

## Michigan Sea Grant Request for Pre-Proposals Questions and Answers

### I. Core Research and Integrated Assessment

- 1. For a core research proposal, would it be appropriate to indicate that the project would address objectives of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in addition to the MISG Strategic Plan? Should a letter of support be included (e.g., from the USEPA)?**

The proposal should make a strong case for how the research will address the MISG Strategic Plan; listing contributions to the GLRI Action Plan would not be a negative. Letters of support are not required for the pre-proposal although applicants could reference in the narrative any expected partnerships (e.g., USEPA).

- 2. I am faculty at a Michigan university; however, my collaborator is faculty at an Ohio public university. Would we be eligible for this program if my collaborator was listed as a co-investigator?**

As long as the lead principal investigator (PI) is a qualified researcher from an accredited Michigan university, the co-investigators can be from universities or companies outside the state. If support for the Co-PI from outside the state is included in your budget, Michigan Sea Grant would issue a subcontract to that university.

- 3. I have reviewed the Michigan Sea Grant Strategic Plan and our particular proposal would fall under the Healthy Coastal Ecosystems focus area. However, our proposed project does not fall under those specific topics of sediment, aquaculture, and marina best practices, which have been indicated as being of particular interest for this RFP. Should we be discouraged from submitting a pre-proposal if we do not match up with those particular topics but do still align with the objectives of the strategic plan?**

Researchers are invited to submit pre-proposals on any topic that relates to the Michigan Sea Grant Strategic Plan and that is important to Great Lakes ecosystems (e.g. ecology, socio-economic issues). The three topics of special interest were suggested by communities and agencies as important areas of research, but researchers are not limited to those.

- 4. What are my options for generating non-federal match? Can work done in advance of the project start date be used as match?**

PIs do not need to specify the source of matching contributions at the pre-proposal stage. Full proposals will need to demonstrate how the requested Sea Grant funds will be matched by non-federal contributions at a 2:1 rate (a 50% match), which is required by NOAA. Matching contributions can be generated in a variety of ways; however, the match must be spent or applied between the project start and end dates designated in the grant application (2/1/2018 – 1/31/2020).

A few examples of non-federal matches:

- Funds from related non-federal grants, community foundations, or local partners can be used to support research or outreach related to the Integrated Assessment, Fellowships, or Core Research.
- University researchers can dedicate an extra month or two per year on project activities and use a portion of their existing salary as non-federal match.
- Collaborators may donate a certain number of hours to the project (e.g., attending advisory committee meetings, leading an outreach effort, or conducting some amount of analysis or mapping work). The value of their time can be quantified and included as match.
- Universities or other partner organizations can dedicate equipment, analysis tools, or other supplies that have a quantifiable value (e.g., use of a GIS lab or printing expenses).
- Universities can contribute tuition, stipend, or hourly support for graduate or undergraduate students working on the project.

To be eligible, matching contributions must be: non-Federal (U.S.) in origin (federally appropriated or managed funds are ineligible); dedicated specifically for the project; and applied only to the Integrated Assessment, Fellowship, or Core Research project and not used as match for other projects. Letters of support must accompany the full proposal specifying any matching contributions from partner organizations.

#### **5. Does the Core Research competition support social science proposals?**

Yes, a social science research proposal would be considered if it addresses the focal areas of the Michigan Sea Grant Strategic Plan. The strategic plan focuses generally on critical issues relative to the Great Lakes coastal and ecosystem resources, communities, and ecosystem services. If a pre-proposal addressed ecosystem services and one or more of the aspects of the MISG Strategic Plan, that should meet the RFP goals. The applicant should describe how the research will be directly linked to the strategic plan and address a critical issue relative to the Great Lakes ecosystem.

#### **6. Can Sea Grant help with the outreach component on an Integrated Assessment? How do we go about involving Sea Grant without any conflict of interest?**

IA teams are encouraged to talk to Sea Grant staff and policy contacts while preparing pre-proposals. Depending on time and interest, Sea Grant specialists could assist with helping the team identify stakeholder groups and provide input on an approach to outreach and dissemination of results at the pre-proposal stage. Policy contacts can help to clarify the issue and identify state and target area needs.

Once invited to submit a full proposal, researchers can contact Heather Triezenberg ([vanden64@msu.edu](mailto:vanden64@msu.edu)) to discuss outreach plans and Rhett Register ([rregist@umich.edu](mailto:rregist@umich.edu)) to discuss communication plans.

#### **7. What does an Integrated Assessment look like?**

The Michigan Sea Grant website contains information that describes a typical Integrated Assessment ([www.miseagrant.umich.edu/research/approach/](http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/research/approach/)) as well as information about past projects ([www.miseagrant.umich.edu/research/research-themes/](http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/research/research-themes/)).

- 8. Do we need to include the cost sharing approval letters with the proposal for the Michigan Sea Grant Core Research projects? The announcement states that only three letters of support may be included and I need to know if the cost sharing approval letters are included in the supporting documentation section.**

We do not require the non-federal match letter of commitment at this point. However, if the proposal is selected, we will then require such a letter.

- 9. Would a proposal to evaluate the impact of Clean Marina best practices be competitive? Could Michigan Sea Grant assist with the identification of marinas?**

Such a proposal would fit within the 2017 RFP; the topic was listed of special interest in the Core Research section. Mark Breederland, Michigan Sea Grant's Northwest District Extension Educator, is engaged with the Clean Marina Program and may be contacted with questions related to the program. Contact Mark through email: [breederl@anr.msu.edu](mailto:breederl@anr.msu.edu) or by phone: (231) 922-4628. We encourage you to consult with a program expert before contacting any marina directly.

- 10. Can more than one proposal be submitted by one academic unit at a university?**

Yes.

- 11. What is the geographic scope of research projects that MISG funds? Would research on tributaries, tributary watersheds, or tributary runoff be fundable?**

The current Michigan Sea Grant Strategic Plan includes a focus area on Healthy Coastal Ecosystems. Research proposals that make a strong case for the linkage between the proposed tributary research to impacts on coastal ecosystems would qualify.

- 12. The call for proposals states that "co-funding opportunities may be available for several topics" (p. 5 paragraph 3). Could you please clarify what "co-funding" refers to?**

"Co-funding opportunities" refers to potential sources of funding outside of MISG that could be available to support particular projects. In the past, this co-funding allowed MISG to support additional research. These co-funding opportunities are not shared specifically because they depend on the proposed research, the co-funder interest, and applicability of the research. Details about particular co-funding opportunities will be made available as appropriate.

- 13. Would research on fish dynamics be fundable through the core research competition?**

The current Michigan Sea Grant Strategic Plan includes a focus area on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture. Research proposals that make a strong case for the linkage to the strategic plan would qualify. Linkages back to coastal resources or communities or businesses would be a plus. MISG's primary focus is coastal, but Great Lakes issues as a whole are fundable.

**14. Can you please tell me what overhead rate is acceptable for an Integrated Assessment proposal budget?**

All proposals must be submitted via an accredited Michigan university. The overhead rate is set by the university and MISG will accept this rate (i.e., there is no predetermined limit on the indirect rate indicated in the proposed budget). Check with your university business office to determine this rate. Please note, a copy of the institution's current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (IDCRA) must be included when you submit the full-proposal to MISG.

**15. For a core research proposal, does the \$100K per year include the 50% match, or is the match in addition to \$100K federal available per year?**

The \$100K per year does not include the 50% match. Non-federal matching funds should be 50 percent of the requested amount — at least \$1 non-federal for every \$2 federal requested. For example, if you request \$200,000 from MISG (federal), you would need to document an additional non-federal match of \$100,000 from your home institution or policy sponsor (e.g., state funding, in-kind support).

**16. For the pre-proposal, does a budget justification suffice or must the budget file found on the pre-proposal submission page be completed? It is unclear what level of detail is needed and whether then we need to route that information through our grants office for this pre-proposal step.**

For the pre-proposal, a budget justification will suffice. The formal budget form is a requirement for the full proposal.

**17. Is the budget justification and total match section of the pre-proposal included in the 4-page limit?**

Yes, a brief budget justification and description of matching funds is included in the four-page limit. Principal Investigators are not required to fully document the source of the project match until submitting a full proposal.

## II. Graduate Student Fellowships

**1. Are there any funding opportunities still available for a MS project that runs 2016-2018?**

The fellowships for 2016-2018 have already been awarded and there are no additional funds available for student support in that time period. The current RFP includes a call for fellowships for the 2018-2020 period (i.e., research projects beginning in 2018 or 2019, as appropriate).

See: [Michigan Sea Grant 2017 Request for Research Pre-proposals: Fellowship Excerpt \(PDF\)](#)



**MICHIGAN SEA GRANT**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN + MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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