List of Frequently Asked Questions Pertaining to NOAA Ocean Exploration's 2024 Funding Opportunity

Question: When are the pre-proposals and full proposals due?

Response: Pre-proposals are due by May 30, 2023, at 4:59 p.m. EDT via email. Full proposals are due by November 8, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. EDT via Grants.gov for nonfederal applicants or email for federal applicants. Submissions received after these deadlines will not be considered.

Question: How do I submit my pre-proposal that is due by May 30 at 4:59 p.m. EDT?

Response: Email your pre-proposal, including the required cover sheet, to oer.nofo2024@noaa.gov. In the email subject line, include your last name and the words "ocean exploration pre-proposal," (e.g., Jones ocean exploration pre-proposal). Adobe PDF format is preferred.

Question: Can I submit a full proposal if I didn't submit a pre-proposal?

Response: No. You must submit a pre-proposal in order to submit a full proposal.

Question: Can I submit a full proposal if I was discouraged after the pre-proposal submission?

Response: Yes.

Question: Is there a webinar about the funding opportunity?

Response: A webinar about this notice was held on Thursday, April 20, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. EDT and can be viewed here.

Question: Are the three program priorities in the notice of funding opportunity the same as the priority themes on the cover sheet?

Response: Yes, they are the same: ocean exploration and discovery, technology, and maritime heritage. The three program priorities in the notice of funding opportunity are detailed descriptions of the priority themes on the cover sheet.

Question: How were the program priorities decided?

Response: Priorities are based on the [Strategic Priorities for Ocean Exploration and Characterization of the United States Exclusive Economic Zone](#) developed per the [National Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone](#), which outlines objectives related to ocean exploration for federal agencies, NOAA's six science and technology focus areas ([uncrewed systems](#), [artificial intelligence](#), [cloud computing](#), ['omics](#), [data](#), and/or [citizen science](#)), and the [Exploration Variables Identified by NOAA Ocean Exploration](#) technical memorandum. We encourage applicants to familiarize themselves with these documents and [NOAA Ocean Exploration's activities](#).

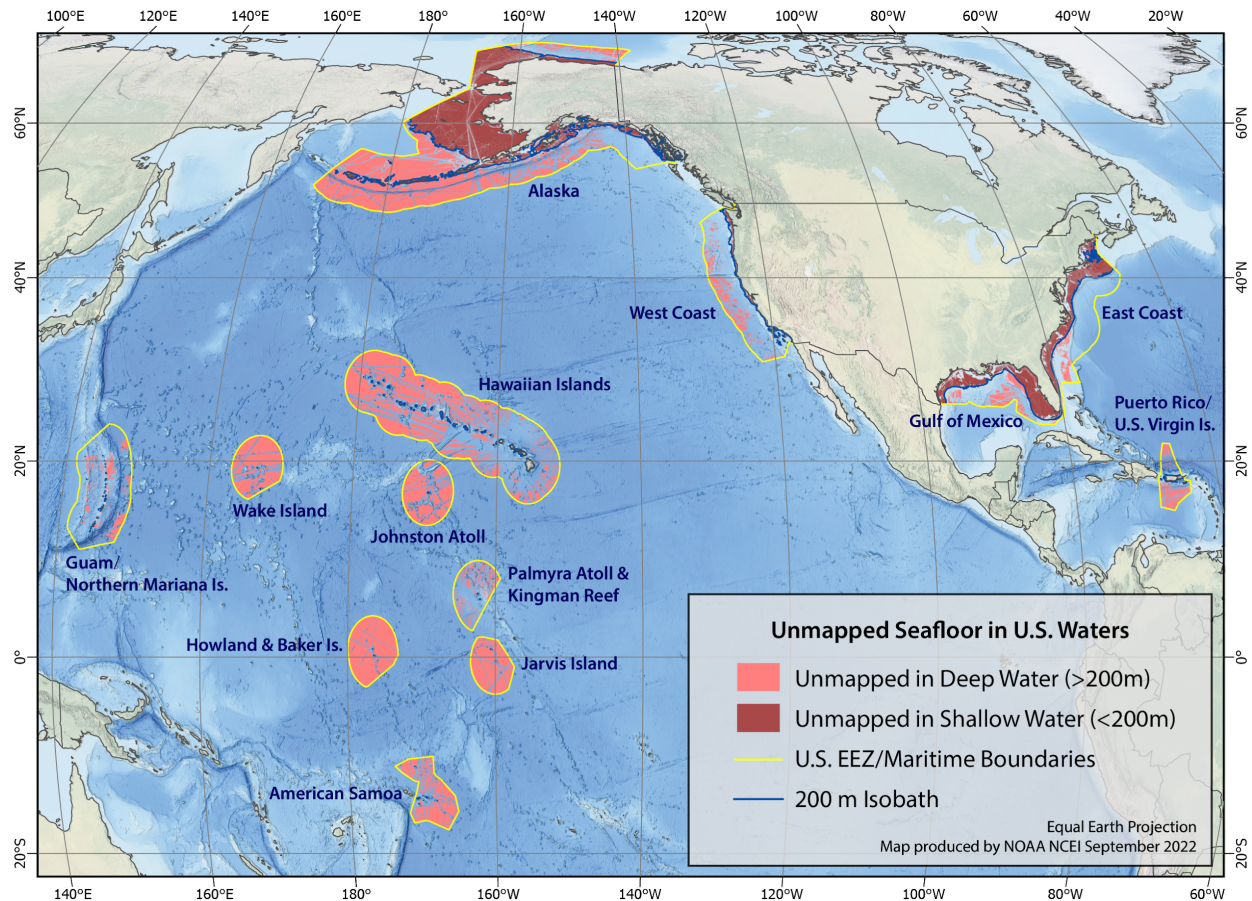## Question: Can I check more than one topic area on the cover sheet?

Response: No. You must choose the one topic area that best represents your project. This does not preclude you from submitting a proposal that covers more than one topic. Each topic area on the cover sheet has corresponding qualifications on geographic location and water depth in the notice of funding opportunity that must be applied when evaluating the application.

Question: Are both nearshore and offshore areas included in the areas of interest?

Response: Yes. There is no requirement related to distance from shore other than the boundaries of U.S. jurisdiction with the exception of maritime heritage proposals which are not limited to waters under U.S. jurisdiction. Proposed work must be planned for, or be applicable to, water depths of at least 200 meters with the exception of maritime heritage proposals and proposals focused on tropical mesophotic environments.

Question: Where are the unmapped areas and bathymetric gaps in U.S. waters?

Response: The map below created by the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (updated September 2022) illustrates where there is unmapped seafloor in U.S. waters. If you are looking for more detail, visit the [NOAA Bathymetric Data Viewer](#) and [NOAA bathymetric gaps data](#). [Multibeam Bathymetry Mosaic: Shaded Relief Visualization](#) is a useful resource for overlaying available bathymetry on other data layers in GIS.

Unmapped Seafloor in U.S. Waters

- Unmapped in Deep Water (>200m)
- Unmapped in Shallow Water (<200m)
- U.S. EEZ/Maritime Boundaries
- 200 m Isobath

Equal Earth Projection
Map produced by NOAA NCEI September 2022

Question: What are the maximum and minimum award amounts?

Response: Proposals for the Ocean Exploration and Discovery theme can range from $75,000 to a maximum of $1,000,000. Proposals in this theme for less than $75,000 or more than $1,000,000 will be disqualified. Proposals for the Technology and Maritime Heritage themes can range from $75,000 to a maximum of $750,000. Proposals in these themes for less than $75,000 or more than $750,000 will be disqualified. For all themes, these minimum and maximum dollar amounts include direct and indirect costs.

Question: How should ship time and platform costs be accounted for in a proposal?

Response: Ship time and platform costs must be included on the cover sheet, which is required for both pre-proposals and full proposals. At the pre-proposal stage, a short budget justification is acceptable. A more detailed budget justification and table are required for full proposals. Note: Ship time on NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* will not be funded through this funding opportunity.

Question: Should I include a UNOLS Ship Time Request Form with my full proposal?

Response: If you plan to use a University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS) asset for your project, we encourage you to submit a UNOLS Ship Time Request Form with your full proposal (but it is not required).

Question: Can I write a proposal that involves analyzing previously collected data?

Response: Yes. There is no requirement to collect new data. Previous proposals that have been successful highlight the innovative methods and technology used for data analysis.

Question: Are applicants from nonacademic institutions eligible to apply for this funding opportunity?

Response: Yes. Eligible applicants are U.S.-based institutions of higher education; nonprofit organizations; U.S. state, tribal, territory, and local governments; for-profit organizations; and federal agencies that possess the statutory authority to accept funding for this type of work.

Applicants from institutions that are part of the Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute (OECI), which are the University of Rhode Island, Ocean Exploration Trust, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the University of New Hampshire, and the University of Southern Mississippi, are not eligible to apply as these institutions have an annual opportunity to apply for NOAA Ocean Exploration funding via the OECI. Personnel from the above-listed OECI institutions may still collaborate with an eligible U.S.-based applicant on a proposal as a subawardee, but not as a principal (lead) or co-principal investigator. We encourage first-time applicants to familiarize themselves with NOAA and NOAA Ocean Exploration's missions and review previously funded projects to see the types of proposals that have been successful in the past.

Question: Can foreign entities be supported through this funding opportunity?

Response: Yes. Although foreign entities are not eligible to apply for funding, they can be supported through this funding opportunity through a subaward from an eligible U.S.-based entity.

Question: May I send my proposal to the program manager for input before I submit it?

Response: No. This may give you an unfair advantage. However, you may reach out to the program manager (oer.nofo2024@noaa.gov) for general questions about preparing your submission.

Question: What happens to unfunded proposals? Are they kept for consideration in future calls?

Response: We do not retain unfunded proposals for future consideration. Applicants should resubmit proposals for renewed consideration under subsequent notices of funding opportunity.

Question: As a nonfederal applicant using Grants.gov, do I really need to submit each section of my proposal separately rather than as one single document?

Response: Yes. The system requires that you submit your proposal by section.

Question: Is work in the Great Lakes applicable?

Response: Yes. For the Ocean Exploration and Discovery theme, proposals will need to be working in waters under U.S. jurisdiction and in areas 200 meters or deeper, unless it's a mesophotic tropical environment. For the Technology theme, proposals can work in the Great Lakes again under waters under U.S. jurisdiction. For the Maritime Heritage theme, the proposals can work at any water depth and are not limited to waters under U.S. jurisdiction.

Question: Do references/citations count towards the page limit requirements for the pre- and full proposals?

Response: No. They are considered separate from the page limit requirements for the pre- and full proposals.