



**CALL FOR PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS
2021-2023 LONG ISLAND SOUND RESEARCH**

OPENING DATE: March 16, 2020

CLOSING DATE: June 8, 2020

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.

Preliminary proposals are invited for the funding period of March 1, 2021 to February 28, 2023. Any investigator seeking support for this period (or portion thereof) must submit a preliminary proposal via NYSG's electronic submission web site www.NYSGproposal.org by **5:00 p.m. EDT on Monday June 8, 2020**. Hard copy, email, and fax submissions will NOT be accepted. For this competition, we anticipate a significant expansion in available funding for research projects.

Subject to available federal funding, up to \$3,000,000 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 March 1, 2021. 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 approval of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) prior to initiation of data collection.

1. Topic Areas

Topic Areas

The purpose of this Call is to ***support actionable research that produces and integrates information which 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.***

Topic areas address the focus areas (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 must specify how the research supports any of the CCMP Ecosystem Targets, the underlying principles of resilience to climate change, long-term sustainability, and environmental justice, and/or CCMP Strategies, Outcomes, Objectives and/or Implementation Actions (Technical explanations of the Ecosystem Targets can be found in Appendix B, page 61, of the CCMP or on the LISS web site). Examples of **Research Needs** (exclusive of monitoring needs) organized by CCMP Ecosystem Targets can be found in the Science Needs document at: <https://lisstudy.net/2020ScienceNeedsDoc>. The Science Needs document is regularly updated and is provided for informational purposes only; topic areas are **not** limited to the research needs listed in that document.

For the purposes of this RFP, research is defined as scientific endeavors with **explicit and testable hypotheses** that strive to answer “why” and “how” questions. Research questions may be derived from either the natural or social sciences. Within the scope of this RFP, proposals that focus primarily on describing or monitoring conditions and do not identify or test a specific hypothesis will not be considered.

This Call encourages the submission of larger-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 to support management measures to prevent, reduce, or mitigate these stressors.

Applicants must clearly identify the actionable information, tools, or outputs to be produced by the research, the individual(s) or organizational users/beneficiaries who will apply or utilize the research results, how these users/beneficiaries will be engaged in the process, and the anticipated management outcomes. Submissions that merely state that the information generated has value to managers, without adequate elaboration, will not be competitive. Applicants should consider involving the users/beneficiaries early in the process.

2. Duration and Funding

At this time and subject to federal funding, the program anticipates awarding approximately \$3,000,000 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 in excess of \$250,000/year must demonstrate interdisciplinary approaches to complex problems, involve collaborative research teams, and produce outputs with the potential for high impact. Proposals that exceed the maximum amount will be discarded without review.

*****NEW THIS YEAR:** This funding Call requires that at least 50% of the aggregate federal dollars awarded must 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.

3. 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 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 CTSG staff cannot serve as principal investigators (PIs), co-PIs, or associate investigators. Members of the STAC may serve as PIs or co-PIs and may receive funding under this initiative.

4. Review

All pre-proposals that meet all specified requirements will be screened by a panel established by CTSG and NYSG that will include scientific peers from unaffiliated institutions and one representative each from CTSG, NYSG, EPA, 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. Usefulness of the anticipated results, as described in the submission, to inform and direct 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 30%

Pre-proposals will be ranked on their average total scores. Each lead investigator will receive a summary of the Panel scores for his/her 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 \$3,000,000 but note that there is no *a priori* projection or target for the number of proposals that will ultimately be supported. Instructions for full proposal submissions will be provided to the PIs for those full proposals which are encouraged.

5. 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 described, that is, specifically how the proposed work will contribute to the management of Long Island Sound and implementation of the CCMP. **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, other funding sources and amounts should be disclosed, and work being funded or proposed elsewhere should be distinguished from, and not duplicative of, 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*. 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 as a single pdf by the closing **deadline of 5:00 p.m. EDT on June 8, 2020**. *Hard copy, email, and fax submissions will NOT be accepted.* Please note that, although the submissions are to NYSG's web site, 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 prior to submission.

Each lead applicant will be notified by August 12, 2020, about whether or not a full proposal is encouraged. A summary of Panel results will be provided by August 31, 2020. 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 Monday, October 30, 2020 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 web site www.NYSGproposal.org to make sure it is a 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 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 web site 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.

6. Schedule

- March 16, 2020 -- Sea Grant announces Call for Pre-proposals
- June 8 -- Pre-proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. EDT via www.NYSGproposal.org
- August 12 -- Sea Grant notifies lead investigators about whether or not a full proposal is encouraged
- August 31 -- Sea Grant distributes to all lead investigators a summary of Pre-proposal Review Panel results for his/her submission
- October 30 -- Full proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. EDT via www.NYSGproposal.org
- December 18 -- Sea Grant notifies lead investigators about decisions
- January 8 -- Provide peer reviews and a summary of Full Proposal Review Panel results
- March 1, 2021 -- 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.
- March 1, 2022 -- Year 2 funding starts if a QAPP has been submitted and approved and Year 1 progress is satisfactory.

7. If you have questions, contact:

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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.

2021-2023 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-d 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 and APPROACH:** List the overall objectives of your proposed study, with a statement of the hypothesis(es) to be tested. Or, if this is model development or a synthesis effort, clearly state the intent. Include brief information about the approach to be used and whether there are linkages to other past, current, or proposed efforts.

b) **CCMP ECOSYSTEM TARGETS, STRATEGIES and/or IMPLEMENTATION ACTION(s) addressed:** Specify which of these the pre-proposal addresses.

c) **RATIONALE:** Explain the rationale for, and significance of, the proposed project to Long Island Sound in addressing the CCMP. Specify whether the research supports any specific CCMP Ecosystem Targets, the underlying principles of resilience to climate change, long-term sustainability, and environmental justice, and/or CCMP Strategies and Implementation Actions.

d) **USEFULNESS OF THE ANTICIPATED RESULTS TO MANAGEMENT:** Explain how the research and anticipated results are actionable and can be used to inform and direct management of Long Island Sound and its resources. Clearly identify the actionable information, tools, or outputs to be produced by the research, 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. Submissions that merely state that the information generated has value to managers, without adequate elaboration, will not be competitive. Applicants should consider involving the users/beneficiaries early in the process.

6. LITERATURE CITED: Starting on a *new page*, present the full citations for any work referenced under #5, where they may be labeled as (1), etc. The space required to list the literature cited is not counted under the 2-page maximum for #5 (Brief Description of Project).

7. REVIEWERS: You are invited to suggest 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. Leaving Section 7 blank 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) prior to 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 website: <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/our-vision/>

Science Needs Document: <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/2020/03/2020-science-needs-document/>

NY Sea Grant: NYSeaGrant.org

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