



NEW HAMPSHIRE SEA GRANT 2026-2027 Biennial Request for Proposals

Every two years, the NH Sea Grant Program issues a **Request for Proposals (RFP)** for those seeking funding (up to \$100K plus 50% match per year) for research projects. During 2025, NH Sea Grant will be reviewing proposals from investigators for one- or two-year research funding during the 2026-2027 cycle, which officially runs February 1, 2026 - January 31, 2028. A 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 NH Sea Grant. This can be accomplished by reading the Identified Needs for each focus area and then describing the NH Sea Grant Goal, Supported Objective(s), 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 Cross-cutting Principles in the Strategic Plan to consider how they can contribute potential research and extension to those topic areas.

For the 2026-2027 RFP, NH Sea Grant will also *encourage* proposals that relate to **aquaculture research**, to enable increased funding from the National Sea Grant Office. However, *aquaculture themed proposals are not more likely to be funded (there are 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 funded 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.

Undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral education and involvement is a vital component of NH Sea Grant's mission. NH Sea Grant encourages projects that promote exploration of research and employment opportunities for students and that include direct student or postdoctoral support in proposed budgets. Researchers without access to a graduate education program and/or postdoctoral scholars are encouraged to find a UNH partner with whom to host a graduate student or postdoctoral scholar. NH Sea Grant also encourages projects to consider how they may reduce barriers to access to careers in marine and coastal science and management as they design efforts to recruit and engage students, including from underserved and underrepresented communities.

For the 2026-2027 RFP, NH Sea Grant is also piloting a potential new approach to our **NH Sea Grant Graduate Research Fellowship**. NH Sea Grant may support one Graduate Research Fellow as an add-on to a 2026-2027 selected biennial research project (funded directly by NH Sea Grant, not included in proposal budgets). If you would like your project to be considered for an additional graduate student as part of this fellowship, please indicate as such in both the pre-proposal and full proposal in the noted sections. For additional details on what the Fellowship would entail, please carefully [read this overview](#).

All pre-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 NH Sea Grant Executive Committee, PIs will be encouraged or discouraged for continuing with the full proposal submission process, explained below. All PIs who submit pre-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.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Pre-proposals must be submitted by 5:00 PM on February 6, 2025.

Notification of the **status of the review** of all pre-proposals will be made by early April 2025.

Full proposals must be submitted by 5:00 PM on May 30, 2025.

2026-27 RFP CALENDAR:

Dec 4, 2024	Release 2026-2027 RFP to potential PIs, research institutions, and partner network
Dec 18	RFP informational webinar for prospective applicants (virtual)
Jan 31, 2025	NH Sea Grant Research Symposium & RFP information session at UNH
Feb 6	Pre-proposals due at 5:00 PM, submitted through eSeaGrant
Mar 12	Review Panel & NH Sea Grant Executive Committee review meeting
Mar 17	Review recommendations are sent to PIs (full proposals encouraged/discouraged)
Mar 24	“Intent to submit” letters required from discouraged proposals only
April 11	List of suggested reviewers submitted by PIs
May 30	Full proposals due by 5:00 PM, submitted through eSeaGrant
July 29	Blinded reviews sent to PIs
Aug 12	PI review rebuttals due by 5:00 PM, submitted through eSeaGrant
Aug 22-29	Technical Review Panel meeting
Mid-Sept	PIs notified of proposal review outcome and funding decisions
Oct 17	Final NH Sea Grant proposal revision requests submitted to National Sea Grant College Program Office
Feb 1, 2026	Beginning of research project funding
Spring 2026	Researcher on-boarding workshop hosted by NH Sea Grant
Jan/Feb 2027	PI participation in biennial NH Sea Grant Research Symposium
Jan 31, 2028	End of 2026-2027 funding cycle

NH Sea Grant RFP Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal Submittal Process

New Hampshire Sea Grant seeks pre-proposals for its 2026-2027 research funding cycle.

PRE-PROPOSAL PROCESS DETAILS:

A) ELIGIBILITY

Principal Investigators (PIs) must be affiliated with an institution of higher learning or other research-supporting organizations 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 race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or marital status.*

B) PRE-PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS

Pre-proposals must be submitted by **February 6, 2025, at 5:00 PM**. Late proposals will NOT be accepted; with no exceptions. Pre-proposals will be submitted through NH Sea Grant's eSeaGrant system at <http://eseagrant.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://eseagrant.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.)
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 "**NH Sea Grant 2026-2027 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 numbers.

eSeaGrant questions or comments:

Contact Michelle Lemos, michelle.lemos@unh.edu, (603) 862-6702

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-page limit). 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 NH Sea Grant Goal, Supported Objective(s), and Desired Outcome(s) that will be most served by the implementation of your project.
- Research design
- Technical and Extension approaches (and end-user engagement, as applicable)
- Student (undergraduate, graduate) or postdoctoral connections (as applicable).
 - Please also indicate in this section if you anticipate requesting that the project be considered as a possible co-host for an NH Sea Grant Graduate Research Fellow (see details here: [2026-2027 NHSGGraduateResearchFellowship OverviewforRFP FINAL.pdf](#)).
- 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 Sections F & G below.)
 - Detailed budget, institutional signatures, and match details are not required for the pre-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’s 3-page 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 pre-proposals will be evaluated by an expert panel, the members of which are free from conflicts of interest. The review process may also include NH Sea Grant staff, members of the NHSG Policy Advisory Committee, and other external experts that are free from conflicts of interest 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 pre-proposals that are encouraged or discouraged will be eligible to submit a full proposal.

E) INTEGRATING EXTENSION AND OUTREACH TO YOUR PROPOSAL

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

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 [NH Sea Grant 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? Is there a way to connect your research interest to a community or societal need, (e.g., municipal land use and climate resilience or seafood and food security)?
- Do you have information indicating that the knowledge resulting from your project is needed or desired by the intended end-users or by other interested parties?
- Who was involved in the issue/problem identification? Would your project benefit from collaborations with someone you have not routinely partnered with in the past?
- Who could use the knowledge (aside from other scientists) and what would they use it for (e.g., decision making, improving practices, increasing profitability, reducing risk, etc.)? Have you considered or sought out best practices for engaging with a new audience or interested parties in ways that are most relevant for them?
- Does your project team have existing relationships with potential users of these findings? If not, who can you partner with to build that bridge? Have you contacted a NH Sea Grant staff member or other outreach specialist for engagement assistance?
- What would it take for the end-users to apply that new knowledge/tool? Are you taking interested parties' needs, resources, and expertise into consideration when designing engaged projects?
- 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?
- How are you engaging students in the project? Can the project take the needs, resources, relative opportunities, and perspectives of students, especially underserved or underrepresented students, into consideration in ways that will enhance their success as well as the success of the project?
- Are you planning any communications associated with your project? Have you considered co-developing communications products that are accessible to a wide range of people?

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, interested parties, 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 member should be able to help co-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 to identify others who could help:

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

Additional Resources and Readings:

For those interested in reading more about ways to develop proposals that integrate research, extension, outreach, etc., these additional readings might be of interest:

- NERRS Science Collaborative - Guide to Collaborative Science: <https://nerrssciencecollaborative.org/guide> (while this resource is specific to a different funding source, many of the principles translate well to Sea Grant research)
- Beier, P., Hansen, L. J., Helbrecht, L., & Behar, D. (2017). A How-to Guide for Coproduction of Actionable Science. *Conservation Letters*, 10(3), 288–296. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12300>
- Canfield et al. 2022. Using researcher and stakeholder perspectives to develop promising practices to improve stakeholder engagement in the solutions-driven research process. *Social-Ecological Practice Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42532-022-00119-5>
- NSF. 2022. Engaged Research for Environmental Grand Challenges: Accelerating Discovery and Innovation for Societal Impacts. <https://nsf-gov-resources.nsf.gov/2022-12/Engaged-research-for-environmental-grand-challenges-508c.pdf>

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

F) PROJECT DURATION AND FUNDING LEVEL

Proposed activities may be of one or two years in duration, for the period between **February 1, 2026, and January 31, 2028** (the 2026-2027 RFP funding cycle overlaps one month beyond 2027 into 2028).

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.

G) MATCH REQUIREMENT

Details for matching funds are not required during the pre-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 non-federal funds** (\$1 of match for every \$2 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.

H) FULL PROPOSAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS AND SUBMISSION

Full proposals are due on **May 30, 2025, by 5:00 PM**. Late proposals will NOT be accepted with no exceptions.

Full Proposal Required Elements:

1. Project Narrative

The Project Narrative must contain all sections listed below (a. through j.). 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 i. (Section j., 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 h).
- 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 NH Sea Grant Goal, Supported Objective(s) 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 Cross-cutting Principles in the Strategic Plan to consider how they can contribute potential research and extension to topic areas, including DEIJA-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 ([previous and ongoing](#)) or proposed Sea Grant projects 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 and Workforce Impact: Briefly describe the extent of involvement in the proposed work by graduate/undergraduate students, postdoctoral scholars and/or by undergraduate or high school faculty. Also note any other potential impacts of the research on education in coastal and marine science, policy, management, and/or outreach. If the project would like to be considered as a possible host for a 2026-2027 NH Sea Grant Graduate Research Fellow, please indicate as such in this section. See this overview for more details on what the Fellowship entails: [2026-2027 NHSGGGraduateResearchFellowship OverviewforRFP FINAL.pdf](#)

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 designed to build connections with end-users throughout the project to ensure their input and a plan 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 (2-page) for all PIs and co-PIs

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

9. Institutional Review Board (as applicable)

In addition, demographic information may (voluntary) also be provided to the National Sea Grant Office: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Demographic-Process-and-OMB-approved-Questions_updated-December-2024-508-3.pdf

If your project plans include a field research component, see this UNH link: <https://www.unh.edu/research/research/complianceehs/environmental-health-safety/research-fieldwork-safety-program> for resources, training, and support for mitigating risks with field research project teams. At this time, a field research safety plan is not required, but is strongly suggested *for funded projects* that include field research components.

Full Proposal Preparation and Submission via eSeaGrant:

Full proposals will be submitted via [eSeaGrant](#), the same system used to accept pre-proposals. PI's will use the same username and password as used for the pre-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) with any questions.

Full proposals are due on May 30, 2025, by 5:00 PM. Late submissions will NOT be accepted with no exceptions as the eSeaGrant system will close promptly at 5:00 PM.

I) OUTLINE OF FULL PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Proposal Review, PI Rebuttal and Final Panel, and NH Sea Grant Selection Processes

Full proposals will be reviewed by 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 external 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-August 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 NH Sea Grant 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 if they have not otherwise been previously trained on this topic.

Final Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The NH Sea Grant proposal review process uses 10 criteria for evaluating submitted research proposals during the external review and panel review stages. These criteria are described below:

Criteria Used by External 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 more effective or new approaches are employed for solving problems and advancing opportunities in resource management or development, or in public outreach on such issues; 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** – the 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 actively engage and 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** – the 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** – the degree to which the proposed activity relates to guidance provided in documents describing [priorities of the National Sea Grant Office](#).
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 College 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), strategic plain alignment (Criterion 3), innovativeness (Criterion 4), the investigator's qualifications (Criterion 5), project costs (Criterion 6), and outreach, extension and education (Criterion 7) are judged by external reviewers. Technical Review Panelists will review these summaries and provide additional evaluation using criterion 8 through 10. Both the external 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 NH Sea Grant Director and Research Coordinator, who may also consult other relevant NH Sea Grant 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 NH Sea Grant's recommendations to the National Sea Grant College Program Federal Program Officer for final review and concurrence.

NH Sea Grant will notify all applicants of the recommendation regarding their proposals in writing after National Sea Grant College Program concurrence is received.