National Estuarine Research Reserve System Science Collaborative
2016 Science Transfer Funding Announcement & Request for Proposals

updated December 15, 2015
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Key Dates

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<tr>
<td>January 15, 2016 at 11:59pm EST</td>
<td>Proposals due</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 22, 2016</td>
<td>Manager proposal assessments due to NERRS Science Collaborative</td>
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<td>April 2016</td>
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About the NERRS Science Collaborative

The University of Michigan Water Center and partners are working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to coordinate the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Science Collaborative. The Science Collaborative’s primary goal is to support the co-development and application of relevant and usable knowledge and assessment information to address critical coastal management issues identified by the NERRS in order to improve the long-term stewardship of the nation’s valuable estuaries. The Science Collaborative works to achieve this goal through regular funding opportunities¹, project support and management, and an adaptive approach to program implementation that fosters ongoing learning and improvement.

The Science Collaborative supports projects that address Science Collaborative focus areas and reserve management needs, engage end users², are highly collaborative, and emphasize outcome-oriented products that are usable and accessible.

Science Transfer Overview

The Science Collaborative solicits proposals for funding from the NERRS for the transfer of existing information, approaches, and/or techniques within the NERRS and with partners outside of the reserve system. Individual awards of up to $45,000 total will be awarded for up to two years.

The primary emphasis of science transfer projects is to build a stronger and more connected NERRS network through increased opportunities for information sharing and cross-reserve exchange and learning. Projects may focus on cross-reserve collaborations, transfer within a single reserve, or between reserves and key partners.

¹ The Science Collaborative supports three types of projects: collaborative research, integrated assessment, and science transfer. To help you determine which project-type is best suited for your idea, we encourage you to refer to the decision tree at http://graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs/funding.
² End user is defined as a person or group in a position to apply the information or tools being produced, evaluated, or transferred through a Science Collaborative project in a way that is of direct consequence to the ecological, social, or economic integrity of a reserve(s) and/or surrounding watershed(s). Examples of end users include, but are not limited to, reserve staff, and public, private, or non-governmental decision/policy makers, including landowners, resource managers, land use planners, and educators at all levels.
Science transfer grants are intended to support the transfer of existing information, approaches, and/or techniques to support NERRS activities and programs of direct relevance to Science Collaborative focus areas and reserve management needs. Proposals must articulate how the proposed work directly relates to at least one reserve and at least one Science Collaborative focus area. See “focus areas” below. Teams are encouraged to include all relevant NERRS sectors in project development, implementation, and the translation of results.

Science transfer projects leverage outputs from external research, educational, and training programs in addition to Science Collaborative and other reserve-based programs. Projects may, but are not required to, be tied to existing or previous projects supported by the Science Collaborative. Projects that develop products from the System-wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) and/or Sentinel Sites, particularly development of regional and national syntheses that address Science Collaborative focus areas, are encouraged.

Example elements within science transfer projects include but are not limited to:

- Workshops;
- The aggregation and synthesis of scientific information and stakeholder perspectives to address a specific management need identified by a reserve, such as the development of indicators and metrics of climate adaptation success;
- The transfer of a successful outreach, communications, or educational initiative from one reserve to other reserves in a region;
- The transfer of outputs and associated training from a Science Collaborative research project to a new group of decision makers to support, for example, local land use planning; estuarine, watershed, or coastal water management; or climate change adaptation and related efforts in hazard mitigation and resilience building;
- The creation of information transfer and dissemination frameworks and networks within and between reserves and stakeholders; and
- The translation of science into curricula to support education programs such as a Teachers on the Estuary (TOTE) workshop.

**Project Outputs**

Project outputs are specific products that are developed during or upon project completion. These will vary according to project focus and design. Outputs may include:

- Curricula;
- A suite of integrated, end user driven communication strategies and products, such as, but not limited to, factsheets, an informational website, technical reports, or visuals and interactive communication tools;
- Decision support tools and guides;
• Development and implementation of a targeted training module, e.g., TOTE workshop, technical training for land managers, or other local decision makers; and
• Issue-specific public outreach.

Project outputs must include an activity that shares the project results with the broader NERRS community. This may, for example, take the form of a poster or session at a conference, such as a NERRS Annual Meeting, a system-wide webinar, or a sector meeting.

**Project Outcomes**

Project outcomes are the consequences of the application of the output(s) associated with the project. These will vary according to project focus and design. Outcomes may include:

• Changes in management strategies that result from transfer activities on reserves or within the watershed affecting the reserve;
• Documented change in the level of awareness, knowledge, or behavior among targeted audiences as a result of the science transfer effort;
• Transfer and application of lessons learned in one reserve to another reserve or set of reserves;
• Creation and sustaining of information/knowledge networks; and
• Common outreach approaches being applied at numerous reserves, such as how to engage a community in planning efforts to enhance climate adaptation.

**Scoping Projects**

Projects must be directly related to at least one reserve and at least one Science Collaborative focus area as described below and must have the full support of the relevant reserve manager(s).

All projects must address one or more of the Science Collaborative focus areas, which are to:

• Further understanding of:
  • Biophysical and socio-demographic impacts of climate change on estuarine systems, including but not limited to, sea level rise, marsh sustainability, and estimating community risk to climate change;
  • How to utilize ecosystem valuation to characterize the benefits and tradeoffs of preserving estuarine ecosystems;
  • The impacts and tradeoffs of shoreline stabilization, and which factors communities need to consider when adopting such measures;
  • How to mitigate the impacts of land use change and estuarine eutrophication and contamination in estuarine ecosystems; and
How to restore estuarine habitat once it has been degraded or lost.

- Support the active engagement of intended end users in the development of System-Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) and Sentinel Site data-derived information products, particularly the development of regional and national data syntheses that address coastal management needs in the NERRS and NOAA.

- Encourage the utilization of SWMP or Sentinel Site data as appropriate in activities that support the focus areas listed above.

Eligibility

This opportunity is open to NERRS staff, including NERRS staff interested in working in partnership with applicants from the academic, private, or public sectors.

Each proposal must designate a single fiscal agent. The person in this role must be a project team member from the reserve, agency, institution, or friends group who will receive the award, if granted. Researchers from institutions outside the U.S. may be included on the project but cannot serve as the fiscal agent. Foreign researchers may apply as subawards through an eligible U.S. entity. Federal employees and institutions are not eligible to receive funding from this RFP, but they can participate as unfunded project team members.

Required Elements

Collaboration and End User Integration

Science transfer projects leverage existing knowledge, data, and information to support NERRS activities and programs directly related to at least one reserve and at least one Science Collaborative focus area. To do so, science transfer projects must clearly identify, engage, and be responsive to the interests and needs of the intended users of project outputs. Examples of end users include, but are not limited to, reserve staff, and public, private, or non-governmental decision/policy makers, including landowners, resource managers, land use planners, and educators at all levels. Each project must be structured and managed in a way that encourages and accommodates effective ongoing collaboration between the science transfer team and end users.

Reserve Engagement

Reserve managers and staff must be consulted and engaged in the development of project proposals. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the reserve manager and other appropriate staff are engaged sufficiently in project development. Managers will be submitting an assessment of each proposal that engages their reserve based on the following criteria:

1) The proposal addresses a need for your reserve.

2) The proposing team engaged reserve staff sufficiently during proposal development process.
3) You agree with the proposed allocation of resources to the reserve, and/or proposed allocation of reserve staff time or other resources if not covered in the budget. These assessments will be submitted by reserve managers directly to the Science Collaborative, independent of all proposals. Applicants must provide a copy of their final proposal to the relevant reserve manager(s).

**Data Management**

Science transfer projects should not include the collection of new data, except in the following two instances:

1) Data collection for the purposes of a needs assessment or project evaluation; or
2) Data collection currently undertaken as part of the SWMP.

In the case of the latter, a proposal must refer to the relevant SWMP component(s), articulate a data collection approach that complies with the SWMP protocol, and state how the project complies with other relevant data management requirements in the SWMP.

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3 Please note – the wording for this criterion has been updated since the RFP was issued on November 18, 2015. Minor changes were made to reflect input from the reserve managers. Please refer to this version (dated December 15, 2015) when developing your proposal. No other changes have been made to this RFP.
Proposal Requirements

Proposals must be provided as a single pdf file using 12 point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. Proposals must include a title page, 5 page maximum narrative, and appendices as outlined below. Proposals not meeting these requirements, including the header requirements, will be removed from the competition without further review.

Proposals must be submitted at [http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/34516](http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/34516) by 11:59pm EST Friday, January 15, 2016.

Title Page (one page):
Please organize your title page using the following headers:

1) Project Title
2) Project Lead / Principal Investigator (primary contact for the project) –
   a) Title / Position
   b) Institution
   c) Telephone Number
   d) Postal Mailing Address
   e) E-mail Address
3) Additional Team Members (anyone receiving project resources or contributing significant resources to the project) – Name, institution, telephone, e-mail, and nature of contribution.
4) Fiscal Agent – Provide the name of the fiscal agent. If different than the project lead, please include contact information.
5) Name of Reserve(s) – Identify the reserve(s) affiliated or involved with the project.
6) Budget Request – Requested dollar amount.
7) Project Duration – Project start and end dates. Those projects chosen for funding should plan for a start date of June 1, 2016 or later.
8) Project Summary – Provide a 250-word summary of the proposed project suitable for a non-technical audience.

Project Narrative (5 page maximum):
Please organize your narrative using the following headers:

1) Statement of Need and Current Conditions – State and provide background and context for the need for this science transfer project. Describe what the project will accomplish, with particular emphasis on how it directly relates to at least one reserve and at least one Science Collaborative focus area described above.
Identify the project end user(s) and describe how they will use the information being transferred.

2) Outputs and Outcomes – Clearly distinguishing between the two, provide a list of the outputs and a list of the anticipated outcomes of the work. Describe these briefly, including their direct relation to the reserve and end user needs discussed in the “statement of need.” Explain how the usability of the outputs will be sustained beyond the project period, e.g., who will be responsible for disseminating products and how informational products will be updated/maintained.

   Output – a specific product that is developed during or upon project completion; there may be several outputs associated with the project. See examples provided above in the “Project Outputs” section of this RFP; these are illustrative only and not meant to be exhaustive.

   Outcome – the consequences of the application of the output(s) associated with the project. See examples provided above in the “Project Outcomes” section of this RFP; these are illustrative only and not meant to be exhaustive.

3) Project Approach – Describe the activities intended to achieve the project outputs and outcomes. Include a description of the process that will be followed to ensure that productive collaboration occurs between the science transfer team and intended users of the outputs.

4) Team – Identify each team member and explain how the team and its expertise are well qualified to implement the project. Describe the role(s) of each team member and identify and discuss each member’s contribution to the project. Two-page resumes for the project lead and other team members must be included as an appendix.

Appendices:

1) Timeline – Using the timeline template found on the application website (http://graham.umich.edu/media/files/2016_NERRS_Science_Transfer_Timeline_Template.xlsx), identify anticipated start and end dates of the proposed work. Identify significant tasks and link directly to the outputs identified in the project narrative. The timeline must include completion of the final project outputs. Please anticipate a start date of June 1, 2016, or later.4

2) Budget – Using the budget template found on the application website (http://graham.umich.edu/media/files/2016_NERRS_Science_Transfer_Budget_Template.xlsx), prepare a budget with the categories provided.

3) Budget Narrative – Provide a budget narrative to justify expenses in all budget categories. Personnel costs must be broken out by team member including number of months and percentage of time requested. Any unnamed personnel, e.g., reserve

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4 When determining the timeline for your project, please consider the required environmental compliance review process described here.
staff, graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, technicians, must be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to that described above. Travel costs must be broken out by number of people traveling, destination, and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Equipment costs shall describe the equipment to be purchased, and the contribution to the achievement of project goals. Overhead may be charged up to the fiscal institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate.

To help reviewers judge the feasibility of the proposed work and budget, explain the nature of any essential contributions not fully funded by this grant. Account for the time of all reserve staff or other personnel that will contribute significantly to project goals, even if funds are not being requested to support that time, or if funds will not cover all of the time required to do the proposed work. Demonstrate that partners will be able to dedicate additional time or resources to the project, if essential to accomplishing the proposed work.

4) Subcontracts – A separate budget and budget narrative are required for each subcontract. The should be prepared using the budget template (http://graham.umich.edu/media/files/2016_NERRS_Science_Transfer_Budget_Template.xlsx). The Science Collaborative will reimburse overhead costs up to the subcontractor's federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement. Unless otherwise noted in the indirect cost rate agreement, indirect costs may only be applied to the first $25,000 of each subcontract. If a proposal includes an estimate for a subcontract, the budget narrative should include a summary of and justification for the subcontract services. If the project is selected for funding, exact costs must be provided before funding is awarded; otherwise, contractual expenses will be capped at the amount listed in the budget.

5) Fiscal Letters of Commitment – The fiscal agent's home unit and institution must provide a letter of commitment approving their proposal submission, including approval of any subcontracts included in the proposal. There is no standardized form for this letter. A letter of commitment is also required from each subcontractor's institution.

6) Data Management – If relevant, i.e., the proposal includes data collection as part of the SWMP, a proposal must refer to the relevant SWMP component(s), articulate a data collection approach that complies with the SWMP protocol, and state how the project complies with other relevant data management requirements in the SWMP.

7) Resumes – Two-page resumes for each team member are required.

8) Other Supporting Documents – Up to five pages of supporting documents may be included as appendices.
**Review Process**

Proposals will be reviewed by Science Collaborative staff for compliance with proposal guidelines.

Proposals and reserve manager proposal assessment forms (due January 22, 2016) will be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary panel composed of collaboration and communications experts and relevant technical experts. Each proposal will be assigned three non-conflicted panelists who will develop written reviews according to the evaluation criteria provided in the following section. In their written reviews, panelists will be asked to provide comments to explain their rating and suggestions for improvement. The panel will then convene to discuss the results of the written reviews, including differences of opinion, and prioritize proposals for funding. Final funding decisions will be made by Science Collaborative staff, with input from the NOAA program officer, based on the recommendations of the panel and available funds.

**Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals must comply with all submission instructions and guidelines to be considered for funding. Proposals will be evaluated based on how well they meet the following, *equally weighted*, criteria.

- **Priority Issue:** The proposal clearly articulates and addresses a science transfer need that is directly related to at least one reserve and at least one Science Collaborative focus area.

- **Response to End User Need:** The proposal identifies an appropriate end user, clearly articulates an end user need, and adequately explains how that need will be addressed through the project, including the outputs.
• **Approach:** The proposed approach is appropriate for achieving the project outputs, and the methods are sufficiently detailed, technically sound, and incorporate an appropriate level of end user input.

• **Team:** The team has the appropriate expertise and experience for the proposed technical methods and end user integration, including those qualified to confirm the accuracy of the information translation and transfer.

• **Feasibility:** The budget and timeline are appropriate and realistic for the proposed work. The proposal demonstrates access and/or availability of necessary resources, including data or staff time not covered by the funding requested.

• **Potential Impact:** The proposal reflects a comprehensive understanding of the issue and the proposed process and outputs are likely to lead to important outcomes.

**Environmental Compliance Review**

Applicants should be aware of the following environmental compliance requirements:

NOAA requires that, prior to award, every Science Collaborative project recommended for funding undergo review for potential impacts to the environment. This initial review process by NOAA takes a minimum of 30 days.

While most science transfer projects will qualify for exclusion, projects that are identified by NOAA as potentially impacting the environment, e.g., involve field work, are conducted in areas where historic or archeological artifacts might be present, will require further review by the agency. NOAA will be reviewing for compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act related to essential fish habitat (EFH) impacts. If the proposed project is placing fixed structures in the environment, consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may also be required. NHPA, ESA, and EFH reviews take a minimum of 30 days to complete, but can often take 60 to 90 days.

**Guidance to Applicants**

Please keep the timelines above in mind when determining your project start dates. All applicants should plan for a 30-day initial review process by NOAA. If you anticipate that your proposal will require further review by NOAA, please consider including a detailed description of the field sampling methods (if applicable) along with a map showing the location of the each field site including the latitude and longitude location of each site. This content will not count towards your proposal page allotment. If further review is required and this information is not provided in your proposal, you will be asked to provide it to NOAA should the proposal be selected for funding.

Questions regarding this requirement should be directed to Dwight Trueblood (603-862-3580, Dwight.Trueblood@noaa.gov).
Proprietary Information & Intellectual Property

Applicants should be aware that the disclosure of patentable ideas, trade secrets, and privileged, confidential, commercial, or financial information can hinder an applicant’s chances to secure patents, trademarks, or copyrights.

Proprietary information of this kind should only be included in proposals when it is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project. Applicants must mark proprietary information clearly in the proposal with appropriate labels, such as, “The following is (proprietary or confidential) information that (proposing entity) requests not be released to persons outside the NERRS Science Collaborative, except for purposes of review and evaluation.”

Please protect your intellectual property rights at the proposal preparation stage as appropriate. This will allow you to speak freely about ideas and avoid the inadvertent loss of intellectual property rights. You should contact your institution’s technology transfer or intellectual property office to determine the best way to protect your intellectual property.

Questions Regarding this Request for Proposals?

Email

The Science Collaborative will accept and reply to written questions regarding this request for proposals until 12pm noon EST January 14, 2016. Questions should be submitted to NERRS-info@umich.edu.

Phone

The Science Collaborative will also accept questions via phone regarding this request for proposals. Questions should be directed to Maeghan Brass (734-763-0727) or Melissa Zaksek (734-763-0034).

Q&A Record

Responses to all questions, without reference to project specifics, will be posted on a rolling basis for all interested applicants to view online at http://graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs/funding/science-transfer.

Other Information

More information about the NERRS Science Collaborative can be found at http://graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs.