

## **IRA RFA Proposal Guidance**

Applicants should follow the directions provided in the RFA, using the information in this guidance document to help with their approach to drafting proposals for both Topic Areas.

### ***From the RFA:***

NOAA will provide \$100 million to the eleven IOOS RAs, via non-competitive cooperative agreements to fund “Climate Ready Coasts” coastal resilience services. This investment will enable the RAs to address coastal community needs and priorities within their regional footprints, and system-wide priorities for all regions. For example, building IOOS RA capacity for equitable service delivery so that successes developed in one RA can be replicated in other RAs, and increasing community science-based resilience observations such as low-cost water level stations and wave buoys. Funding will enable the IOOS RAs to improve their coastal ocean observing systems performance, reliability, coverage, and accuracy. The outcomes of this investment will improve program longevity, enhance capabilities across the system; improve equity of services within and across communities; advance environmental justice; and enable advancements to the IOOS ocean information network capacity to combine and organize regional data collection, management, and information services to users.

IRA funds will leverage the nation’s investment in the establishment and maintenance of the U.S. IOOS national network of regional coastal observing systems and their core elements. The funding will support recapitalization of the system, including priority infrastructure and modernization, as well as the enhancement of partnerships between user communities and technical and scientific experts, the maintenance and operations of the equipment needed to collect data, improved methods for managing the data and expanding its distribution, outreach to communities, and development of tools and services to enable more informed decisions.

### **Project Narratives**

From the RFA:

“Project Narrative and Milestone Schedule (single-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, 15 pages maximum). Include the scope of work and expected outcomes and societal impacts. For the milestone schedule, display timelines for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products including deliverables and key project outcomes.”

The introduction should focus on the objectives, limiting the amount of background information about IOOS or the role of the Regional Association.

In the project narrative, discuss:

- What is the coastal resilience issue this project will address?
- What does success look like?
- How does it address the RFA tenets?

- How will frontline and overburdened communities be more resilient to climate change impacts?
- If communities, users, and partners have not yet been identified, the proposal should describe the approach and steps to identify groups to work with and how they will be engaged as the project progresses.
- The project narrative should describe, to the best of the applicant's ability, who will do the work, what the timeline is in project years, and a list of milestones.
- Describe potential for lasting impacts and whether/how any O&M will be included/covered.
- For Topic Area 2, how does the project result in outcomes at the national and/or pan-regional scale?

**Guidance on sub-awards:**

While the proposal should have a description of the scope of work (outcomes, milestones, cost, timeline) of all work that will be performed by sub-award PIs, *the proposal can state that the entity who will do the work can be "To Be Determined" at a later date.*

What does this mean for these proposals, both Topic Area 1 and Topic Area 2:

- The project narrative should include a description of the outcomes from all work proposed.
- The budget narrative should include an overall cost for proposed work to be completed by a sub-PI through a sub-award. This should be captured in the "Contractual" category of the Primary PI's Budget Narrative. For example (the more detailed the description of work, deliverables, and cost the better):
  - Establish Common Best Practices (TBD, \$300,000) - a contractor will be hired to convene 3 meetings to scope deliverables in Years 1-2. A draft document listing best practices will be circulated for review and finalized
  - Implement Best Practices (TBD, \$250,000) - an organization will be selected to implement the Best Practices in the Pacific Islands region starting in Year 2. This will include x, y, and z . . .
- Sub-award statements of work cannot be used to provide additional details as a way to supplement the project description beyond the 15-page limit. The RFA does not offer such an approach as an option.

**Benefits of this approach:**

- RAs and IOOS Program Managers can focus on identifying the outcomes of the project and clearly outline the scope of work, including timelines and milestones. Depending on the lead RA, a mid-February deadline for the proposal could be established for all paperwork, allowing the team more time to collaborate on the scope of work and final draft of the proposal.
- The composition of the project team can be informally identified, including assigning roles, tasks, and budgets. All participants can and should be involved in drafting the proposal.

- Sub-PIs or “Other Investigators” can be identified and included in the proposal when possible, given their ability to submit all the necessary information required (SF-424A forms, other requirements established by their financial organizations) by the March 5 deadline for submission of proposals.
- For those organizations that cannot meet the established deadline for inclusion in the proposal, their part of the work will still be captured. These sub-PIs will have more time to work with their institutions on the required paperwork. When ready, an award action request can be initiated by the Primary PI, formally amending the award to include the new PI. Upon IOOS and Grants Management Division’s approval of the Award Action Request, the lead PI will be able to establish the sub-award and funds will be available to start that part of the project.
- Project ideas can be included in the proposal even when there is uncertainty about who will be funded to implement those activities.