

## IRA RFA Overview Webinar Q&A

### October 17, 2023

*The Regional Associations submitted questions in advance of this webinar. Those questions and responses from the IOOS Office can be [found here](#). The Q&A below occurred during the webinar.*

- What is an example of an overburdened community that would be served in an exclusive manner?
  - The RAs are encouraged to review the definitions in the RFA .
  - The IOOS Office is not looking for projects that will exclusively serve overburdened or underserved communities, but those communities should be the drivers.
  - Specific examples of overburdened communities can be discussed with the national office
- Where does this terminology "frontline" and "overburdened" come from? Is there a reference to share?
  - The sources of the definitions are provided in the RFA Definition section.
- What is a finite project? One with no on-going component or operation and maintenance (O&M) tail? Like a process study?
  - We seek finite projects with lasting impacts. No additional funds will be made available after project completion to sustain work. Proposals can be for projects that have zero O&M tail, but zero O&M tail is not a requirement. If an RA would like to propose a project that will have an O&M tail, the proposal needs to include how that will be funded once the project is complete.
  - An example of a project with no O&M is a pilot project at demonstration level. The proposal could state that the demonstration version of the project will be complete by a certain date within project period, even if no O&M available to sustain projects. This can be used as a way to showcase what the IOOS Enterprise can achieve and could be leveraged for external funding.
  - An example of a project that minimizes O&M and delivers on being finite with lasting impact is the development of a product or tool, where the majority of the cost is upfront in development and requires relatively little to be maintained.
- There seems to be some nuance with "TBD" projects. On the one hand, very open TBD projects are discouraged, but on the other, the RA may not know what that project is without first engaging with the new community. Can the proposal state that part of the project will look into how to engage with that new community?
  - The IOOS Office needs sufficient detail around the planned engagement process to understand where the project is going. See [Q3 here](#) for more information.
  - IOOS added that bottom up identification of communities is an important piece and that "TBD" projects will allow for this approach. If an RA is going into a community with a predefined project, they are not allowing for input from communities.
- Could the co-design and how you plan to do it be a core element of the proposal? That would definitely not be TBD. But you could have broad services defined as products with the understanding they will be refined through co-design.

- Yes, it would depend on how you outline the co-design and engagement with underserved and frontline communities. This type of engagement strategy should be discussed with the IOOS Office early in proposal development.
- The RAs have discussed only submitting 1-2 proposals for Topic Area 2 in order to minimize the amount taken out as indirect cost and therefore maximize the amount going to the RAs. There was a plan to go through MARACOOS, as they have a low indirect rate.
  - The IOOS Office thinks it will be difficult if not impossible to provide the level of details needed in just 1 or 2 umbrella proposals.
- The RAs have discussed two focus areas for Topic 2 proposal: water and wave information, and ecosystem changes and observation. The idea was for each region to show how they are contributing to a topic.
  - The IOOS Office has not participated in any discussions with or seen any proposals from the RAs about these topics. Therefore, a next step would be for the RAs to meet with IOOS staff to learn more about what the RAs are considering and iterate with them.
  - The IOOS office needs to be a part of defining these projects to ensure they align with both regional priorities and national priorities.
- Can the proposals have appendices that provide detail on individual projects if one master proposal is submitted for Topic 2?
  - The project does need to be fully described within the page limit.
  - This supports the need to communicate with the IOOS project experts or the IOOS regional team to ensure the proposal includes the necessary information.
- Similar to BIL, can we assume that you don't need all the background information in the proposals, so we can focus on the project detail?
  - Yes, that is correct.
- We were operating under the assumption that RA data and product service delivery is equitable if it is public, free, uses FAIR and CARE. It seems like a lot of our services will and do hit that mark but may not be tailored to overburdened communities until we can identify specific groups of people in those categories and work on additional co-design.
  - While the IOOS Office encourages the RAs to consider how their products are available and who can access them, it is important to provide a plan for how you will identify people in frontline and overburdened communities and begin a dialogue around what is needed to help improve their community resilience to climate change.