

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)
Environmental Studies Program**

Program Announcement No. M16AS00002

BOEM FY 2016 Environmental Studies Program

CFDA No. 15.423

December 16, 2015

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The Environmental Studies Program (ESP) of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is offering a cooperative agreement opportunity to conduct research in topics that serve the public interest of safe and environmentally sound energy and mineral production on the nation's outer continental shelf. The BOEM manages the exploration and development of the nation's offshore energy and mineral resources. The Bureau seeks to balance economic development, energy independence, and environmental protection through oil and gas leases, renewable energy development and environmental reviews and studies.

Authorities: Section 1346 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) mandates the conduct of environmental and socioeconomic studies needed for the assessment and management of environmental impacts on the human, marine, and coastal environments which may be affected by oil and gas or other mineral development. [OCSLA Section 1345](#) authorizes the use of cooperative agreements with affected States to meet the requirements of OCSLA, including sharing of information, joint utilization of available expertise, formation of joint monitoring arrangements to carry out applicable Federal and State laws, regulations, and stipulations relevant to outer continental shelf operations both onshore and offshore.

Background: Increasingly, active acoustic telemetry is being used to track the movements of fish species. The use of telemetry involves the attachment of active acoustic tags on fish and the placement of passive acoustic receivers on the seafloor. Over the years a network of largely near-shore receivers has been established by various academic and government agencies on the Atlantic coast. These acoustic networks help scientists and regulators to understand migratory fish, such as sturgeon, and habitat affinity for other commercially important species such as black sea bass.

Through projects funded as part of this study program BOEM will be taking advantage of new methodologies of securing receivers in deeper waters of the OCS to expand and leverage data from the existing acoustic receiver networks (see: Atlantic Cooperative Telemetry Network and the Mid-Atlantic Animal Tracking Observing System) by researchers participating in those networks. In addition, BOEM would fund the additional capture and tagging of fish to increase the pool and diversity of tagged fish. The information will be useful to the Office of Renewable Energy Programs and the Marine Minerals Program in understanding protected fish and important commercial fish use of an area.

The region of focus for BOEM is from Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras, where renewable energy leasing is already underway. The telemetry network is also very robust in this area. BOEM will evaluate study proposals under this program to ensure that they not only meet BOEM's information needs but involve resource users, such as commercial fishermen, in the project design and/or project execution.

Purpose: Projects are intended to provide information and data that will support environmental impact assessments and consultations; inform resource management decisions and statutory consultations required under the Endangered Species Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and the Coastal Zone Management Act; and build trust in data for management decisions between BOEM, academic institutions, and fishery resources users.

Generally, BOEM envisions project proposals that demonstrate an ability to characterize the benthic and oceanographic environment selected for the proposal and project proposals that will characterize fish utilization of the study site by use of acoustic transmitters attached to target fish species (those of important commercial value or protected under the Endangered Species Act). Study proposals may assess fish distribution, habitat use, and migration at fine resolutions such as around important habitat features within a wind energy area, and at larger resolutions such as occurrence across an entire wind energy area. Fishery resource users should be involved in the project where appropriate.

Scope of Objectives: There are several objectives that may be addressed through study proposals submitted under this broad announcement of financial assistance. Studies awarded under this program may address one or more of the following objectives:

- Collect data that will benefit consultations regarding environmental assessments of potential impacts from OCS leasing activities as well as improve data for the management of the species.
- Obtain information in order to assess impacts to commercially important and protected fish species in the mid-Atlantic and New York bights where offshore wind projects may occur.
- Support data management of acoustic telemetry networks.
- Build upon baseline knowledge of fish use of proposed development sites.

II. Award Information

The ***total anticipated*** amount of funding available in FY 2016 is approximately \$1,000,000, with another \$280,000 in FY 2017, subject to the availability of funds. No single study proposal may have a budget exceeding \$500,000 in funds requested from BOEM. Total project budgets may exceed \$500,000 when matched with direct funds from another non-Federal source or in-kind contributions. Matching contributions from the applicant are strongly recommended. The BOEM anticipates making cooperative agreement awards in Fiscal Year 2016 for 1 to 4 proposals submitted under this program announcement.

Work performance under these awards must start before October 1, 2016 and the proposed work must be completed no later than 30 months from the start date. Additional information regarding multi-year proposals is presented in the “Multi-Year Proposal” section below.

This Program Announcement describes the specific projects that may be awarded to the universities or eligible groups identified. All awards are premised on receipt of an acceptable proposal. This is not an open solicitation for proposals.

This announcement is specifically to announce intent to undertake the following project:

- Atlantic Fish Telemetry: Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras
Open to:
 - Eligible institutions are limited to state academic institutions adjacent to the project area (e.g., Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina). Institutions

within the North Atlantic Coast and Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units are encouraged and will use applicable overhead rates.

No other proposals are requested at this time, although additional opportunities may be announced in the future.

The award(s) will be a cooperative agreement(s) (with the exception of tasks performed by Federal partners – see Eligibility Information below). This involves substantial involvement by BOEM scientists in various aspects of study development and/or study conduct.

Multi-Year Proposals:

If the proposed work is such that more than one year is required to complete the research, then a multi-year proposal is appropriate and the applicant shall write the proposal accordingly. Proposals shall clearly define the work to be completed in the first, second, and each succeeding year, and the evaluation panel reserves the option to fund only the first year of a multi-year proposal. Funding for subsequent years of a multi-year cooperative agreement is contingent upon the availability of funds and satisfactory progress demonstrated by the recipient. Progress will be determined through technical review of quarterly and annual progress reports and other work identified by the BOEM Project Officer. Funds requested for the final year of performance shall comprise a minimum of 15% of the project's total anticipated budget request.

III. Eligibility Information

Research projects are required to have a University faculty or staff member as the Principal Investigator. Cooperative research between University scientists and various state agencies, other university researchers and stakeholder organizations is always encouraged.

The specific project identified in Section 2 is intended for one of the organizations or groups identified. However, cooperative research (establishment of teams) is encouraged. Contributions of matching funds towards these efforts, either as cash or in-kind contributions (such as salary, equipment, etc., or a combination of both) is very strongly encouraged. Match cannot include value associated with collection costs for samples previously collected. Match value for instrumentation and other equipment should be adjusted to the period of use within the project relative to the full life cycle for the item. Written documentation for the assessed match for ship time shall provide a fair assessment of costs relevant to the project. Matching dollars cannot be from other federal funding sources. Further information can be located at 2 CFR 200.306.

Federal entities as partners are allowed, however the tasks performed by the Federal partner and the associated budget must be presented separately by the Federal partner. The University proposal and the Federal proposal should be cross referenced to each other, but each should stand alone. Other non-federal organizations may be partners and their tasks and budgets should be included in the University proposal.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Proposals must be submitted by 5 pm EST, January 30, 2016.

2. Location of Application Package

All applications must be submitted through the www.Grants.gov portal at “Apply for Grants.” Applicants can locate the application package by visiting the Grants.gov portal and searching on CFDA number 15.423 in the Grants.gov search engine.

The electronic submission system requires several preliminary registration steps before the actual proposal can be submitted (go to www.Grants.gov, and click on “Applicants” on top menu bar, go to “Apply for Grants”, Register as an Organization or Register as an individual.

3. Content and Form of Applications

The application process begins by downloading Adobe Reader (version 9.0.0 and later) at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>. The Adobe software will enable the applicant and all interested parties to view and complete the following required application forms:

SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance

SF-424a Budget Information

SF-424b Assurances – Non-Construction Programs

Project Narrative Form (including Proposal Cover Sheet described below)

Budget Narrative Form

Budget Form and Budget Justification

GG Certification Regarding Lobbying Form

(Complete the Optional SF-LLL Lobbying form only if lobbying has occurred)

4. Proposal Cover Sheet

The cover sheet of the proposal shall contain the following information:

Project Title:

Principal Investigator(s):

Name:

Address:

Phone:

FAX:

Email:

Name of university/department/organization:

Contact information for Technical and Administrative Negotiations

Project Status: New/Continuation

Project Duration: (years or months)

Proposed Start Date:

Proposed Draft Final Report Submission Date:

Proposed Completion Date:

Amount Requested From BOEM:

Amount and Sources of Non-Federal Match:

Total Project Cost:

Signature, Name and Contact Information of University Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator:

Proposal Endorsement, including Signature, Name and Contact Information of Sponsoring University Department Dean or Institute Director:

Signature, Name and Contact Information, Office of Sponsored Programs of Sponsoring University

5. Proposal Text

The proposal must be in 11-12 point Times New Roman, Arial, or similar font with 1" page margins. Non-conforming proposals will not be considered. The text should be no longer than 20 pages. The text for multi-year proposals may be up to 30 pages. Please include the following in the Proposal:

- a. Abstract
- b. Background/Relevance to BOEM Issues, Information Needs, and Research Topics: Give a brief introduction to the research problem. State how the proposal addresses BOEM goals. Explain why the work is important. Specify the contribution to science related to renewable energy issues, oil and gas development, or marine minerals production and the benefits that society will receive from the study. Proposals should describe why the research is important to offshore energy development issues. Provide a brief summary of findings or outcomes of any prior work you have completed in this area.
- c. Objectives/Hypotheses: Clearly define goals of the project.
- d. Methods/Analyses: Provide a clear description of planned methodologies and analyses.
- e. Data Management, Data Security and Data Archiving Plan: Provide copies of data files with metadata to BOEM in a format that meets Federal data standards (e.g., current Federal Geographic Data Committee standards). Copies shall also be archived with the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS), or other appropriate Federal Data Repository.
- f. For studies involving field work, or as otherwise appropriate, applicants shall provide plans for Logistics, Safety Management, and necessary Permits/Interagency coordination/Local Coordination
- g. Project management/Staffing plan: All key personnel (including graduate student workers) shall be identified by name. List the University Principal Investigator first, followed by the names of other individuals. Indicate the role (oceanographer, geochemist, field assistant, etc.) and anticipated level of effort for each participant in the project. If names of some participants are unknown at the time the proposal is first submitted, a proposal addendum with the names and vitae must be submitted prior to award.
- h. Performance Measures: Applicants shall suggest specific measures that can be used to monitor project progress, including that of sub-awardees e.g., quality and timely deliverables, timely completion of fieldwork or other project components, draft peer reviewed articles. These performance measures will be incorporated into the cooperative agreement award and reviewed as part of any continuation request.
- i. Timeline (including deliverables): Provide for submission of the draft final report six months before project end date to ensure adequate time for review, revision, and publication.

- j. Critical starting dates (e.g., for season-limited field work): Identify any critical starting dates and the reason why project success is dependent upon that start date.
- k. Project Deliverables and Planned Products: List product(s) (reports, analyses, maps, digital data, etc.) that will be delivered during the performance period. Quarterly, annual, draft and final reports, and draft and final technical summaries are required. Images and data are also standard deliverables.
- l. Publication and Presentation: BOEM strongly encourages the Recipients to publish project reports in scientific and technical journals, and present results to the scientific community, appropriate professional organizations, and local, State, and federal agencies as part of the project. These publications and meetings should be included in the proposal and budget.
- m. Bibliography: List all references cited in the text, as well as references that are relevant to the current proposal from your past work in the field.
- n. Curricula Vitae (maximum 2 pages) for each identified participant. Emphasize previous experience in the field of study that the proposal addresses.
- o. Letters of Commitment: Provide signed letters of commitment by matching funds grantors, contractors, and sub-grantees.
- p. Budget Spreadsheet: In addition to SF-424a Budget Information form in section IV.3 above, include information in a format which provides personnel, travel, services, supplies, equipment, tuition, and indirect costs on an annual basis for both the requested BOEM funds and for the anticipated match funds.
- q. Budget Justification Narrative: (see item 6 below)

6. Budget Justification Narrative

This information will provide more details than the SF-424a form (section IV.3) and will provide adequate information for the Contracting Officer to conduct a detailed analysis of the costs to determine they are reasonable, allowable and allocable. Please include the following:

- a. Salaries and Wages. List positions and rate of compensation for University employees. If contract employees are hired, also list job titles, number of estimated hours, rate of compensation, and total time.
- b. Fringe benefits/labor overhead. Indicate the rates/amounts in conformance with normal accounting procedures. Explain what costs are covered in this category and the basis of the rate computations. Provide a copy of the negotiated rate agreement with the cognizant federal audit agency for the Recipient, and all sub-grantees, if available.
- c. Tuition. Requests for funds for tuition must identify the student by name. The total compensation (including tuition funds, stipend, etc.) requested for the individual must be commensurate with the services to be performed by that individual.
- d. Lab Analyses. Briefly itemize cost of all analytical work.
- e. Supplies. Enter the cost for all tangible property. Include the cost of office, laboratory, computing, and field supplies separately. Provide detail on any specific item that represents a significant portion of the proposed amount. Provide a statement that supplies will be purchased in accordance with 2 CFR. 215.40-48.
- f. Equipment. Show the cost of all special-purpose equipment necessary for achieving the objectives of the project. "Special-purpose equipment" means scientific equipment having a useful life of more than 1 year and having an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more

per item. Each item should be itemized and include a full justification and a dealer or manufacturer quote, if available.

General-purpose equipment (used also for purposes other than this project) must be purchased from the applicant's operating funds. Title to non-expendable personal property shall be vested solely with the Recipient. Under no circumstances shall property title be vested in a sub-tier recipient. Provide a statement that equipment will be purchased in accordance with 2 CFR 215.40-48.

- g. Services or consultants. Identify the tasks or problems for which such services would be used. List the contemplated sub-recipients by name (including consultants), the estimated amount of time required, and the quoted rate per day or hour. Sub-applicant proposals should provide cost breakdowns at the same level of detail as the Applicant's proposal. If contract employees are hired, include their total time, rate of compensation, job titles, and roles. Provide a statement that salaries will be charged at the actual rate and that the rate is comparable to others doing similar work within the organization. Note that tasks conducted by Federal partners must have a separate proposal and budget. Federal partners must be funded directly from BOEM via an intra-agency agreement, and cannot be reimbursed directly by the recipient.
- h. Travel. State the purpose of the trip and itemize the estimated travel costs to show the number of trips required, the destinations, the number of people traveling, the per diem rates, the cost of transportation, and any miscellaneous expenses for each trip. Calculations of other special transportation costs (such as charges for use of applicant-owned vehicles or vehicle rental costs) should also be shown. Applicants should include in the proposal a plan to present findings at one to two major meetings (see Section IV.5.1).
- i. Publication costs. Show the estimated cost of publishing the results of the research in the peer-reviewed literature. Include costs of drafting or graphics, reproduction, page or illustration charges, and a minimum number of reprints.
- j. Digital Images. All projects should plan to provide BOEM with no less than 20-30 digital images related to the research activity. BOEM encourages the Recipient to develop education and/or outreach materials, e.g. teacher's packet, poster, video, etc.
- k. Other direct costs. Itemize the different types of costs not included elsewhere.
- l. Total Direct Charges. Totals for items a - k.
- m. Indirect Charges (Overhead). Indirect cost/general and administrative (G&A) cost. Show the proposed rate, cost base, and proposed amount for indirect costs based on the cost principles applicable to the Applicant's organization. If the Applicant has separate rates for recovery of labor overhead and G&A costs, each charge should be shown. Provide a copy of the negotiated rate agreement with the Applicant's federal cognizant audit agency.
- n. Amount proposed. Total items l and m.
- o. Multi-year projects. The Applicant shall provide summary information as well as a detailed budget for each year. Funds requested for the final year of performance shall comprise a minimum of 15% of the project's total anticipated budget.

V. Application Review Information

Proposals will be reviewed by BOEM scientists, program managers and may also include external peer review. Reviewers have expertise in federal offshore programs and/or the specific scientific discipline of the proposal.

Evaluation Criteria. All proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

Technical and Programmatic (30%)

Are all elements outlined within the scope of work effectively understood and a description provided of how each element will be addressed? Is there a complete and precise, technically and scientifically sufficient description of the design and methodology for the required services? Is there a clear statement of how each project deliverable will be accomplished, including major tasks that will lead to achieving the goal, the strategies to be employed, required staffing, and other required resources, tools or techniques? Are there any innovative approaches, techniques, or design aspects proposed that will enhance the project? If applicable, are logistics, safety, and permits/interagency coordination adequately addressed?

Organizational (40%)

Does the proposed project staff possess the skills, knowledge, and expertise necessary to complete the tasks, including all of the elements listed within the project scope of work? Does the applicant agency or institution have the organizational capacity to complete all deliverables? If consultants and/or partnerships are proposed, is there a reasonable justification for their inclusion in the project and a clear structure to ensure effective coordination? Does the applicant demonstrate the ability to purchase necessary inventory? Does the applicant demonstrate the ability to produce the results offered and according to the timeline proposed? Are the proposed project management and staffing plans realistic and sufficient to complete the project within the award period? Is the proposed budget realistic, does it provide sufficient cost detail/narrative, and does it represent good value relative to the anticipated results? Is the applicant able to work within the time constraints outlined in the solicitation?

Past Performance (30%): Were previous studies completed in a competent and timely manner? Were the reporting requirements from previous awards satisfied? Were the results and data from previous studies published in peer-reviewed scientific or technical journals? Is the applicant experienced in assessing fish distribution, habitat use, and migration at multiple resolutions? Does the applicant have experience applying, tracking and interpreting data from acoustic transmitters on fish? Does the applicant have experience coordinating with fishery resource users? Has the applicant had experience characterizing the benthic and oceanographic environment in the past? Can the applicant provide adequate tools, techniques, analysis and all equipment necessary to produce the required deliverables?

VI. Award Administration Information

The recipient is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the cooperative agreements and sub-awards to ensure compliance with applicable Federal statutes, regulations and policies. The recipient is also responsible for meeting the performance goals identified in the Proposal Text.

Awards based on the application submitted to, and as approved by the BOEM, are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated either directly or by reference in the following:

Acceptance of a Federal Financial Assistance award from the Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureau of Ocean Energy Management carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions of award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by BOEM, and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated either directly or by reference in the following:

- Program legislation/regulation.
- Special terms and conditions.
- Code of Federal Regulations/Regulatory Requirements, as applicable (Contact the Contracting Officer with any questions regarding the applicability of the following):

[2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#)

[2 CFR Part 25 Universal Identifier and System for Award Management](#)

[2 CFR Part 170 Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information](#)

[2 CFR Part 175 Award Term for Trafficking in Persons](#)

[2 CFR Part 1400 NonProcurement Debarment and Suspension](#)

[43 CFR 12\(A\) Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs](#)

[43 CFR 12\(C\) Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments](#)

[43 CFR 12\(E\) Buy American Requirements for Assistance Programs](#)

[43 CFR 12\(F\) Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations](#)

[43 CFR Part 18 New Restrictions on Lobbying](#)

[2 CFR Part 182 Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace](#)

Reporting

The BOEM will conduct oversight and monitoring of the work progress and financial status of each cooperative agreement by requiring the following information from the Recipient institution, at a minimum:

1. Federal Cash Transactions Reports

The Recipient must submit the Standard Form 425, Federal Financial Report and, when necessary, its continuation form if funds are withdrawn in advance of expenditures. The BOEM will use the form to monitor the cash advanced to the Recipient, and to obtain disbursement or outlay information for each cooperative agreement.

2. Performance and Financial Status Reporting Requirements

Reporting requirements for the projects are regulated by 2 CFR Part 215. These regulations specify basic cooperative agreement reporting requirements including performance and financial reports. BOEM will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance and financial reporting requirements into each cooperative agreement award, consistent with 2 CFR Part 215. These regulations provide some flexibility in determining the appropriate content and frequency of performance and financial reports. At a minimum, however, the reporting schedule will require the recipient to report their progress at least quarterly through the established reporting process and yearly submission of financial status reports.

3. Single Audit Requirements

Nonfederal entities that expend financial assistance funds of \$750,000 or more in Federal awards must have a single or a program-specific audit conducted for that year.

Nonfederal entities that expend less than \$750,000 in Federal awards are exempt from Federal audit requirements for that year, except as noted in Circular No. A-133.

4. Technical Reporting Requirements (to be submitted by project PI)

Quarterly Reports, Annual Progress Reports, Draft and Final Reports, and Draft and Final Technical Summaries are required. Details are available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Environmental-Studies-Program-Report-Specifications/>.

Acknowledgement of Sponsorship

The Recipients shall acknowledge Federal sponsorship in the draft and final reports by placing the following statement on the disclaimer page of both reports: “Study collaboration and funding were provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Environmental Studies Program under Agreement Number _____.”

The Recipient shall require of all investigators that all manuscripts intended to be published in journals resulting from this study shall be submitted to BOEM for review and comment prior to submittal to the journal, with final revisions remaining subject to the discretion of the author. BOEM manuscript reviews shall be conducted expeditiously, within a period of 10 business days, and in conformance with the U.S. Department of the Interior Scientific and Scholarly Integrity Policy, as outlined in the DOI Departmental Manual (Part 305: Chapter 3).

All publications and oral presentations shall contain an acknowledgement of support from BOEM under this Cooperative Agreement that reads: “Study collaboration and funding were provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Environmental Studies Program under Agreement Number _____.”

VII. Agency Contacts

Grants.gov:

Technical questions concerning the application process:

Grants.gov Help Desk at:
Phone: 1-800-518-4726
Email: support@grants.gov

Program Announcement and Cooperative Agreement Questions:

Acquisition Policy and Financial Assistance Branch
Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement
45600 Woodland Road, VAE-AMD
Sterling, Virginia 20166
Attn: Christy Tardiff
Phone (703) 787-1367
christy.tardiff@bsee.gov

Program Office:

Nicole Cooper
BOEM ESP Cooperative Agreements Program Coordinator
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
45600 Woodland Road, VAM-OEP
Sterling, VA 20166
Phone (703) 787-1716
nicole.cooper@boem.gov

VIII. Other Information

Extensions to the project period. Extensions are discouraged. The timely conduct of funded projects is of great importance to the achievement of the goals of the BOEM. Applicants should consider their time commitments at the time of applying for funding support. Requests for extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applicants should supply documentation supporting their request for an extension.

--End of Program Announcement M16AS00002--