

UPR Sea Grant Request for Proposals

The University of Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program (UPRSGCP) announces its Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2014-2016 biennium. This RFP is the result of our assessment of research needs for the conservation of coastal and marine habitats and resources, in Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and the Caribbean region. Scientists, resource managers, and resource users provided guidance into what needs to be done to contribute to the mission of the National Sea Grant Program: “to provide integrated research, communication, education, extension and legal programs that lead to the responsible use of the nation’s ocean, coastal and Great lakes resources through informed personal, policy and management decision.”

Research priorities and funding opportunities will be circumscribed to our three focus areas: **Healthy Ecosystems and Habitats (HEH), Resilient Communities and Economies (RCE), and Education and Workforce Development (EWD)**. Projects that feature truly interdisciplinary approaches, and incorporate resource managers and resource users as partners and collaborators will have a better chance of being funded.

Background

For programmatic and management reasons UPR Sea Grant recently conducted a survey to help identify areas for research focus and has restated the strategies and goals for the upcoming cycle. Data was collected under the auspices of the Caribbean Regional Assessment project, devoted to the study of regional research needs for the conservation of coastal and marine habitats and ecosystems, and the appropriate use of the resources. Participants in the project presented their recommendations for future actions by NOAA, Sea Grant, and other government and non-governmental institutions and organizations on a local and regional scale.

There was consensus that UPR Sea Grant must support projects that produce sound scientific knowledge related to the dynamics and processes working in PR/USVI and regional Caribbean tropical insular marine ecosystems and associated habitats. These would include watersheds, beaches, coral reefs, estuaries, wetlands, and the living resources they contain. This is referred to in the UPR Sea Grant 2014-2017 Strategic plan as research focused on **Healthy Ecosystems and Habitats (HEH)**. This area aligns with National goals and strategies. Research in this area should have outcomes which improve the understanding of coastal ecosystem processes and the influence that anthropogenic activities have on them. This science is expected to aid the development of appropriate technologies and management methods and tools that will support improved, restored, or protected coastal ecosystems and resources.

The next high priority recommendation was that research should be conducted on ways to promote sustainable coastal development. Methods which make efficient use of land, water, and energy resources while protecting ecosystems and quality of life need to be identified. The UPR Sea Grant strategic plan includes these concerns in research focus on **Resilient Communities and Economies (RCE)**. In this area, research might focus on the integrated relationships between coastal communities, ecosystems, natural resources, and hazards operating in the coastal

zone. The wise management of coastal ecosystems and the resources (e.g. fisheries, beaches) that depend on them, as well as the planned response to natural hazards (storms, tsunamis, flooding and erosion related to climate change) will support resilient communities and economies. Hazard resilience in coastal communities was also given a high priority in the survey. Determining ways to identify the footprint of risk associated with living, working, and doing business in PR/USVI and the Caribbean region are essential.

Our assessment also identified as a priority area the need to promote research that helps demonstrate the benefits of healthy coastal ecosystems on marine fisheries. In addition, those responding to the survey want to see research showing the benefits of consuming seafood and identifying methods to evaluate seafood quality. These efforts will promote **Education and Workforce Development (EWD)**. Educated coastal residents and resource managers, who are up to date with recent discoveries, will be better equipped to enhance the protection, restoration, and preservation of the resources on which communities, livelihoods, and economies depend. Informed and appropriate use of coastal resources will support abundant fisheries, attractive coasts, safe and efficient ports and harbors, and related distribution of goods and services.

Our partners in Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and the Caribbean region also identified the critical need for effective efforts in education. This is an important part of Sea Grant outreach. Project Principal Investigators (PI) need to participate actively not only in producing sound scientific information but also in working directly with individuals, NGO's, and resource managers. A close relationship between PIs and the different user groups helps insure that Sea Grant investment will have measurable beneficial impacts. The number of users and managers that choose to incorporate Sea Grant findings in their work, projects, and strategies are a measurable societal impact; just as important, if not more so, than publication in peer reviewed journals.

Researchers are encouraged to read our Strategic Plan 2014-2017, available at: <http://www.seagrantpr.org>. Successful proposals submitted to UPR Sea Grant will align with one of the new thematic areas or preferably combine aspects of several of them. Since its inception, Sea Grant as a national program has sought to harness the best science, technology, and human expertise to address marine and coastal resource issues of immediate concern. Incorporating these strengths the UPRSGCP has been instrumental in solving problems and creating benefits and opportunities for coastal communities and marine resource users in the Caribbean region.

To enhance problem solving and significant research outcomes and impacts, UPRSGCP prefers research projects that incorporate resource users, managers, and researchers, as partners and collaborators. These proposals will have a better opportunity of being selected for funding.

This RFP is open to all researchers except those currently employed by Sea Grant.

Pre-proposal Format and Guidelines

A pre-proposal must be submitted and evaluated prior to an invitation to submit a full proposal.

Your pre-proposal must contain the following items:

- i. A cover page with the title of the project, name of the investigators, and academic affiliation. The cover page must have the researchers' signature, and the signature of the main department head, or supervisor who will be authorizing the matching funds. We encourage potential researchers to pay attention to the budget at this early stage. Researchers should consult their respective External Resource Office in order to complete the budget justification and the matching funds.
- ii. A short pre-proposal (use the project summary form, www.seagrantpr.org) consisting of the following parts: (a) Project summary (250-300 words, include five key words), (b) Research problem, (c) Goals and objectives, (d) Methodology, (e) Activities, and a time-table, and (f) Potential benefits (applied or theoretical) of the proposed project, and identify potential users/managers. This project summary should not exceed two pages.
- iii. The budget summary (www.seagrantpr.org) should include one page per year and a budget justification. The budget justification must include details on permanent equipment (a list), number of students (graduate and undergraduate), calculation of salaries and fringe benefits, time and effort of personnel, staff, and students, subcontracts (if any), the nature of matching funds, and calculation of indirect costs. NOAA requires that the grantee provide a 1/3 match (50% of that requested from NOAA). Budgets should not over estimate the required funds. We will give preference to proposals that are accurate, appropriate, and proportionate.
- iv. One-page bibliography
- v. One-page curriculum vitae and only include the 5 most recent publications.
- vi. The PI must submit a list of 4 peer reviewers. The reviewers will be contacted about their availability prior to sending the pre-proposal for review. Our office will also seek additional reviewers. All peers will be asked to sign a statement that they have no conflict of interest reviewing the proposal.
- vii. All pages should use 8-1/2" x 11" paper, be single-spaced, and use at least a 10-point font.
- viii. Proposals with a two-year duration are preferred.
- ix. Proposals must be submitted in MS Word or RTF format. For detailed instructions, visit our web-page for full proposal guidelines.

Submittal

Pre-proposals must be submitted to the University of Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program by email: seagrant@uprm.edu or through the Research Coordinator Kurt Grove at kurtallen.grove@upr.edu.

In order to comply with a new procedural directive, “all NOAA grantees must share data produced under NOAA grants and cooperative agreements in a timely fashion, except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security requirements. Grantees must address this requirement formally by preparing a Data Sharing Plan as part of the project.” This will not be required as part of your preliminary proposal. However, the Data Sharing Plan will be required as part of a full proposal. UPR Sea Grant suggests that potential Grantees go to <http://www.nodc.noaa.gov/General/NODC-Submit/submit-guide.html#polguide>. This is “the place” to store all environmental data generated by NOAA grants. An invitation to submit a full proposal will include more information related to data sharing plans.

Schedule and due dates (deadlines)

Preliminary proposals are due at UPRSGCP on or before March 15, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. Late applications will not be accepted. After selection by the UPR Sea Grant’s Technical Review Panel (TRP), invitations for submission of full proposals will be sent on or before April 27, 2013.

The deadline for the submission of full proposals is July 12, 2013. At this time, all projects will be sent out for peer review. We expect the peer reviews to be in our office by August 30, 2013.

Project ranking will be based on programmatic focus, budgetary considerations, and quality of the proposed research, links to outreach and education, and the results of the peer reviews. The project must have an applied component, aimed at solving critical management and conservation problems in coastal and marine ecosystems in PR and USVI.

Budgetary constraints for the 2014-2016 institutional plan will allow for a final selection of approximately 10 projects per year. Research funding will be available for projects with annual budgets in the \$20,000-\$30,000 range. Proposals included in the final omnibus proposal will have a February 1, 2014 start date.

Important 2013 dates:

February 8	Request for Preliminary Proposals announced
March 15	Preliminary proposals due at UPRSG before 4:30pm
April 27	Invitations requesting for full proposals
July 12	Deadline to receive full proposals
August 30	Proposals evaluated
September 4	Final selection of projects

Contacts for further information

UPR Sea Grant College Program is located at the Center for Research & Development (Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo, CID), Road 108, Km 1.0, Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, 00680.

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