OMB Control Number: 0648-0672
Expiration Date: 07/31/2029

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION AS A REGIONAL COASTAL OBSERVING SYSTEM

1. Type of Application:

New ☐ Renewal ☐ Revision ☐

2. Applicant Information:

Legal Name:

Address:

Street 1:

Street 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

3. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:

First Name:

Last Name:

Title:

Organizational Affiliation:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

Email:

Directions:
For the purposes of these certification guidelines, when the verb "describe" is used it indicates that the RCOS shall give an account in text that responds to the requirement. This text shall contain sufficient information to demonstrate how the RCOS satisfies the certification requirement. The RCOS may include a link(s) to additional information. When the verb "document" is used, it indicates that the RCOS shall furnish a document(s) that responds to the requirement. A text statement accompanying the document(s) will normally be necessary to provide context for the document(s) and to demonstrate how the RCOS satisfies the certification requirement. The RCOS may include a link to a document in the accompanying text statement.

Documentation that addresses the certification requirements may include references to existing RCOS documents. All documents and materials may be submitted directly to the U.S. IOOS Program Office or made accessible for public viewing on the RCOS's website.

§997.21 Organizational Structure

(b) The application shall:

1) Describe the RCOS's organizational structure (e.g., 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, establishment via MOU or MOA).

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

2) Document the RCOS's ability to satisfy applicable legal criteria for accepting and disbursing funds, and entering into agreements. Sufficient documentation may be provided in the form of: 1) evidence of a current grant, cooperative agreement, or

contract in good standing with the Federal government; or 2) evidence of fiscal agreements, standard operating procedures for financial activities, and proof of an audit process.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

3) Document the RCOS's measures for addressing issues of accountability and liability. For this criterion, accountability and liability refer to the RCOS's governance and management activities. Sufficient documentation may be provided in the form of 1) a conflict of interest policy for the Governing Board or governing body, which clearly states that a member of the governing board will declare any conflict of interest he or she may have and will recuse him or herself from associated funding decisions that may result in the Board member or a direct family member benefiting financially, and 2) a policy statement in the RCOS's by-laws that addresses liability issues.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

4) Describe the process the RCOS uses to set priorities for distributing funds (e.g., requirement for Governing Board or governing body approval when responding to funding opportunities or adjusting to funding level changes in existing agreements); and

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

5) Document the by-laws, signed articles of agreement, or any binding agreements that demonstrate how the RCOS establishes and maintains a Governing Board or governing body. The documentation shall demonstrate:
    i. How the composition of the Governing Board or governing body is selected and how it is representative of regional ocean observing interests. NOAA defines "representative" in this specific context to include geographic, sector, expertise, and stakeholder considerations.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

    ii. How and with what frequency the RCOS solicits and receives advice on RCOS participant diversity, stakeholder coordination, and engagement strategies, to ensure the provision of data and information that satisfy the needs of user groups.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

    iii. How the RCOS collects and assesses user feedback to gauge the effectiveness of the regional system and subsystems in satisfying user needs, and how the RCOS responds to this user feedback in setting its priorities. Sufficient documentation may be provided in the form of a description of the method the RCOS uses in its annual planning process to assess priorities among the identified user needs in the region and to respond to those user needs, and

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

iv. Steps the RCOS takes to ensure decisions on priorities and overall regional system design are transparent and available. At a minimum, RCOS priorities and regional system design decisions shall be made accessible for public viewing on the RCOS's website.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

§997.22 Membership Policy

The application shall describe:

(a) The process by which individuals or organizations may formally participate in the governance activities of the RCOS;

(b) The rights and responsibilities of this participation;

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(c) The process by which the RCOS strives for organizational diversity through intra-regional geographic representation, and diversity of activities and interests from both public and private sectors; and

(d) How the RCOS allows for participation from adjacent regions or nations.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

§997.23 Strategic Operational Plan

(b) Background and Context
The Strategic Operational Plan shall contain a Background and Context section that describes:

1) The role of the RCOS in furthering the development of the regional component of the System;

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

2) The process by which the RCOS updates the Strategic Operational Plan at least once every five years and how the RCOS seeks inputs from the broader user community; and

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

3) The RCOS's primary partners and any contributing observing systems. For the purposes of § 997.23, NOAA defines a primary partner as any organization or individual that contributes significant staff time, funding or other resources to project activities. This is not an exhaustive list of all RCOS partners but the primary partners the RCOS is working with on a given project.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(c) Goals and Objectives

The Strategic Operational Plan shall contain a Goals and Objective section that describe:

1) How the RCOS addresses marine operations; coastal hazards; ecosystems, fisheries and water quality; and climate variability and change; and

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

2) The major objectives that guide the RCOS's priorities for data collection and management, development of products and services, research and development, and education and outreach.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(d) Operational Plan for the Observing System

The Strategic Operational Plan shall include or reference an Operational Plan for the Observing System that:

1) Describes the desired outcomes of the observing system;

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

2) Describes the elements of the operational integrated observing system that will deliver those outcomes;

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

3) Documents to NOAA's satisfaction that the individual(s) responsible for RCOS operations has the necessary qualifications and possesses relevant professional education and work experience to deliver observations successfully. At a minimum the Strategic Operational Plan shall:
    i. Identify the individual(s) responsible for overall RCOS management;
    ii. Identify, as applicable, the individual(s) responsible for observations system management across the region;
    iii. Provide the curriculum vitae for each identified individual; and

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

    iv. Identify the procedures used to evaluate the capability of the individual(s) identified in subsection §997.23(d)(3) to conduct the assigned duties responsibly; and

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

4) Describes how the RCOS manages ongoing regional system operations and maintenance. At a minimum the Strategic Operational Plan shall:
    i. Describe the RCOS's standard operating procedures for calibrating, validating, operating, and maintaining equipment owned and/or operated by the RCOS regularly and in accordance with manufacturer guidance or industry best practice. Equipment is defined in §997.1; and

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

ii. Describe the RCOS's standard operating procedures for maintaining equipment inventories, shipping logs and instrument history logs for equipment owned and/or operated by the RCOS.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(e) Development of a Strategy to Sustain and Enhance the System
The Strategic Operational Plan shall describe its strategy for balancing changes in regional priorities with the need to maintain established data sets, the primary value of which may be in their long-term records. At a minimum the description shall:

1) Identify the guiding principles that inform the strategy;
2) Reference and show connections to a long-term (five-to-ten-year) regional Build-out Plan for the full implementation of the regional observing system based on the RCOS's priorities and identified user needs; and
3) Relate the annual planning process the RCOS uses to review its priorities in light of funding levels and its plans for system enhancement as outlined in the regional Build-out Plan.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(f) Data Management and Communications (DMAC) Plan
The Strategic Operational Plan shall include or reference a DMAC plan that:

1) Documents to NOAA's satisfaction that the individual(s) responsible for management of data operations for the RCOS has the necessary technical skills, and possesses relevant professional education and work experience to support DMAC capabilities and functionality for the System. At a minimum the DMAC Plan shall:
    i. Identify the individual(s) responsible for the coordination and management of observation data across the region;
    ii. Provide the curriculum vitae for the identified individual(s); and

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

    iii. Identify the procedures used to evaluate the capability of the individual(s) identified in subsection §997.23(f)(1) to conduct the assigned duties responsibly.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

2) Describes how data are ingested, managed and distributed, including a description of the flow of data through the RCOS data assembly center from the source to the public dissemination/access mechanism. The description shall include any transformations or modifications of data along the data flow pathway including, but not limited to, format translations or aggregations of component data streams into an integrated product.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

3) Describes the data quality control procedures that have been applied to data, not obtained through a federal data source, that are distributed by the RCOS. All data shall be quality controlled and QARTOD procedures shall be employed for data with QARTOD manuals. For each data stream, describe the quality control procedure applied to the data, by the RCOS or other named entity, between the data's collection and publication by the RCOS. The description will also include a reference to the procedure used.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

4) Adheres to the NOAA Data Sharing Procedural Directive.[1] The System is an operational system; therefore the RCOS should strive to provide as much data as possible, in real-time or near real-time, to support the operation of the System. When data are collected in part or in whole with funds distributed to a RCOS through the U.S. IOOS Program Office, the RCOS should strive to make the data

[1] NOAA Data Sharing Policy for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Procedural Directive, Version 2.0 https://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/EDMC_PD-DSPNG_final_v2.pdf

available as soon as logistically feasible for each data stream. When data are not collected with funds distributed to a RCOS through the U.S. IOOS Program Office, the data may be made available in accordance with any agreement made with the data provider.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

5) Describes how the RCOS will implement data management protocols promulgated by the IOOC and the U.S. IOOS Program Office in a reasonable and timely manner as defined for each protocol; and

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

6) Documents the RCOS's data archiving process or describes how the RCOS intends to archive data at a national archive center (e.g., NODC, NGDC, NCDC) in a manner that follows guidelines outlined by that center. Documentation shall be in the form of a Submission Agreement, Submission Information Form (SIF) or other, similar data producer-archive agreement.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(g) Budget Plan

The Strategic Operational Plan shall include or reference a Budget Plan that:

1) Identifies who supports the RCOS financially;
2) Identifies how RCOS priorities guide funding decisions; and
3) Assesses funding constraints and the associated risks to the observing System that the RCOS must address for the future.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

§997.24 Gaps Identification

(b) The application shall

1) Document that the RCOS's asset inventory contains up-to-date information. This could be demonstrated by a database or portal accessible for public viewing and capable of producing a regional summary of observing capacity;

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

2) Provide a regional Build-out Plan that identifies the regional priorities for products and services, based on its understanding of regional needs, and a description of the integrated system (observations, modeling, data management, product development, outreach, and R&D). The RCOS shall review and update the Build-out Plan at least once every five years; and

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

3) Document the priority regional gaps in observation coverage needs, as determined by an analysis of the RCOS asset inventory and Build-out Plan. The RCOS shall review and update the analysis of priority regional gaps in observation coverage needs at least once every five years.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

§997.25 Financial Oversight

(b) The application shall document compliance with the terms and conditions set forth in 2 CFR Part 215 – Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations, Subpart C – Post Award Requirements. Subpart C prescribes standards for financial management systems, among others. (Compliance with this criterion can be demonstrated by referencing any existing grant, cooperative agreement, or contract the RCOS has with NOAA.)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(c) The RCOS shall document annually the RCOS's operating and maintenance costs for all observing platforms and sensors, etc., owned and/or operated by the RCOS. This information shall be made available to NOAA upon request.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

Signature Date

*By signing this application, I certify that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept certification. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)

Privacy Burden Statement

A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with an information collection subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 unless the information collection has a currently valid OMB Control Number. The approved OMB Control Number for this information collection is 0648-0672. Without this approval, we could not conduct this information collection. Public reporting for this information collection is estimated to be approximately 75 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the information collection. All responses to this information collection are voluntary, but required to obtain benefits pursuant to the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11) (ICOOS Act), as amended by Section 103 of the Coordinated Ocean Observations and Research Act of 2020 (COORA) (Public Law 116-271, Title I). The information provided in this information collection will be used by NOAA staff to determine if the entity has successfully met the requirements to be certified as a Regional Coastal Observing System (RCOS). Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden to DOC NOAA IOOS: ioos.regions@noaa.gov.

Privacy Act Statement

Authority: The collection of this information is authorized under 5 U.S.C. § 301, Departmental regulations which authorizes the operations of an executive agency, including the creation, custodianship, maintenance and distribution of records, and 15 U.S.C. 1512, Powers and duties of the Department.

Purpose: NOAA collects limited information, such as name, address, phone number, or email address for a variety of purposes. This information will be used to respond to user inquiries or provide services requested by the user.

Routine Uses: Disclosure of this information is permitted under the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. Section 552a) to be shared among Department staff for work-related purposes. Disclosure of this information is also subject to all of the published routine uses as identified in the Privacy Act System of Records Notice COMMERCE/NOAA-11, Contact Information for Members of the Public Requesting or Providing Information Related to NOAA's Mission.

Disclosure: Furnishing this information is voluntary. By providing this information, you are consenting to the use of that information only for the purpose for which it is submitted.