Q. Please clarify the funding opportunities and due dates.

A. Sea Grant has two funding opportunities: the first is for full integrated assessments and pre-proposals are due for them on Friday, February 24 @ 5 pm; the second is for one project to evaluate the IAs and the full proposals for that are due @ the same time, Friday, February 24 @ 5 pm.

Q. How does this year’s pre-proposal process differ this year from past years?

A.

• Mechanics of the pre-proposal process are a little different this year – fully electronic submission process
• Fill in the on-line form – linked to the RFP web page
• It’s about 5 pp of text altogether – our usual pre-proposal length
• You have to submit on or before 5 pm on Friday, February 24
• There are eight individual questions, two of which – the DNR question on ecosystem management and the DEQ question on Areas of Concern – can be applied to more than one geographic location. If you are pursuing one of these two IAs we intend for you to select only one geographic location to focus your IA on. Two of the questions, DEQ waterfront redevelopment and brownfield question, will use multiple projects/locales and should be as expansive as possible.
• At the workshop we were asked if PIs could propose their own IA topic. The answer is yes providing you have a question sponsor – which is an entity that is in a position to use the results of the IA to develop and implement a management plan related to the question. You should have the question sponsor contact Jen Read prior to the pre-proposal due date.

Q. What are you looking for in proposals to evaluate the IA process?

A.

• We are looking for full proposals for a project to evaluate the IA process.
• This grew out of discussions with various interested parties who pointed out it would be useful to evaluate the process, identify best practices – both those that can help this suite of IAs and best practices to help the next round of IAs.
• We have a provision that the evaluation process should not be overly burdensome to PIs and that’s really a recognition that to be most productive you want the PIs participating willingly and fully, so don’t make it overly involved for them.
• We are not experts in evaluation, so we’re looking to you to provide us w/ the best approach to evaluate IAs – bear in mind that IAs are both rigorous scientific analyses and sound stakeholder engagement processes both are important components of the IA
Q. Who is eligible to apply?

A. Researchers at Michigan universities will be project principal investigators but project teams are not limited to university researchers, please assemble the best possible team that you can. It may be that the best person for the job is someone from an entity external to a university and you should include those people. PIs however, must be eligible to be researchers at the university and submit proposals through it.

Q. What is the role of Question Sponsor at two-stages of proposals?

A.
• At the pre-proposal stage of the process, the contacts at the bottom of each question are there to answer general questions about the IAs – since they’ll be providing advice to the Sea Grant Management team on pre-proposals to invite to full proposal we’ve asked them to avoid conflicts that would disqualify them from doing so.
• Please do not ask them to endorse your pre-proposals or develop your pre-proposal.
• At the full proposal stage we anticipate the question sponsors to interact more closely w/ the proposing team and to endorse those proposals that they feel will best meet the needs identified by their agency/organization in the IA question. That does not mean that they will necessarily endorse your proposal.

Q. How much funding is available for this initiative?

A.
1) General guidance on grant amounts and caps, if any
   • We’re looking for proposals in the neighborhood of 75-100K/ per project year for up to two project years.

2) General guidance or restrictions on how grant monies can be allocated
   • no equipment (i.e. computer/laptop, printer, scanner, etc.), no alcohol, no hosting, and no gifts
   • Match is typical SG match and in-kind as well as hard cash works as match as long as the source is non-federal entity.

Q. When will projects begin?

A. Project start dates will be determined by when we receive the money from NOAA. It will likely be later than February 1, in reality, as budgetting processes and other issues in DC typically mean funding does not arrive from NOAA until June.