



**2025-2027**

**LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM  
CALL FOR PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS**

**OPENING DATE: January 29, 2024**

**CLOSING DATE: April 8, 2024**

Connecticut Sea Grant (CTSG) and New York Sea Grant (NYSG) announce the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) extra-mural research program. The intent of this program is to fund research that will support the science-based management of Long Island Sound (LIS) and its resources, and the [implementation](#) of the LISS [Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan](#) (CCMP). The LISS is a regional, community-based partnership to protect and restore LIS. Information on the LISS can be obtained at [www.longislandsoundstudy.net](http://www.longislandsoundstudy.net).

Preliminary proposals are invited for the funding period of January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2026. Any investigator seeking support for this period (or a portion thereof) must submit a preliminary proposal via NYSG's electronic submission website [www.NYSGproposal.org](http://www.NYSGproposal.org) by **5:00 p.m. EDT on Monday, April 8, 2024**. Hard copy, email, and fax submissions will NOT be accepted.

Subject to available federal funding, up to \$6.5 million is expected to be available for one- or two-year projects. The first year of the funding period covered by this Call for Preliminary Proposals begins on January 1, 2025. Allocation of Year 2 funds, if applicable, will be contingent on satisfactory progress in Year 1, and availability of federal funding. Projects chosen for funding require the completion and approval of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) before initiation of data collection.

**1. Topic Areas**

The purpose of this Call is to ***support actionable research that produces and integrates information that fills identified gaps in our understanding and extends the ability of managers to make informed decisions and take appropriate management actions to prevent, reduce, or mitigate anthropogenic stressors and enhance the health and sustainability of the Sound.*** This is best accomplished by engaging early with end users of the anticipated products/outcomes of the research project (see below). Please note that, while relevance to management may be immediate (e.g., changes in the distribution of species or habitat) or longer-term (e.g., biogeochemistry rates that are fundamental to support mechanism-based understanding and modeling of LIS), relevance to management is required and must be explicitly described and

detailed in the proposal.

Topic areas address the four themes of the 2015 Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), which is available at <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/our-vision-and-plan/>. Applicants should also review the 2020-2024 CCMP Update with revised Implementation Actions at <https://longislandsoundstudy.net/2021/01/ccmp-implementation-actions-supplemental-documents/>.

Applicants **must EXPLICITLY** specify which **CCMP Outcome, Objective, Strategy, and Implementation Action(s)** the project will address. A vague listing of or references to those priorities without an effective explanation of how the proposed work will specifically address the **Outcome -> Objective -> Strategy -> Implementation Action(s)** will not be deemed sufficient. Proposals that also specify the Ecosystem Targets to be addressed and/or incorporate the cross-cutting principles of resilience to climate change, long-term sustainability, and environmental justice are encouraged.

For the purposes of this RFP, research is defined as natural and/or social scientific endeavors with **explicit and testable hypotheses** that strive to answer “why” and “how” questions. Proposals that focus primarily on model development and/or synthesis efforts must also be hypothesis driven. **Those that seek to describe or monitor conditions and do not identify or test a specific hypothesis will not be considered.**

This Call encourages the submission of large-scale research proposals that combine topic areas or themes, embrace interdisciplinary approaches, or involve multiple partners to produce actionable, management-relevant outputs. Research outputs should provide explanations, models, or tools to understand and forecast the response of LIS to anthropogenic stressors and describe how the outputs will directly support, and how they will be made available to support management measures to prevent, reduce, or mitigate these stressors.

## **2. End Users**

The project must **engage end-users** from the beginning and throughout the project. An end-user is defined as an individual or group of individuals in a position to apply the information or tools being produced, evaluated, or transferred through a research project in a way that is of direct consequence to the ecological, social, or economic integrity of LIS and/or surrounding watershed(s) and communities. Examples of end-users include, but are not limited to, municipal, state or federal government, private, or non-governmental decision/policy makers, including landowners, resource managers, land use planners, businesses (such as fisheries or aquaculture), and educators at all levels.

Pre-proposals must identify likely end-users that would benefit from this research and briefly describe the mutual benefits of collaboration. Applicants must also clearly identify the **actionable information, tools, or outputs** to be produced by the research, and how they will be delivered for actionable/ applied use. More details and a letter of support from end-users will be encouraged in full proposals. Submissions that merely state that the information generated has value to

managers, without adequate elaboration, will not be competitive. Applicants should consider involving the end-users/beneficiaries early in the process. Colleagues in federal, state or local government agencies, NGOs and/or Sea Grant extension professionals may be able to assist in identifying potential end users. The LISS Working Group membership lists can be found at: <https://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/>.

### **3. Duration and Funding**

At this time and subject to federal funding, the program anticipates awarding approximately \$6,500,000 to cover the entire duration of all selected projects. The program will support one- or two-year projects. Proposals of any amount are welcome up to a **maximum funding level of \$1,000,000 (\$500,000/year cap) and this must include all direct plus indirect costs**. Proposals over \$250,000/year must utilize interdisciplinary approaches to complex problems, involve interdisciplinary collaborative research teams, and produce outputs with the potential for high impact. Proposals that exceed the maximum amount will not be reviewed.

**Match Requirements:** This funding Call requires that at least 50% of the aggregate federal dollars awarded be matched by non-federal funds. This Call therefore requires that proposals include at least a 50% match, i.e., \$1 in non-federal match for every \$2 of federal funds requested. More details will be provided in the full proposal guidance.

### **4. Eligibility**

Pre-proposals from the following eligible categories will be considered for funding:

- A. Faculty at universities and colleges,
- B. Researchers at not-for-profit institutions,
- C. Researchers who are personnel of state or local agencies, and
- D. Researchers at for-profit institutions or companies.

Eligibility is not limited to individuals from New York and Connecticut. However, the primary professional base of the lead investigator must be in the United States, and the proposed projects must be relevant to Long Island Sound. U.S. citizens located in other countries are not eligible. Federal employees and institutions are not eligible to receive compensation, equipment, or budgeted items of any sort, but they may be involved with the project. Students and NYSG and CTSO staff cannot serve as principal investigators (PIs), co-PIs, or associate investigators. Members of the LISS Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) may serve as PIs or co-PIs and may receive funding under this initiative, provided they meet the other criteria above.

### **5. Review**

All pre-proposals that meet all specified requirements will be screened by a panel established by CTSO and NYSG that will include scientific peers from unaffiliated institutions and one representative each from CTSO, NYSG, EPA, LISS, NYSDEC, and CTDEEP. **Note that the largest**

**evaluative component in the pre-proposal review process is the management relevance and actionability of the research and outputs.** The Panel will use the following criteria, scoring, and weighting in rating pre-proposals:

- A. Engagement of end-users, and usefulness of the anticipated results, as described in the submission, to inform and advance management of LIS and its resources (40%)
- B. Rationale and alignment to the CCMP (30%)
- C. Likelihood that the project will be successful in fulfilling its objectives, including hypotheses, soundness of the proposed approach, and qualifications of the PIs (30%).

**Pre-proposals will be ranked on their average total scores.** Each lead investigator will receive a summary of the Panel comments for their pre-proposal. Full proposals will be encouraged only from those prospective principal investigators with the highest-ranked preliminary proposals. Subject to federal funding, at this time we anticipate \$6,500,000 to be available but note that there is no *a priori* projection or target for the number of proposals that will ultimately be supported. Full proposal guidance will be provided to the PIs for those proposals that are encouraged to submit.

## **6. Preliminary Proposal Requirements**

A preliminary proposal, while not as detailed as a full proposal, should clearly and succinctly define the objectives, approach, and rationale for the project. The anticipated benefits (i.e., the usefulness) of the proposed work must also be adequately described. This entails specifically explaining how the proposed work will contribute to the management of Long Island Sound and implementation of the CCMP, and identifying the **end-users** who will be targeted for engagement as part of the proposal. **General statements simply expressing that there will be value in the information generated from the proposed research will not be competitive.**

Pre-proposals requesting funding that is complementary to that sought from other sponsors are welcome. In this case, the other funding sources and amounts should be disclosed, and the work being funded or proposed elsewhere should be distinguished from, and not duplicative of, the work proposed under this Call.

All preliminary proposals must be submitted using the format and categories described at the end of this announcement. No appendices or other attachments are permitted. Investigators should ensure that all information is provided and that pre-proposal components follow the specified format.

The preliminary proposal project description must conform to stated page limitations, including minimum *1-inch margins and 12-point font of Times New Roman or equivalent.* Any deviations from these formats will not be reviewed. Illustrations and tables must be

of legible size and are *included* in the page limitation. References cited may be included as a separate section *and are not included* in the stated page limits.

The completed Pre-proposal Submission Form (see end of this announcement) must be received via [www.NYSGproposal.org](http://www.NYSGproposal.org) as a single pdf by the closing **deadline of 5:00 p.m. EDT on April 8, 2024**. *Hard copy, email, and fax submissions will NOT be accepted.* Please note that, although the submissions are to NYSG's website, this is a jointly administered funding opportunity and all the submissions will be processed by both programs, CTSG and NYSG, as a single pool. *Preliminary proposals that are not received by this deadline will be discarded without review, as will preliminary proposals that fail to comply with content, format, budget, and other requirements. Note that submissions with sections that exceed specified page limitations will be rejected, not truncated.* We want all submissions to have a fair and equal opportunity, so please be sure to carefully follow the instructions. Unless required by your institution, it is not necessary for your university (or institution) sponsored programs office to formally approve your preliminary proposal before submission.

Each lead applicant will be notified by June 7, 2024, about whether a full proposal is encouraged. A summary of Panel results will be provided by June 14, 2024, for encouraged and June 27 for non-encouraged pre-proposals. Note that submission of full proposals will only be encouraged for those prospective principal investigators with the highest-ranked preliminary proposals following the Panel review and evaluation. For those investigators encouraged to submit full proposals, the deadline for these full proposals is Friday, August 5, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. EDT.

The total budget request for a project may not exceed \$1,000,000 for the entire project, or \$500,000 for each year, including all direct and indirect costs.

Please double-check your Pre-proposal Submission Form file before uploading at the submission website [www.NYSGproposal.org](http://www.NYSGproposal.org) to make sure it is a Mac and PC-readable pdf and that it is your final version. ***Warning!! Do not wait until just before the deadline*** in case you encounter technical difficulties with your computer or unexpected network issues. Note that the deadline time is based on the server clock and not your computer clock. Be sure to pay attention to the server time and the remaining time as displayed on the submission form page. For best results, it is recommended that you use your office computer at your institution to submit your pre-proposal. Allowing yourself plenty of time (at least several hours, if not days) to submit is highly recommended. Sending a test submission is allowable, if you identify it as such. You will receive an auto-receipt with a time and date stamp from the website confirming your submission, but this is not an indication that your file is readable. If the file contains a virus or is unreadable, your submission cannot be accepted. It is a recommended practice to open the pdf file on another computer to confirm there are no issues with the file.

## **7. Schedule**

- January 29, 2024 -- Sea Grant announces Call for Pre-proposals
- April 8 -- Pre-proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. EDT via [www.NYSGproposal.org](http://www.NYSGproposal.org)

- June 5\* -- Sea Grant notifies lead investigators about whether a full proposal is encouraged
- June 21 & June 27\* -- Sea Grant distributes to all lead investigators a summary of Pre-proposal Review Panel results for their submission
- August 5 -- Full proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. EDT via [www.NYSGproposal.org](http://www.NYSGproposal.org)
- October 7\* -- Sea Grant notifies lead investigators about decisions
- October 25\* -- Provide peer reviews and a summary of Full Proposal Review Panel results
- January 1, 2025 -- Year 1 funding starts\*\*; the completion, submission and approval of a QAPP is required. No data collection can be conducted by PIs until a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) has been approved.
- January 1, 2026 -- Year 2 funding starts\*\* if a QAPP has been submitted and approved and Year 1 progress is satisfactory.

\*Dates are approximate and may change slightly. \*\*Contingent on availability of funding.

**8. If you have questions, contact:**

Dr. Syma A. Ebbin  
 Research Coordinator  
 Connecticut Sea Grant College Program  
 University of Connecticut  
 1080 Shennecossett Rd.  
 Groton, CT 06340-6048  
 Tel. (860) 405-9278  
 E-mail: [syma.ebbin@uconn.edu](mailto:syma.ebbin@uconn.edu)

Mr. Lane Smith  
 Research Coordinator  
 New York Sea Grant  
 IDC Bldg., Suite 221  
 500 Innovation Drive  
 Stony Brook University  
 Stony Brook, NY 11794-5001  
 Tel. (631) 632-6905  
 E-mail: [lane.smith@stonybrook.edu](mailto:lane.smith@stonybrook.edu)

**PRE-PROPOSAL SUBMISSION  
FORM -- INSTRUCTIONS**

Please be sure to use the format and provide the information as described below. Submissions that do not include the required sections and information will be rejected as incomplete. Likewise, submissions that do not follow the specified instructions below or as indicated elsewhere in the Call will also be rejected as not meeting the submission requirements.

**2025-2027 LONG ISLAND SOUND RESEARCH PRE-PROPOSAL**

1. **LAST NAMES OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:** (e.g., Smith / Doe / Jones)
  
2. **BRIEF PROJECT TITLE:**
  
3. **INVESTIGATOR(S) and ELIGIBILITY:** List **all** principal, co-principal, and associate investigators, including name, address, telephone, and email for each. *Also* indicate eligibility category for each (see Section 3 and specify A, B, C, or D).
  
4. **BUDGET:** Total of direct plus indirect costs (\$1,000,000 max over duration of the project; \$500K/year limit).
  - A. **Estimated Funding Request** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - B. **Anticipated Non-Federal Cost-Share Provided (50% required)** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - C. **Expected Source(s) of Cost-Share:**
  
5. **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Starting on a *new* page, use up to two pages of text with the following a-e headings to describe your proposed project. Use all-around margins of at least 1" and a font size no less than #12 Times New Roman or equivalent.
  - a) **OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESIS(ES), and APPROACH:** List the overall objectives of your proposed study, with a statement of the hypothesis(es) to be tested. **Proposals without a specifically stated hypothesis will not be considered.** Include brief information about the approach to be used and whether there are linkages to other past, current, or proposed efforts.
  
  - b) **CCMP OUTCOME -> OBJECTIVE -> STRATEGY -> IMPLEMENTATION ACTION(S) ALIGNMENT:** Applicants **must EXPLICITLY** specify which **CCMP Outcome, Objective, Strategy, and Implementation Action(s)** the project will address. A vague listing of or references to those priorities without an effective explanation of how the proposed work will specifically address the **Outcome -> Objective -> Strategy -> Implementation Action(s)** will not be deemed sufficient. Proposals that also specify the Ecosystem Targets to be addressed and/or incorporate the cross-cutting principles of resilience to climate change, long-term sustainability, and environmental justice are encouraged.

- c) **RATIONALE:** Explain the rationale for, and significance of, the proposed project to Long Island Sound in addressing the CCMP. Specify whether and how the research supports ecosystem targets or the cross-cutting principles of resilience to climate change, long-term sustainability, and environmental justice.
- d) **USEFULNESS OF THE ANTICIPATED RESULTS TO MANAGEMENT:** Explain how the research and anticipated results are actionable and can be used to inform and advance the management of Long Island Sound and its resources. Clearly identify the actionable information, tools, or outputs to be produced by the research. Submissions that merely state that the information generated has value to managers, without adequate elaboration, will not be competitive.
- e) **ENGAGEMENT OF END-USERS:** Clearly identify the individual(s) or organizational users/beneficiaries who will apply or utilize the research results, how these users will be engaged in the process, and the anticipated management outcomes. Applicants should consider involving the users/beneficiaries early in the process and supply letters of support with the full proposal if encouraged to submit.
- f) **LITERATURE CITED:** Starting on a *new page*, present the full citations for any work referenced under #5. The space required to list the literature cited is not counted under the 2-page maximum for #5 (Brief Description of Project). There is no page limit for this section.

**6. (OPTIONAL) REVIEWERS:** On a separate page, you are invited to suggest up to three potential peer reviewers who would not have a conflict of interest with you, your team, or your institution, should you be encouraged to submit a full proposal. We may or may not select these peer reviewers, so there is no need for you to contact them. If there is anyone who you feel should *not* be asked to provide a review, you may list up to two people and we will do our best to accommodate this request. Omitting this section is acceptable.

**\*\*Please note that the full proposal will require a **Data Management Plan**. This requirement will be described in the full proposal instructions.**

**\*\*Please note that projects chosen for funding under this Call require approval of a **Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)** before initiation of data collection. This requirement will be described in the full proposal instructions.**

**USEFUL LINKS:**

Submission website: <http://www.NYSGproposal.org>

Long Island Sound Study: <http://www.longislandsoundstudy.net/>

CCMP: <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/our-vision/>

LISS Working Groups: <https://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/>

Science Needs Document: <https://longislandsoundstudy.net/2022/04/science-needs-comprehensive-summary/>

NY Sea Grant: [NYSeaGrant.org](https://nyseagrant.org)

CT Sea Grant: <https://seagrant.uconn.edu/>