

## NEW HAMPSHIRE SEA GRANT PROGRAM

### 2024-2025 Biennial Request for Proposals

Every two years, the New Hampshire Sea Grant Program issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) for those seeking major (up to \$100K plus 50% match per year) funding for research projects. During 2023, NH Sea Grant will be reviewing proposals from investigators for one or two-year research funding during the 2024-2025 cycle, which officially runs February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026. A brief summary of this opportunity is provided below along with links to additional information.

The guiding philosophy for NH Sea Grant is to serve the state and region by funding innovative and cutting-edge research integrated with expert extension, outreach, and education to support dialogue and science-based decision-making in areas of particular importance to our region. To meet our mission, we seek to foster and support the highest quality marine and coastal research and education projects that relate to the [NH Sea Grant Program's Strategic Plan's Focus Areas](#):

1. Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture
2. Healthy Coastal Ecosystems
3. Resilient Communities and Economies
4. Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development

The 2024-2027 NH Sea Grant Strategic Plan provides specific guidance on goals for research, extension and education in relation to these focus areas. Investigators writing research proposals should carefully read this document and consider how their proposed project aligns with the research theme and/or the broader goals of NHSG. This can be accomplished by reading the Identified Needs for each focus area and then describing the NHSG Goal, Supported Objective and Desired Outcome(s) that will be most served by the implementation of your project. Additionally, PIs should also pay attention to the core values and crosscutting principles in the Strategic Plan to consider how they can contribute potential research and extension to topic areas, including diversity, equality, inclusion, environmental justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) related issues.

For the 2024-2025 RFP, NH Sea Grant will also *encourage* proposals that relate to **aquaculture research**. However, *aquaculture themed proposals are not more likely to be funded (there is no evaluation criteria linked to aquaculture relevancy) and high-quality proposals addressing any of the Focus Areas outlined in NH Sea Grant's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan will be given equal consideration.*

Successful proposals will clearly identify and delineate a process for engaging end-users of the resulting research, and robust outreach, engagement and extension activities will be a requirement for all proposals. Thus, we strongly recommend that researchers seek out external partners and/or **work with NH Sea Grant extension specialists and educators** as early as possible to ensure that their direct input regarding identification/ engagement with potential end-users is integrated during the proposal development process. See Sections E & F below for additional guidelines about " Integrating Extension, Outreach

and diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and accessibility (DEIJA) Principles to Your Proposal.”

All preliminary proposals will be evaluated by an expert panel to assess fit with the RFP requirements, relevance to the NH Sea Grant Strategic Plan and RFP priorities, and the potential for strong extension and end user engagement. After a final review by the NHSG Executive Committee, PIs will be encouraged or discouraged for continuing with the full proposal submission process. All PIs who submit preliminary proposals will be eligible to submit a full proposal.

The following pages provide important information for RFP applicants. **Questions or comments?** Contact Steve Jones, NH Sea Grant Associate Director, (603) 862-5124 or [Stephen.jones@unh.edu](mailto:Stephen.jones@unh.edu).

### **SUBMISSION DEADLINES:**

**Pre-proposals** must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on February 10, 2023. Notification of the **status of the review** of all pre-proposals will be made by April 2023. **Full proposals** must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on June 2, 2023.

### **RFP CALENDAR:**

Dec 7, 2022	Release 2024-2025 RFP to potential PIs and stakeholders
Dec 19	RFP informational webinar at UNH and other institutions
Feb 1, 2023	NHSG Research Symposium
Feb 10	Preliminary proposals due at 5:00 PM, NHSG office
Mar 10	Review Panel & NHSG Executive Committee review meeting
Mar 17	Review recommendations sent to PIs
Mar 24	Intent to submit letters required from discouraged proposals only
April 15	List of suggested reviewers from PIs
June 2	Full proposals due by 5:00 PM at NHSG office
July 31	Blinded reviews sent to PIs
Aug 14	PI review rebuttals due to NHSG
mid-Sept	Technical Review Panel review meeting
Sept 15	PIs notified of proposal review outcome and funding decisions
October	NHSG Omnibus Proposal produced
Oct 12	Final NHSG proposal submitted to National Sea Grant Office
Feb 1, 2024	Beginning of research project funding
Spring 2024	Researcher on-boarding workshop hosted by NH Sea Grant
Jan/Feb 2025	PI participation in biennial NH Sea Grant Research Symposium
Jan 31, 2026	End of 2024-2025 funding cycle

# NHSG RFP Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal Submittal Process

New Hampshire Sea Grant seeks pre-proposals for its 2024-2025 research funding cycle.

## PRE-PROPOSAL PROCESS DETAILS:

### A) ELIGIBILITY

Principal Investigators (PIs) must be affiliated with an institution of higher learning or other research institutions in New Hampshire with relevant research or educational capability. Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) on proposed projects funded through sub-awards can be from NH or elsewhere and/or non-profit and private research entities. Single investigator and multiple investigator research teams from different New Hampshire institutions are encouraged to apply. *NH Sea Grant Program encourages proposals that include diverse participants with regards to age, race, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital statuses, education levels, job classifications, veteran status types, income and socioeconomic status.*

### B) PRE-PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS

Pre-proposals must be submitted by **February 10, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.** Late proposals will NOT be accepted, with no exceptions. Pre-proposals will be submitted through NH Sea Grant's eSeaGrant system at <http://eseagrants.unh.edu>. *New users to this system will need to first register in eSeaGrant and should do so early in the process to avoid potential problems and risk missing the deadline.* To establish login credentials:

1. Go to: <http://eseagrants.unh.edu>
2. Click the grey **register** button at the top right-hand corner of the window to make your account.
3. After you create your account, you will receive an email with login credentials. (If you do not receive a "Welcome" email with login credentials, please contact Michelle Lemos at [michelle.lemos@unh.edu](mailto:michelle.lemos@unh.edu).)
4. Once you login with your credentials, you can change your password. To do so click your name in the upper-right corner of the screen and select "My Profile."

Existing users can log in using their previously established username and password. If you have forgotten your password, please use the "forgot password" feature to trigger a reset. *Start this submission process early to avoid potential problems and risk missing the deadline.*

To start a pre-proposal, or revisit/edit an existing pre-proposal:

1. Click on "Current Tasks" on the banner head
2. Search for and click on the application labeled "NHSG 2024-2025 RFP (Pre-Proposal)"
3. Upon entering eSeaGrant the Principal Investigator (PI) will be presented with a

series of tabs located on the left side of the screen. Each tab represents a section of the pre-proposal and requires the PI to add information either by uploading PDF files or entering information directly into a text box. See below for more information on each tab/section. Please be sure that PDF files **DO NOT** contain footers or headers containing file names or page number.

**Questions or comments?** Contact Michelle Lemos, NH Sea Grant Program, (603) 862-6702 or [michelle.lemos@unh.edu](mailto:michelle.lemos@unh.edu).

### **C) PRE-PROPOSAL COMPONENTS WITHIN eSeaGrant**

**Start Here:** Please review the instructions, enter the proposal title, keywords, project initiation/completion dates.

#### **Principal Investigator/Co-Principal Investigators:**

In this section, information will be entered directly into a system-generated form and PI CV's (**one-page limit**) will be uploaded as PDF files. The PI should be prepared to enter PI, Co-PI and senior staff contact information and to upload a one-page CV in PDF format for each individual.

**Results of Prior Sea Grant Support:** Include all projects receiving funds from any Sea Grant program during the previous five years. Maximum of one page per project to include project name, PI name, Sea Grant funds awarded, project summary and results. If you have more than one project to report on, please combine all reports into one PDF.

#### **Project Narrative, Budget and References:**

**Project Narrative** – PI will upload Project Narrative into eSeaGrant in PDF format (3-*pg max*) Please include:

- A concise description of the project
- The programmatic relevance for Sea Grant funding (based on the 2024-2027 NH Sea Grant Strategic Plan). Please describe the project's relevancy and/or a NH coastal research need. This can be accomplished by reading the Identified Needs for each focus area and then describing the NHSG Goal, Supported Objective and Desired Outcome(s) that will be most served by the implementation of your project.
- Experimental design
- Technical and Extension approaches (and end-user engagement, as applicable)
- Expected outcomes, products and impacts of the effort
- The end users of any results, new information and/or deliverables should be

clearly and specifically identified

- Bottom-line budget estimation and brief budget explanation
  - Please estimate the approximate overall cost of the project including the 50% match (See Section F below).
  - Detailed budget, institutional signatures and match details are not required for the preliminary proposal.

**References:** References will be uploaded as a separate PDF file. Although uploaded in the same section as the Project Narrative, references are not considered part of the Project Narrative 3-pg limit.

**Submission Preview:** You will have the opportunity to view your pre-proposal before you submit. Please carefully review and when satisfied, please click on the SUBMIT button located on the right side of the window. Proposals are accessible for edit/review up until you click on the SUBMIT button.

#### **D. PRE-PROPOSAL REVIEW CRITERIA AND PROCESS**

All preliminary proposals will be evaluated by an expert panel, the members of which are free from conflicts of interest. The review process may also include NHSG staff, members of the Policy Advisory Committee, and other external experts that are free from conflicts of interests regarding the pre-proposals. The panel will review and rank proposals according to the below criteria:

- fit with the RFP requirements (25%)
- relevance to the NH Sea Grant Strategic Plan and RFP priorities (50%)
- the potential for strong extension, outreach and end user engagement (25%).

The expert panel will determine a rank for each pre-proposal based on the overall scores. The highest-ranking pre-proposals will be encouraged and the rest will be discouraged from continuing with the full proposal submission process. PIs will receive a letter following the panel review that will include a summary of review comments from the panel review that informed to the final decision. The target number of proposals to be encouraged is 10-12, corresponding to what would be a 50% funding ratio, as we expect to fund 5-6 proposals. All PIs who submit preliminary proposals that are encouraged or discouraged will be eligible to submit a full proposal.

#### **E) INTEGRATING EXTENSION AND OUTREACH TO YOUR PROPOSAL**

Sea Grant research proposals featuring strong research accompanied by meaningful engagement/extension components will be considered more competitive! Below are considerations that may help you develop and strengthen the engagement components of your Sea Grant research proposal, whether or not Sea Grant or Cooperative Extension staff members are formally involved.

### **Consider these questions:**

When preparing a pre-proposal, use the questions below to help identify potential engagement directions and opportunities. You can reach out to Extension staff for help. *If preparing a FULL PROPOSAL, we suggest that you discuss these questions with an Extension staff member early in the proposal preparation process to help determine IF and WHAT extension could be included.*

- What new knowledge/tool will result from your project?
- Why is this knowledge/tool needed?
- Who could use that knowledge (aside from other scientists) and what would they use it for (e.g., decision making, improving practices, increasing profitability, reducing risk, etc.)?
- Do you have some information indicating that the knowledge resulting from your project is needed or desired by the intended end users or by stakeholders?
- What would it take for the end users to apply that new knowledge/tool?

If end users were able to apply the new knowledge/tool that resulted from your work, would there be an improvement in social, economic or environmental conditions?

### **Engage Extension staff early (i.e., during initial planning) in the proposal preparation process:**

The benefits of working with an Extension staff member early on are many! They may, for example:

- Have access to needs assessments of the end users for whom you may be interested in providing information, knowledge or tools
- Have access to audiences, stakeholders, volunteers or citizen scientists important for your work
- Have outreach venues and opportunities already in place that would work for you
- Know willing partners for demonstration projects, pilot projects or collaborative research
- Be familiar with research from the social, behavioral, and/or economic sciences associated with successful implementation of new knowledge in your field
- Help you locate more appropriate engagement partners if Extension is not the right partner

All Extension staff have experience designing, developing and implementing outreach/education projects. Most have experience conducting needs assessments and evaluations. Many Extension staff conduct applied research themselves. Any Extension staff should be able to help plan meaningful outreach components, contribute significantly to the integration of outreach with research and add value to the project.

Browse these sites to locate staff that might be able to help you or identify others who could help:

- [Sea Grant Extension Staff](#)
- [Cooperative Extension program areas](#)

**Questions or comments?** Contact Julia Peterson, NH Sea Grant's Extension Program Leader, (603) 862-6706 or [julia.peterson@unh.edu](mailto:julia.peterson@unh.edu).

## **F. INTEGRATING, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, JUSTICE and ACCESSIBILITY (DEIJA) PRINCIPLES TO YOUR PROPOSAL**

National Sea Grant and New Hampshire Sea Grant (NHSG) are committed to integrating principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and accessibility (DEIJA) into their programs through all functional areas – research, extension, education, communications, and administration. The natural sciences, and [geosciences in particular](#), have decades of stagnation in diversity to overcome.<sup>1</sup> A [recent update \(2022\) to national Sea Grant's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Justice \(DEIJA\) Visioning Plan](#) lays out a potential roadmap for better integration of DEIJA within the organization. NHSG is implementing some of these steps in both HOW it operates and WHAT it works on with its 2024-25 Request for Proposals. NHSG is taking or considering taking the following steps identified below. They are anticipated to strengthen NHSG's work overall, not just in relation to its DEIJA commitment.

1. reaching out more vigorously to more research institutions in NH for potential PIs
2. reaching out to potential PIs within a broader range of disciplines
3. recognizing DEIJA-related topics\* within the coastal and marine spheres as research priorities
4. encouraging partnerships\* that strengthen capacity to address DEIJA
5. encouraging engagement\* efforts that enhance DEIJA integration
6. broadening representation on relevant proposal review teams in terms of discipline, organizations/institutions represented, race and ethnicity, gender, age, etc.
7. including DEIJA integration in its proposal selection criteria
8. supporting DEIJA related professional development for its staff, volunteers, and collaborators
9. integrating DEIJA considerations\* into its student intern and fellowship recruitment and selection processes
10. producing communications products\* that are accessible to a greater diversity of NH residents

NHSG encourages potential PIs to consider how they can increase the implementation of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion into their projects through their approaches, collaborations, topics, students, and engagement efforts. NHSG staff members are ready and willing to discuss integration ideas with potential PIs. NHSG staff members can often provide key information, contacts, access to networks, best practices, and expertise during the project design, development, and implementation phases.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard, R.E., Cooperdock, E.H.G. No progress on diversity in 40 years. *Nature Geoscience*. **11**, 292–295 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41561-018-0116-6>

NHSG is not alone in this journey. Entities including [NOAA](#), [UNH](#), UNH School of Marine Science and Ocean Engineering, as well as many NHSG partners in the region are recognizing the benefits of greater diversity and inclusion in scientific endeavors and expressing renewed commitments. PIs may wish to consider the following in the development of their proposals:

**DEIJA related topics** – is there a way to connect a coastal and marine topic you are interested in with a justice, equity, diversity, or inclusion topic? For example, municipal land use/climate policies and equity, or seafood/sea vegetables and food security.

**DEIJA partnerships** – is there someone you could include in your project who could inform, co-investigate, or benefit from the research in ways that enhance the DEIJA aspects of the work? Would the work benefit from collaborations with someone you have not routinely partnered with in the past?

**Engagement for DEIJA** – have you considered or sought out best practices for engaging with a new audience or stakeholders in ways that are more equitable, just, and inclusive? Are you taking stakeholders' needs, resources, and expertise into consideration when designing engaged projects? Have you contacted a NHSG staff member or other outreach specialist for engagement assistance?

**DEIJA considerations for students** – is your research taking the needs, resources, relative opportunities, and perspectives of students, especially underserved students, you work with into consideration in ways that will enhance their success as well as the success of the project?

**DEIJA and science communication** – are you planning any communications associated with your project? Have you considered communications products more accessible to diverse audiences?

## **G) PROJECT DURATION AND FUNDING LEVEL**

Proposed activities may be of one or two years in duration, for the period between **February 1, 2024, and January 31, 2026** (the 2024-2025 RFP funding cycle overlaps one month beyond 2025 into 2026).

The proposal budget should not exceed \$100,000 per year in Sea Grant funds, including all direct and indirect costs. In addition to Sea Grant funds, there is a 50% matching requirement- See Section H below. Therefore, the maximum annual budget is \$100,000 in Sea Grant funds with a mandatory \$50,000 non-federal match. The project scope should reflect the available funds.

## **H) MATCH REQUIREMENT**

Details for matching funds are not required during the preliminary proposal phase but will be for all final proposals. Sea Grant is a matching funds program, which **requires that at least 50% of the aggregate federal dollars received be matched by state or private funds** (\$1 of match for every \$2 of requested federal Sea Grant funds). In-kind matching from university or other sources is often acceptable. Possible sources of matching funds include faculty/staff salaries, departmental or college student stipends, benefits, donated lab or ship time, indirect costs, and real or in-kind contributions from



non-federal partners.

## **I) FULL PROPOSAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS AND SUBMISSION**

*Full proposals are due on June 2, 2023, by 5:00 p.m. (Late proposals will NOT be accepted with new exceptions)*

### **A. Full Proposal Required Elements**

#### **1. Project Narrative**

The Project Narrative must contain all sections listed below (A through I). Details on requirements for each section will be provided within eSeaGrant. You must use Times or Times New Roman 12-point font, 1" margins and single-spacing. Narrative should not include headers or footers.

Note: There is a 15-page limit for sections A through H. (Section I, Literature Cited, is not included in the 15-page limit.) Narrative components include:

- a. Abstract: One or two paragraphs summarizing the proposal and its intent.
- b. Rationale: A vital section that should thoroughly develop the justification/need and expected benefits of the project. Discussion of relevant coastal issues or events having a bearing on your project (e.g., oil spills, fisheries management, shoreline erosion, marine products) are appropriate here. This section should present a convincing argument as to why it is important to carry out the project. End users of the project's results should be clearly identified here and in other sections as appropriate (see section f).
- c. Alignment with NH Sea Grant Strategic Plan: Clearly state how your proposed research aligns with the NH Sea Grant Program Strategic Plan. This can be accomplished by reading the Identified Needs for each focus area and then describing the NHSG Goal, Supported Objective and Desired Outcome(s) that will be most served by the implementation of your project. Additionally, PIs should also pay attention to the core values and crosscutting principles in the Strategic Plan to consider how they can contribute potential research and extension to topic areas, including environmental justice, diversity, equity and inclusion related issues.
- d. Review of Previous Work: A description of both the previous work done in the area of the project you are proposing, and a review of your experience working in this area. Discussion of how your project relates to other Sea Grant projects (either previous, ongoing or proposed) is also appropriate here.
- e. Project Objectives and Scientific Hypothesis: A clear statement of the project objectives and goals. It is important to clearly construct and state a defensible scientific hypothesis.

f. Project Plan/Methodology: Carefully explain the conceptual and methodological approaches using language and terminology appropriate to your discipline. The project plan should be consistent with the highest standards of the discipline involved.

g. Educational Impact: Briefly describe the extent of involvement in the proposed work by graduate/undergraduate students and/or by undergraduate or high school faculty. Also note any other potential impacts of the research on education in the marine studies area.

h. Extension of Research Results: Specifically identify the end users of the research results and explain the nature of the benefits and impacts they will receive. The role of the end users in the project should be described in detail. NH Sea Grant encourages the inclusion of end users as project participants. Include a description of extension activities necessary to transfer the research results to the end users.

i. Available Resources: Briefly describe personnel qualifications or special resources, equipment or facilities that demonstrate your ability or a special opportunity to successfully pursue the project.

j. Literature Cited: Complete bibliographic citations, including titles of all papers, books and reports to which reference is made.

In addition, the following additional elements, not included in the 15-page Project Narrative, are required:

**2. Data Management Plan** (or alternative statement if no data management plan is needed)

**3. Current and Pending Support**

**4. Results of Prior Sea Grant Support** (if applicable)

**5. Letters of Support** (if applicable)

**6. 90-4 Budget Forms and Budget Justification**

**7. CVs** (1 page) for all PIs and co-PIs

**8. Completed Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire** (including copies of associated permits, if applicable)

In addition, we request that you provide Demographic Information using the form link provided in the eSeaGrant submission portal. Using this form decouples any demographic information provided from your proposal submission. Your response is voluntary, however, it helps Sea Grant advance its DEIJA goals and vision.

## **B. Full Proposal Preparation and Submission via eSeaGrant**

Full proposals will be submitted via [eSeaGrant](#), the same system used to accept preliminary proposals. PI's will use the same username and password as used for the preliminary proposals. If you have forgotten your password, please use the "forgot password" feature to trigger a reset.

Recall that in the eSeaGrant work environment, your changes will be saved automatically and you can leave and return to enter data during multiple sessions. Your proposal will not be submitted until you enter the "hit submit" button in the last section: "Submission Preview." You may also submit the proposal multiple times. The system will retain the most recent submission only.

Upon entering eSeaGrant the Principal Investigator (PI) will be presented with a series of tabs located on the left side of the screen. Each tab represents a section of the proposal and requires the PI to add information either by uploading PDF files or by entering information directly into a form field. Please be sure that PDF files *DO NOT* contain footers or headers containing file names or page number.

You may also request that co-PI collaborators have access to the proposal on eSeaGrant.

Please contact Michelle Lemos ([michelle.lemos@unh.edu](mailto:michelle.lemos@unh.edu)) with any questions.

**Full proposals are due on June 2, 2023, by 5:00 p.m.** Late submissions will NOT be accepted with no exceptions as the eSeaGrant system will close promptly at 5:00 p.m.

## **J) OUTLINE OF FULL PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

### **Proposal Review, PI Rebuttal and Final Panel and NHSG Selection Processes**

Full proposals will be sent to three external reviewers who are experts on the topic(s) of the proposed research, who are free from conflicts of interest associated with the proposals and include, where possible, individuals from underrepresented groups. Near the end of July, the anonymous text and evaluation scores of the three mail reviews will be sent to PIs who will then be given two weeks to provide rebuttals to review comments.

A Technical Review Panel will be assembled, made up of experts with both collective knowledge on the topics of all reviewed proposals and of regional research trends and needs. An assigned primary and a secondary panel reviewer will summarize all information from each proposal, mail review and the PI rebuttal for each proposal. The panel will meet in mid-September to present, consider and discuss all aspects of each proposal, followed by a general review of the mail review and panel rankings of all proposals to inform the final NHSG Program decisions. Panelists will be free from any conflicts of interest and primarily be located outside the state of NH. The review panel will provide a proposal ranking order based on the evaluation criteria described below.

All external reviewers and Technical Review panelists will be offered training resources on bias awareness and management, or otherwise ensure reviewers have been previously trained on this topic.

### **Final Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

The NH Sea Grant proposal review process uses nine criteria for evaluating submitted research proposals during the peer review and panel review stages. These criteria are described below.

*Criteria Used by Peer and Technical Panel Reviewers*

1. **Rationale** - the degree to which the proposed activity effectively addresses an important (national, local, State or regional) issue, problem, or opportunity in development, use, or management of marine or coastal resources. , especially those listed in the NH Sea Grant Strategic Plan.
2. **Scientific or Professional Merit** – the degree to which the activity will advance the state of the science or discipline through use and extension of state-of-the-art methods
3. **Aligns with the NH Sea Grant Strategic Plan** – The degree to which the activity will contribute to progress toward Goals outlined in the 2024-2027 NH Sea Grant Strategic Plan.
4. **Innovativeness** – the degree to which new approaches to solving problems and advancing opportunities in resource management or development, or in public outreach on such issues will be employed; alternatively, the degree to which the proposed activity creatively addresses problems or opportunities associated with new types of important or potentially important resources and issues.
5. **Qualifications and Past Record of Investigators** – degree to which investigators are qualified by education, training, and/or experience to capably execute the proposed activity, including the investigator’s past record of achievement and the likelihood of success based upon the techniques, procedures, and methodologies proposed.
6. **Appropriate and Cost-Effective Budget** – Adequacy of the proposed budget to accomplish objectives and of the budget justification in explaining the need for resources.
7. **Outreach, Extension and Education** - Appropriateness and impact of the outreach/education component outlined. Consider the methods by which the investigators propose to disseminate results to user groups and encourage positive impacts through extension, education, or communication activities.

*Additional Criteria Used by the Technical Review Panel*

8. **User Relationships** - degree to which users or potential users of the results of the proposed activity have been brought into the planning of the activity, will be brought into the execution of the activity, or will be kept apprised of progress and results.
9. **Relationship to Sea Grant Priorities** - degree to which the proposed activity relates to guidance provided in documents of the National Sea Grant Office or in descriptions of special focus programs.
10. **Programmatic Justification** - the degree to which the proposed activity will contribute, as an essential or complementary unit to other projects, to reaching the objectives of a sub-program in a state, regional, inter-institutional, or national sea

grant program or the degree to which it addresses the needs of important state, regional, or national constituencies.

A proposal's rationale (Criterion 1), scientific/technical/professional merit (Criterion 2), innovativeness (Criterion 3) the investigator's qualifications (Criterion 4) project costs (Criterion 5) and outreach, extension and education (Criterion 6) are judged by peer mail review. Technical Review Panelists will review these summaries and provide additional evaluation using criterion 7 through 9. Both the peer reviewers and technical review panelists will use the descriptive evaluation criteria below to review and rank the proposals submitted.

**The following ratings are used to evaluate each criterion:**

**Excellent:** Scientifically and professionally important and well-justified; presents an opportunity for a major contribution to the advancement of knowledge and to the resolution of a problem of practical import; a truly meritorious research project.

**Very Good:** Scientifically and professionally important and well-justified; will make an important contribution to the advancement of knowledge and to the resolution of a problem of practical import; a project that clearly deserves support.

**Good:** Scientifically and professionally competent and well-justified; will make an important contribution to the advancement of knowledge and the resolution of a problem of practical value, but proposal has deficiencies or is somewhat routine; a project that is good enough to be supported, with certain reservations.

**Fair:** Scientifically and professionally satisfactory in part and only marginally justified; possibility for a contribution to the advancement of knowledge and to the resolution of a practical problem appears limited; routine in character; a project about which reservations are so serious that it should be supported only in exceptional circumstances.

**Poor:** Scientifically and professionally unsatisfactory; poorly organized and justified; sub-professional in character; not deserving of support; a project that should not be funded under any circumstances.

**Each category will be given a score, according to the following Scoring Rubric**

Excellent (5) Very Good (4) Good (3) Fair (2) Poor (1)

An averaged overall score will then be compiled for each proposal. The Director and Research Coordinator, who may also consult other relevant NHSG staff, will make the final recommendations based on the proposal rankings as described above, unless proposals are recommended for funding outside of rank order based on the following selection factors:

Selection Factors:

1. Availability of funding

2. Diversity in the applicant pool (institution, geography, career stage etc.)
3. Strategic priority
4. Previous award performance

The Director will then submit NHSG's recommendations to the National Sea Grant Office Federal Program Officer for final review and approval. NHSG will notify all applicants of the recommendation regarding their proposals in writing after NSGO concurrence is received.