



Ocean-based Climate Resilience Accelerators Program (OCRA)

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The Opportunity: Ocean-Based Climate Resilience Accelerators

What. NOAA will provide a combined total of \$60M in funding over the course of approximately 5 years to accelerator entities that will use that funding to develop and provide business accelerator services to start-ups and small businesses in multiple defined “theme areas”.

Why. To promote the climate resilience of the U.S. by addressing critical needs associated with ocean resources and coastal communities.

How. Selected accelerators will develop and implement programming to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses as they advance technologies and sustainable business models supporting key, identified theme areas related to emerging ocean and coastal-related topics.

THEME AREAS



Ocean Renewable Energy



Coastal and ocean-based carbon sequestration monitoring and accounting



Hazard mitigation and coastal resilience



Ecosystem services management

NOAA's Technical Assistance

NOAA will provide technical assistance and support to the accelerator entities throughout the process to ensure that the program design aligns with the identified goals and objectives by:

- Providing access to NOAA's network of place-based partners that are already working on products and services in the four theme areas and that can help identify market opportunities.
- Using regular and structured dialogues, workshops, and events with scientists, technologists, and the accelerator entities to provide the accelerator entities a mechanism to clarify needs that address the climate resilience themes.

NOAA's NETWORK OF PLACE-BASED PARTNERS INCLUDES:

- Integrated Ocean Observing System Regional Associations
- National Marine Sanctuaries
- National Estuarine Research Reserves
- Regional Ocean Partnerships
- Coastal Zone Management programs
- Sea Grant College Programs
- NOAA and state-based Regional Climate Service Providers
- NOAA Laboratories, Science Centers, and Cooperative Institutes
- University-based Climate Adaptation Programs
- National Weather Service Coordination and service delivery networks

AT-A-GLANCE

HOW

Two-phased competitive awards:

PHASE 1: Proposals that define an approach for scoping, planning, and designing climate resilience accelerator activities according to the defined requirements.

PHASE 2: Proposals for the implementation of the climate resilience accelerator programs that are planned and designed in Phase 1.

FUNDING

\$60 million across two phases:

PHASE 1: \$5 million to competitively fund multiple external accelerator entities to put together full proposals.

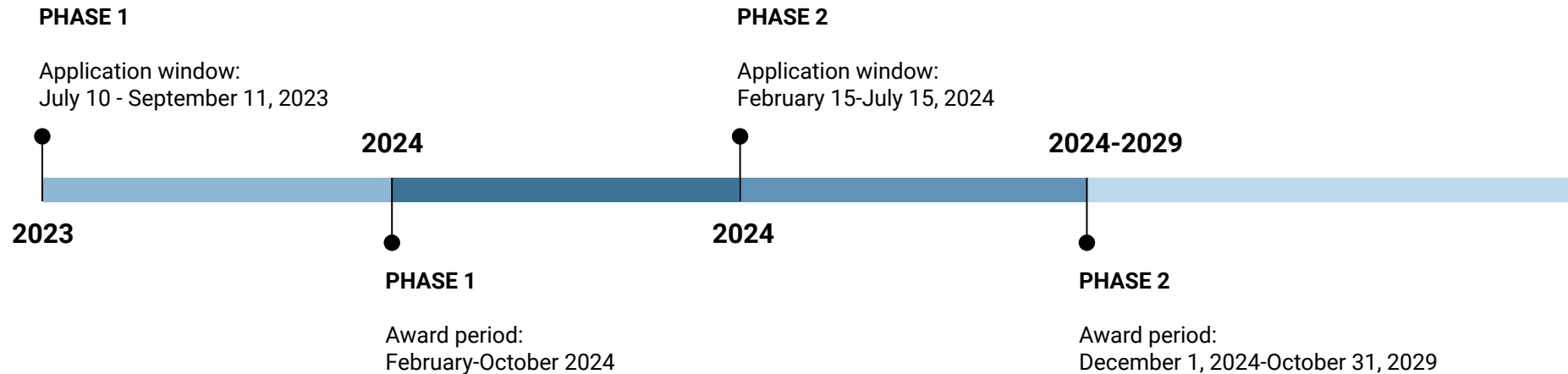
PHASE 2: \$55 million awarded to accelerator entities in a negotiated 'release of funds' to implement the proposed climate and coastal resilience projects.

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

U.S.-based, geographically-concentrated entities are eligible, including:

- For-profit organizations.
- Academic institutions.
- Nonprofit organizations.
- State or local governmental entities, agencies or instrumentalities.
- Tribal governments or consortia of Tribal governments.

Timeline



Objectives

Establish a national network of ocean-based climate resilience accelerators to better understand how ocean observation technologies and information services can: (1) support solutions to climate resilience themes; (2) enable sustainable business models for US businesses delivering such solutions; and (3) increase competitive advantages for innovators to meet these themes.

Support entrepreneurs and startups developing ocean-based climate resilience-focused products and services.

Accelerate and catalyze investment in ocean-based climate resilience-focused businesses by providing funding, access to growth capital, and networking support.

Leverage and advance startups and technologies that have already received federal investments (from SBIR/STTR, BIL, and IRA) to enable product and service development and industry adoption.

Advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within ocean-based climate resilience business innovation ecosystems.

Background....

Phase 1: Proposal Design

Focus: Identifying potential accelerator entities and funding them to design accelerator programming

Key content.

- Describe the applicant's existing and planned resources, including climate resilience expertise. Resources and expertise may exist as part of the accelerator entity, current partners, or new proposed partnerships.
- Include a description of how the Phase 1 award funds will be spent and a timeline for the development of an accelerator program design including key design milestones.
- Include a plan for how the Accelerator entity will advance diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility.
- Describe current and proposed partner's role and commitment to economic growth in the selected climate resilience theme area(s).

PROPOSAL CONTENT

1. Title Page
2. Project Summary
3. Project Narrative (up to 5 pages)
4. Standard SF-424A Budget Form with budget for each fiscal year of the proposal
5. Detailed Budget Narrative (See [here](#) for more information)
6. Diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility plan
7. Appendices
 - a. Supporting materials
 - b. Resumes
 - c. CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying.
 - d. SF-424B Assurances - Non-Construction Programs.

Phase 1: Proposal Review

Focus: Identifying potential accelerator entities and funding them to design accelerator programming

Review criteria

- Alignment of proposed accelerator program with one or more defined OCRA theme areas.
- Robust strategy and plan to establish key partnerships and processes necessary to meet program goals.
- Ability/capacity to successfully execute multiple cohorts (over a multi-year period) of accelerator programming.
- Identification of impactful and appropriate funding opportunities to administer NOAA-funded Technology Commercialization and Development (TDC) awards.
- Support for cohort participant businesses in pursuing follow-on funding and commercialization.

Phase 1: Proposal Awards

Focus: Identifying potential accelerator entities and funding them to design accelerator programming

AWARDS

NOAA will award up to \$250,000/awardee to support up to 15 qualified accelerator entities in scoping, planning, and designing an ocean-based climate resilience-focused accelerator program design that aligns with NOAA mission areas and addresses climate resilience themes.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- NOAA will invite winning applicants to engage in public workshops and webinars designed to convene a range of federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal agencies, non-governmental organizations, trade, and academic organizations, and other relevant entities to identify regional and/or sector-specific needs and market opportunities related to the identified climate resilience theme areas.
- NOAA will provide accelerator entities with access to subject matter experts (SMEs) who will provide feedback on accelerator programming design; assistance on development of selection criteria for cohort businesses; federal, state, and local networking opportunities; and other resources relevant to selected Climate Resilience Challenge area(s). SMEs may include technical experts from NOAA and other federal agencies, as needed. SMEs will meet regularly with Accelerator Entity leadership at a mutually agreed upon cadence.

ABOUT PHASE 2



Phase 2: Accelerator Implementation

Focus: Implement the program designs developed in Phase 1

What. Phase 2 will involve a subsequent Request for Applications (RFA) that will be made exclusively available to all Phase 1 awardees in order to implement the climate resilience accelerator programs that were planned and designed in Phase 1.

How.

- The Phase 2 solicitation will be released roughly one month from the start of the Phase 1 project period of performance. This will give awardees sufficient time to familiarize themselves with the Phase 2 solicitation requirements and incorporate them into their Phase 1 project execution.
- Phase 2 applications should describe an accelerator program plan that utilizes a significant portion of total funds requested for Technology, Development, and Commercialization Awards to be distributed to meritorious cohort participant businesses, with remaining funds for operations and implementation.
- NOAA will provide technical assistance to successful applicants to ensure that the program design aligns with the identified goals and objectives.

Phase 2: RFA Review

Focus: Implementing the program designs developed in Phase 1

The ultimate success of the accelerator entities in Phase 2 will be measured by the degree to which the program facilitates the successful commercial progress of the cohort businesses that participate in the programming. Specific measures will be addressed in the Phase 2 process; typical metrics associated with business accelerators include:

- Measurable increase in the Commercial Readiness Level (CRL) of cohort businesses.
- Follow-on funding secured by cohort businesses (VC, Series A/B, public).
- Commercial products/services developed by cohort businesses.
- Partnerships, licenses, agreements, pilot demos, etc. executed.

RFA COMPONENTS

- Structured Curriculum for Start-ups
- Technological, Market, and Economic Analysis
- Mentorship Program
- Board of Advisors
- Access to Capital and Strategic Partners
- Access to Prototyping and Demo Facilities, if appropriate
- Demonstrated Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility
- Strong Commitment to Data Collection
- Technology Development and Commercialization Awards

Phase 2: Awards

Focus: Implementing the program designs developed in Phase 1

NOAA anticipates that a subset of 4-5 subset of applicants will each be awarded up to \$10 million over a ~5-year period to implement the accelerator program designs developed in Phase 1.

The final selections may be individual Phase 1 awardees, or a combination of Phase 1 awardees that submit joint applications to the Phase 2 solicitation.

This funding is expected to support accelerator program operations, facilities, and cohort selection.

QUESTIONS

For more information:

- Contact NOAA at cr.accelerators@noaa.gov
- Official Notice of Funding Opportunity and application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)



Appendix: Definitions

Accelerator Entity	Entities composed of one or more eligible applicants that develop and deliver accelerator programing. These “accelerator entities” will be the primarily applicants for funding under this NOFO. Applicants may apply individually or submit joint proposals that involve collaboration in establishing an “accelerator entity”.
Accelerator Program Design	The process of designing an accelerator program that supports entrepreneurs and startups. Accelerator programs provide multiple services for businesses that participate in their programs, including customer discovery, partner structure, market analysis, business model development, and others. (Focus of Phase 1)
Accelerator Program Implementation	The accelerator program implementation is the execution of the accelerator program design, including selection of cohort participant businesses, training cohort participant businesses in the concepts that they have incorporated into their accelerator program design, and other support services to assist accelerator cohort participating businesses navigating commercialization pathways. Implementation also includes conducting rigorous processes for distribution of TDC awards (see below) to cohort participant businesses. Funds for TDC awards will be provided by NOAA as part of a Phase 2 award.
Cohort participant business	A cohort participant business is a company that applies and is selected to participate in a specific cohort of an accelerator program. These businesses are the entities that will participate in the accelerator program, potentially receive TDC awards, and ultimately be positioned to pursue commercial opportunities in the ocean-based climate resilience sector.
Accelerator cohort	An accelerator cohort is a group of cohort participant businesses that participate in an iteration of an accelerator program together.
Technology Development and Commercialization (TDC) awards	Technology Development and Commercialization (TDC) awards are non-dilutive funding awards that are offered to cohort participant businesses by the accelerator entity, during or after the businesses have completed the formal accelerator training, to implement specific projects or activities that were identified through the accelerator process to directly promote commercialization of their product/service.



THANK YOU!