the same type.

15 A reserve may lead as many proposals as desired, but they are unlikely to receive funding for more than one project that they are leading if those proposals involve fewer than three reserves. A reserve may be the lead reserve on more than one project awarded through this RFP if the additional projects involve three or more reserves. This criterion will be applied to proposals submitted to this RFP independent of other Science Collaborative funding opportunities.