

**Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) Opportunity Number: M16PS00004 for Proposed Research for the Atlantic Deepwater Ecosystem Observatory Network (ADEON) – An Integrated System for Long-Term Monitoring of Ecological and Human Factors on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)**

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), on behalf of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), hereby amends BAA Opportunity No. M16PS00004 for Proposed Research for the Atlantic Deepwater Ecosystem Observatory Network (ADEON) – An Integrated System for Long-Term Monitoring of Ecological and Human Factors on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) to provide answers to questions submitted by potential offerors in response to BAA M16PS00004.

**Question 1:** In the funding announcement it is stated that there is an expectation of a single award and that the anticipated funding is up to \$6.5M. It also states that there will be a 12 month base period and four 12 month option periods. Does the anticipated funds up to \$6.5 million apply only to the 12 month base period or will it be spread across the base and optional periods?

Answer: The \$6.5 million is the total amount available which will be spread across the base and option periods, if a single award is determined. The allocations for each year are not expected to be equal and will be determined by the Government, in coordination with the successful offeror(s). The budget is intended to cover all phases of the project, including (but not limited to) network design, deployment of the monitoring system, and analysis of the resulting data.

**Question 2:** Do you have any guidance on the density and/or frequency of measurements? The geographic and depth areas proposed for the project are large, so do you envision, for example a focus on the true shelf break areas as opposed to areas where the depth remains ~100m for many miles? Any guidance would be helpful.

Answer: Beyond information provided in the announcement, the density, frequency and location of measurements is open to interpretation based on an entity's knowledge of environmental processes and potential for human use in the region, data gaps and existing assets that might be leveraged, and priority locations for establishing long-term monitoring. Flexibility is allowed in the depth range if a good justification is provided by the offeror.

**Question 3:** The BAA indicates that one can apply for up to 4, 12-month option periods in addition to the first year - I wonder whether one can apply for additional funds, i.e., is the \$6.5M for all the sampling you're requesting or for only 1 year of sampling? Alternatively, is one to propose to buy and 'build' the sampling capability in year 1 and then apply for additional, 'operational' funds for the optional 12-months periods?

Answer: See the answer to Question 1.

**Question 4:** Can the applicant be the Prime on one white paper proposal, and simultaneously a subcontractor on another proposal?

Answer: Yes.

**Question 5:** Will federal agencies be eligible to participate in the subsequent award that will be determined from this white paper solicitation?

Answer: The original BAA notice is hereby revised under the section labeled “ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT” to remove the sentence: “Federal agencies *are not* eligible to participate in this call for White Papers.” The following statement is being added under the same section:

“Partnering between University, Private, and Federal research sectors is allowed but not required. All responsible sources from academia and industry are encouraged to submit proposals under this announcement. Federal laboratories (such as Federally Funded Research & Development Centers, Department of Energy National Laboratories, Department of Defense, or other civilian agency laboratories) are not eligible to propose as the lead organization for this research study. However, teaming arrangements and partnerships between these laboratories and eligible principal potential offerors are allowed so long as they are permitted under the sponsoring agreement between the Government and the specific laboratory. Should a project team include a Federal entity, funds to that entity will be provided through a separate Interagency Agreement (IA).”

**Question 6:** Is the \$6.5K budget intended only for design of a scheme and assessment metrics or is there an expected degree of deployment of an actual, physical network monitoring system?

Answer: See the answer to Question 1.

**Question 7:** What is the duration of ship time available, what is the source of the vessels (e.g., NOAA) and what vessel(s) size, configuration, capabilities will be made available? How many times per year would the vessel be offered and what duration might a typical cruise be allotted? What times of year would the vessel(s) be available?

Answer: NOAA and ONR will be collectively providing ship time needs, with all specifics to be determined based on logistics presented in the successful proposal(s). This ship time may be a combination of time directly reserved for this project as well as opportunistic time available, as appropriate.

**Question 8:** Will A-frames and/or deck cranes be available on the vessel?

Answer: See the answer to Question 7.

**Question 9:** Is it expected that a single monitoring site (e.g., metocean buoy) be put in place or is it expected that many monitoring sites be in place for the five year duration of the project?

Answer: As implied by the study title, it is expected that a “network” of monitoring sites will be established.

**Question 10:** The BAA indicates that the project should result in infrastructure, measurements, and analysis schemes, what is meant by ‘scheme’? Please define fully your expectations for the schemes.

Answer: Given the interdisciplinary nature of datasets to be collected through this project, an analysis scheme or methodology will be required to interpret individual datasets as well as to develop a holistic understanding of observed variability in integrative properties, such as soundscape.

**Question 11:** What is the expected data use requirements from the described “scheme” (i.e., is “usable” data a deliverable; will collected data be required to go to a specific repository; or is resulting data expected to be an example of analyses managed by the contractor?)

Answer: All data resulting from this study will be required to be archived in a publicly-accessible database.

**Question 12:** In the BAA, deep waters are defined as 100 to 1,000m. This is a narrower area in the Mid-Atlantic than in the South Atlantic. Is 1,000m a hard limit on the study area? Are the Mid and South Atlantic considered equally important in the study?

Answer: See the answer to Question 2.

**Question 13:** The solicitation states at the beginning of the 2nd paragraph on p. 1 that "The National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) is an innovative collaboration of federal agencies that supports research partnerships among academia, government, industry, and non-governmental organizations". However, under "Eligibility Information" on p. 3, it states "Federal agencies are not eligible to participate in this call for White Papers". We have been collaborating with scientists at two federal research laboratories, the Naval Research Laboratory in Wash DC and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, to develop novel, soundscape-based approaches to the analyses of underwater sound field recordings to extract useful information on both the acoustic sources themselves (marine animals, man-made sources, etc) and the properties of the marine environment (with particular focus on the properties of the ocean bottom). This research partnership is consistent with the stated goals of the NOPP program. So my question is - does the category "Federal agencies" in the Eligibility Information statement on p. 3 include federal research laboratories, and if so, will scientists from these research labs be able to participate at later stages (e.g., the full proposal stage and/or the research stage) in a proposed effort?

Answer: See answer to Question 5.

**Question 14:** Does the 5-page limit on the length of the white paper include figures and/or list of references?

Answer: The 5-page limit is inclusive of all supporting material submitted.

**Question 15:** It is not clear in the BAA what the actual limits of interest to the Outer Continental Shelf actually are. “100-1000” m is really the upper slope and is, across most of the Atlantic coast, a narrow strip of only a few 10s of km wide. Is that the totality of BOEM’s interest in this region, or is it really the OCS as conventionally described (~>50m) + the upper slope?

Answer: See answer to Question 2.

**Question 16:** The BAA indicated an anticipated amount of \$6.5 million plus federal ship time. It was unclear whether the \$6.5 million was anticipated for a single year or for the duration of a potential 5 year study. Is the \$6.5 million anticipated for the 12-month base period with additional funding to follow in subsequent option periods? The answer to this question will be critical as my team contemplates the scale of the proposed work in response to the BAA.

If the anticipated \$6.5 million is envisioned to cover the duration of the potential 5 year program, is there a cap within the first 12-month budget? This is also vital to know, as designing and constructing an observation system in the first year will be the most expensive portion of Year 1.

Answer: See answer to Question 1.

**Question 17:** Are there any partnership requirements, as I've seen in other NOPP calls (e.g. academia, industry, government)? It was clear that federal agencies are not eligible to be the lead on a white paper, but is it required that they be part of the proposed project partnership?

Answer: See answer to Question 5.

**Question 18:** The BAA speaks to the intent to establish long term monitoring capability. What is your definition of long-term? Is it the 5 year potential period of the award or some other time period?

Answer: The scope of the current announcement allows for a 5-year potential period or some subset thereof, as reasonable based on budget and final reporting requirements and other deliverables.

**Question 19:** What is the federal ship availability? Would successful partners be able to directly reserve annual ship time, or will federal ship availability be opportunistic, i.e. there is another cruise/project nearby, so we could take advantage of that to conduct maintenance or deployment as long as it did not compromise the original cruise/mission?

Answer: See answer to Question 7.

**Question 20:** Does the BOEM have a specific site (in the Atlantic shelf seas) in mind or should the project cover the entire footprint of the Atlantic outer continental shelf?

Answer: See answer to Question 2.