

# Minnesota Sea Grant

## Research Proposal Guidelines

**Full proposal deadline:** 5:00 PM CST, 28 March 2011

**Proposal submission:**

Proposals should be submitted in PDF format via e-mail to: [vbrady@d.umn.edu](mailto:vbrady@d.umn.edu) AND [seagr@d.umn.edu](mailto:seagr@d.umn.edu). You will receive verification of proposal receipt within 1 business day.

Alternate submission: Mail CD to:

Minnesota Sea Grant Program  
144 Chester Park  
31 W. College Street  
Duluth, MN 55812-1445  
Attn: Valerie Brady

CDs may also be delivered to:

Connie Post  
173 McNeal Hall  
1985 Burford Ave  
St. Paul, MN 55108

**Electronic RFP and form templates:** <http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/projects/rfp>

**Contact the following for questions:**

**Preparation and formatting:** Valerie Brady, 218-726-8714 or Judy Zomerfelt, 218-726-8106

**Project budget:** Connie Post, 612-624-9239, [postx003@tc.umn.edu](mailto:postx003@tc.umn.edu)

**General questions:** Valerie Brady, 218-726-8714, [vbrady@d.umn.edu](mailto:vbrady@d.umn.edu)

## General Guidelines

The University of Minnesota Sea Grant College Program emphasizes excellence and competitiveness in its research program. Proposals will be selected on the basis of quality and support of Minnesota Sea Grant priorities. You are encouraged to contact Director Jeff Gunderson, Research Coordinator Valerie Brady, or other Minnesota Sea Grant staff to discuss research subjects, proposal preparation, priorities, and/or procedures.

Selected proposals will be combined into one package centered around the following four thematic areas, and described in the RFP: healthy coastal ecosystems, sustainable coastal development, safe and sustainable seafood supply, and community coastal resiliency. The complete proposal package will be submitted by Minnesota Sea Grant to the National Sea Grant office.

Minnesota Sea Grant-funded research must meet the following criteria:

1. It incorporates a compelling reason for the research as it relates to Sea Grant's mission "to facilitate interaction among the public and scientists to enhance communities, the environment and economies along Lake Superior and Minnesota's inland waters by identifying information needs, fostering research, and communicating results." Research should have the immediate **or** long-term purpose of improving the understanding, assessment, and sustainable use of coastal resources. All Sea Grant research and resulting products should include - as a major component - sustainability and stewardship of natural resources.
2. It capitalizes upon Minnesota's unique aquatic resources to address problems of regional or national concern. Projects directed solely towards solving local problems or surveys of local content are usually not funded.
3. It supports **hypothesis-based**, peer-reviewed investigations related to oceanographic, aquatic, or Great Lakes topics and issues. Monitoring efforts or research problems relevant only to freshwater areas other than the Great Lakes are not appropriate.

**Industry or state agency support is highly desirable. Sea Grant strongly encourages collaborative links with private industry and management agencies. Contributions from industry or state sources may also be used as matching funds.**

A proposal must be constructed so that content and methodology satisfies both administrative and scientific peer review.

## Proposal Evaluation

Evaluation is based on scientific merit, excellence of approach, relevance to timely questions, and qualifications of the investigator(s). Proposals will be selected on the basis of their scientific merit and consistency with Minnesota Sea Grant's mission from those favorably reviewed. Reviewers are asked to rate proposals on a 5-point scale (1 = poor; 5 = excellent) for the following qualities:

1. Rationale and relevance: is it relevant to Sea Grant's mission?
2. Scientific merit:
  - a Is the proposal based on a testable hypothesis and directed toward a clearly established goal?
  - b Is the proposed research at the forefront of its discipline?
3. Methodology:
  - a Is the project organized within a finite period of time with regular deliverables to show progress?
  - b Is the proposed time frame appropriate to the project?
  - c Are the methods appropriate?
  - d Is the budget realistic?
4. Innovativeness: Will the project use new approaches or focus on new issues?
5. Investigator qualifications: Will the research be conducted by a highly qualified investigator?
6. User relationships:
  - a Have potential users been identified?
  - b Will the results actually be useful to the identified users?
  - c Is there a well-developed outreach component for effective information transfer?
  - d What specific application will users make of the results?
7. Extent of collaboration.
8. Overall rating of the proposal

Proposals will be reviewed by experts in each field drawn from universities and agencies outside of Minnesota. These reviews, along with the proposals, will then be screened by an ad hoc panel of experts from outside Minnesota. Due to the difficulty in finding reviewers, reviews may be sought outside the Great Lakes area, and even outside North America. Therefore PIs are encouraged to provide sufficient background information to allow these reviewers to understand the proposal and its importance to Lake Superior or the Great Lakes.

Proposals will be selected on the basis of their scientific merit and consistency with Minnesota Sea Grant's mission from those favorably reviewed. The lead PI from each selected proposal will be allowed to append a 1-2 page addendum to the front of the proposal to discuss, incorporate, or rebut reviewers' comments, but he/she cannot modify the proposal due to our time constraints.

## Proposal Package Checklist

Please use the following list as the preferred order of components for the PDF file that PIs will create and submit to us.

1. Project summary form 90-2 (please use electronic template)
2. Budget form 90-4 (please use electronic template)
3. Budget justification
4. Proposal (**12 page limit** for the following components):
  - a Project title
  - b Personnel
  - c Five key words (not included in the title)
  - d Background (sufficient for reviewers from outside the Great Lakes or North America)
  - e Hypotheses and objectives (research questions must be stated as hypotheses)
  - f Methods (detailed enough to pass scientific peer-review)
  - g Expected results
  - h Usefulness (describe potential users and how results will be used)
  - i Economic benefits
  - j Outreach (contact outreach staff listed in RFP for assistance)
5. Literature cited
6. Activity schedule form (please use electronic template)
7. Vitae (1 page per investigator; please use electronic template)
8. Letters of support from potential users (optional) (**end of PDF file**)

### Attachments (please send as separate files):

9. Letter of department approval for match and research
10. Letters of collaboration, support, or match
11. Contact information (including email addresses) for five suggested reviewers who are NOT from either Minnesota or Wisconsin (**create and send as a separate file**)

## Formatting Requirements

1. Proposal length: 12 pages
  - a 12-page limit includes tables and/or visual materials, up to but not including the literature cited section.
  - b NO forms, including budget forms, CVs, and match and support letters are included in the 12-page limit.
  - c Failure to adhere to this limit will result in rejection without review.
2. Font: Times New Roman 11 pt
3. Page size: 8.5" x 11" or metric A4 (210mm x 297mm)
  - a Margins:
    - i 2" top, page 1 only; 1" following pages
    - ii 1 ½ " left
    - iii 1" right
    - iv 1" bottom
  - b Spacing:
    - i Triple space after main title
    - ii Single space body text;
    - iii Double space between paragraphs and after headings (except 4<sup>th</sup>-order headings);
  - c Justification
    - i Left justify all text (no paragraph indentation)
    - ii Exceptions: number/bulleted lists; long equations
  - d Page numbering
    - i Bottom center
4. Measurements: metric units
5. Electronic file/submittal is required
6. File naming:
  - a Pllastname-proposal\_2012.pdf
7. **Proofread for typing errors and clarity before submitting.**

**Note:** *Formatting guidelines may seem overly detailed, but are designed to assist Minnesota Sea Grant staff in compiling and presenting a unified proposal package to NOAA Sea Grant electronically through grants.gov in the fall. Please comply with these guidelines for a smoother grant submission process.*

## Project Summary Form (90-2)

**Complete one Project Summary form for each project year. The only things that should change are the budget amounts.** Please use no smaller than 10 pt font.

Minnesota Sea Grant will finalize the Sea Grant Project Summary Form 90-2. You must fill out the following:

### (2) Title

- Give your project a descriptive title within two lines (less than 16 words).

### (6) Initiation Date

- Month/day/year on which Sea Grant funding for the project is proposed to begin. This date may be no earlier than February 1, 2012, but can be as late as mid-summer 2012.

### (7) Completion Date

- No later than January 31, 2014, to comply with NOAA guidelines. A no-cost extension may be granted to complete projects.

### (9) Principal Investigator (P.I.)

- Name (co-leads are not allowed; each project must have a single designated lead who will serve as the primary contact with MN Sea Grant)
- Effort s/he will devote to the project in "**person-months**"
- Department affiliation and campus

### (10) Co-Principal Investigator

- Same as for P.I.

### (11 & 12) Associate Investigator 1 & 2

- Same as for P.I.

### (13 & 14) Sea Grant Funds and Matching Funds

- Project year one – enter funds requested and matched for year one.
- Project year two – enter funds requested and matched for year two.

(15 & 16) Last Year's Sea Grant Funds and Last Year's Matching Funds

- Enter "0".

(19) Related Projects

Number(s) and name(s) of other Sea Grant projects from which this project was derived. The intent is to build a record of continuity. We can help you look up numbers of previous projects.

(22) Objectives

In **no more than 10 lines** address the objectives of the research as related to anticipated results. Start with the word "To" followed by a verb, such as: develop, provide, determine, isolate, characterize, identify, restore, implement. The verbs "study," "consider," and "continue" should not be used since failure to do these cannot be determined.

(23) Methodology

In **no more than 6 lines** explain the research methods or the approach to be taken. Descriptions should be clear and concise, and written such that they may be generally understood by a well-educated layperson.

(24) Rationale

In **no more than 6 lines** explain why this is an appropriate Sea Grant project. State the significance of the issue, describe why addressing/solving it is important, and identify the potential users of the information.

**Note: Each Project Summary Form should print out on no more than two 8- by 11-inch pages - one page is preferable but not required.**

## Budget

University of Minnesota researchers, please note that the Proposal Routing Form should NOT be forwarded to SPA electronically. Please DO NOT enter your proposal into EGMS except as a tool for preparing your proposal. (Contact Connie Post at (612) 624-9239 for questions).

### Budget form 90-4

The Sea Grant budget form (90-4) may be found at <http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/projects/rfp/>. This Excel spreadsheet contains embedded formulas. An example budget form is also available from this same link.

Sea Grant requests researchers attempt to secure a **30% match from nonfederal sources**. Matched funds must be fully documented and are subject to audit. For most proposals, the salary (plus fringe benefits and indirect costs) of the principal investigator(s) may provide the University matching contribution. **You must attach a letter from the department approving salary match(es)**. If you are part of the University of Minnesota system, unrecovered indirect charges cannot be used as match.

### Instructions

Minnesota Sea Grant will finalize this form, but you must fill out the following:

Principal Investigator (P.I.)

Duration : Number of months and the fiscal year (FY12 or FY13) for the budget.

#### A. Salaries and Wages

Actual numbers of personnel should be shown in the blank spaces corresponding to the categories (a., b., etc.). Total time to be spent on the project should be shown in **person-months**. In calculating the share of salaries, actual time to be spent on the project should be used.

#### 1. Senior Personnel

- a. The principal investigator is responsible for conducting the activity. They may be the leaders of a research project, the coordinators of an educational project, or the directors of an extension service activity.
- b. Associates are professional persons who are full-time on the faculty or staff.

#### 2. Other Personnel

- a. Professionals are non-faculty, non-staff (i.e., not members of the university) associated with the project. Professional agency personnel cannot receive Sea Grant salary funding.
- b. Research associates are professional persons participating in the project who are part-time employees, or persons retained solely for the project, or staff members of participating organizations.

- c. Research assistant graduate students are part or full-time students who hold at least a bachelor's degree, are enrolled in a program leading to an advanced or professional degree, and are integral to the project as research assistants. The student is obligated to write a paper or thesis on the research as part of his/her degree requirements and to perform outreach activities in association with Sea Grant outreach staff. Students are eligible for tuition grants of up to 100% of tuition according to the terms of their appointments. **If you want to include a graduate assistant, type “\*RA requested” in the column.** Do not fill in the amount. If RA is requested, funds will be awarded independently of the research funds. The 90-4 is for research costs only. No research assistant will be appointed at a level greater than 50% effort.
- d. Professional school students are students enrolled in medical, legal, and other professional schools. Typically, such students are not eligible for Sea Grant funding.
- e. Pre-baccalaureate students may be employed as aides or helpers on a Sea Grant project either on salary as part-time employees or on an hourly basis. Pre-baccalaureates are undergraduate students enrolled either part or full time in a course leading to a degree, including an associated degree in the case of students in two-year programs, or a certificate in the case of some vocational students.
- f. Secretarial-clerical: Not allowed as per Federal Office of Management and Budget directive.
- g. Technical-shop is a category for technicians, shop personnel, and other persons with special but non-professional skills.

B. Fringe Benefits are 36% for academic, 41.3% for civil service, and 4% for undergraduates.

C. Permanent Equipment is any non-expendable equipment with a cost of more than \$2,500 per unit and an expected lifetime in excess of two years. All permanent equipment must be itemized on the budget justification form.

D. Expendable Supplies and Equipment includes all supplies and any equipment costing less than \$2,500.

E. Travel - Current mileage reimbursement rates are \$0.51/mile. See the budget justification sheet for further details.

F. Publication Costs - Do not fill in an amount unless you anticipate large page charges for color panels. Most publication costs are paid by Sea Grant through its communications budget.

G. Other Costs - List such items as computer lab time, reimbursement for participating organizations outside the proposing institution (i.e., subcontracts), ship time, and equipment lease.

H. Indirect Costs – **Disregard IDC if the lead PI is from the University of Minnesota system;** this will be filled in later by MN Sea Grant staff. For those outside UM, IDC is capped at 25% of personnel salary and fringe.

## Budget Justification Guidelines

### Salaries and Wages

- Identify key investigators, classification of personnel.
- State time commitments such as hours or percent of time for each position.
- List total charges for each person.
- Ensure time commitments and charges appear reasonable.
- Are all individuals employees of the applicant organization? (If not, explain.)
- Is a cost of living increase built into the budget? (We suggest using 2% for year 2)
- Ensure all salary/personnel costs are allowable (e.g., no federal employees, legislative personnel, or secretarial/clerical staff)
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### Fringe Benefits

Please use the following format:

\$X,XXX - Academic fringe benefits calculated at 36%

\$X,XXX - Civil Service fringe benefits calculated at 31.3%

\$X,XXX - Undergrad students fringe benefits calculated at 4%

### Supplies

An explanation is necessary only for supplies costing over \$1,500, or 5% of an award, whichever is greater. The budget narrative should explain the type of material to be purchased or the nature or expense. For specific items/units with a total cost of \$1,500 or more, list number of items/units, cost per unit, and total cost.

### Equipment

For any items of equipment whose cost exceeds \$2,500, a description of the item and associated costs is required, plus a lease vs. purchase analysis, if appropriate. List each item of equipment along with a description of how it will be used in the project.

### Travel

For each trip, the budget should include the destination (or conference name), estimated cost of transportation, duration, number of travelers, and per diem. Current mileage reimbursement rates are \$0.51/mile. If actual trip details are unknown, the basis for the proposed travel charges should be explained. The budget narrative should explain how proposed travel is necessary to the successful completion of the project. We expect professional conference attendance by the PI and/or the Sea Grant scholar to present research results. Canadian travel is now considered foreign travel and should be justified here in the proposal if at all possible.

### Other

- List items by type of material or nature of expense, state number of units, cost per unit, and total cost specified.
- State necessity of charges for the successful completion of the project.
- Ship time: UMD R/V Blue Heron rate is \$7500/day in 2012 and \$7750/day in 2013. For Blue Heron details visit [www.d.umn.edu/llo/facilities/blueheron.html](http://www.d.umn.edu/llo/facilities/blueheron.html). Contact Doug Ricketts at (218) 726-7826 for questions relating to the boat.

### Contractual

- List each contract or subgrant as a separate item (separate budgets are required for subgrants or contracts regardless of the dollar value).
- Describe the products/services to be acquired along with the applicability of each to the project.
- Describe how procurement will be accomplished: competitive or sole source. (Sole source requires justification as to why the proposed sole source entity is the only source capable of meeting the applicant's project needs. Note that collaborators do not require sole-source justification).

### Match

Please provide evidence that you can secure at least 30% match from nonfederal sources. Describe how match will be accomplished and list total dollar value for each year. University of Minnesota researchers may NOT use unrecovered IDC for match.

### **Year 2 (Same format as year 1)**

## Activity Schedule (project timeline)

The timeline is expected to be reasonable and accurately reflect an estimation of the time schedule of events and activities. These activities may extend beyond the official end date of 1/31/2014.

An example and a blank template are available from <http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/projects/rfp>

## Vitae

One page per investigator. Please download the template at <http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/projects/rfp>