



**Broad Area Funding Opportunity
Gulf of Mexico Region
Funding for 2012 and 2013**



Funding Sources: Ocean Research Priorities Plan, NOAA Coastal Storms Program, NOAA Coastal Services Center, Florida Sea Grant, Louisiana Sea Grant, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Texas Sea Grant and the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program. Other funding sources may be added prior to final selection of proposals.

Funding Opportunity Title: 2012-2013 Regional Research

Announcement Type: Request for pre-proposals

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to advise the public of three funding opportunities for pre-proposals as the first step in the review process to identify one- or two-year research projects to address priority coastal issues in the Gulf of Mexico region.

Timetable: The following list provides key milestones for this competition along with corresponding dates for each.

Funding announcement released	Dec. 15, 2010
Regional pre-proposals due	Feb. 25, 2011
Notification of principal investigators	April 20, 2011
Regional full proposals due	June 10, 2011
Notification of funding decisions	Sept.1, 2011
Project initiation	Feb.1, 2012

Deadlines for Principal Investigators: Pre-proposals must be received by 4 p.m. Central Time on Friday, Feb. 25, 2011. Full proposals must be received by 4 p.m. Central Time on Friday, June 10, 2011. No extensions.

Funding Areas

The three funding areas for the Gulf of Mexico are coastal storms, ecosystems services valuation and sea-level-rise data, products and tools.

Question-and-Answer Webinars

One webinar will be held for each of the three funding areas to answer questions.

Please see: masgc.org/regionalresearch for the schedule and instructions on how to participate in webinars.



Funding Levels

One- or two-year projects are acceptable for each funding area and total project budgets will vary depending on the funding area. Budgets cannot exceed the maximum listed under budget available per project (Table 1). A 30-percent non-federal match is required for the ecosystem services valuation funding area.

Table 1. Funding areas, individual project budget range, match requirement and total federal funds available for each funding area. The upper budget range is the total of either one- or two-year projects.

Funding Areas	Budget Available per Project	Match Requirement*	Total Federal Available
Coastal Storms Program	\$25,000- \$100,000	0	\$450,000
Ecosystem Services Valuation	Up to \$650,000 plus match	30 percent	\$1,300,000
Sea-Level-Rise Data, Products and Tools	\$180,000	0	\$540,000

***Match may consist of in-kind or cash and cannot be from other federal sources.**

Funding under this grant program may not be used for construction, routine program implementation, regulatory compliance or mitigation, land acquisition or on-the-ground restoration.

Eligibility

Eligibility requirements vary depending on the funding area. All work must be completed in the Gulf of Mexico region and have regional application. Please refer to the following when submitting a pre-proposal:

1. **Coastal Storms Program:** Local governments, non-profits, homeowner associations, business organizations and community-university partnerships are eligible. Principal investigator(s) must work in and focus on the coastal counties within the Gulf of Mexico region.
2. **Ecosystem Services Valuation:** University-based programs throughout the United States. Pre-proposals submitted require investigators from at least two Gulf of Mexico states.
3. **Sea-Level-Rise Data, Products and Tools:** University-based programs within the Gulf of Mexico region.

Priority Areas

Coastal Storms Priorities

The NOAA Coastal Storms Program will fund projects that help coastal communities plan for, respond to and recover from coastal storms. The target audiences (end-users) include

emergency/floodplain/natural resource managers, port authorities, planners, developers, local governments, chambers of commerce, homeowner associations, community organizations and citizens. Proposed projects should support community resiliency efforts in the coastal counties in the Gulf of Mexico region in one or more of the following ways:

1. Improve hazard awareness by engaging citizens via community outreach and education
2. Improve planning for, response to and recovery from coastal hazards and climate associated risks
3. Determine hazard impacts and hazard mitigation techniques through conducting risk and vulnerability assessments
4. Demonstrate the connections between planning decisions (e.g. land use, infrastructure siting) and hazard impacts
5. Promote best management practices for storm-related water-quality issues
6. Develop tools and information related to the human dimensions of resiliency (i.e., economic, social and cultural factors); including building/strengthening social networks
7. Create land-use and land-cover change maps, floodplain and flood-elevation maps and/or topography (land elevation) and bathymetry (water depth) maps
Note: These maps are not intended to duplicate National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) mapping efforts. They are intended to create flood layers that enhance GIS planning (i.e., repetitive loss data, houses damaged by storm-induced erosion, geospatial layers based on historical records of flood losses in coastal counties)
8. Determine pre-storm damage estimates
9. Determine rates of shoreline change from human and natural impacts
10. Investigate availability of self-insurance
11. Promote cultural and historical resiliency
12. Develop safer storm harbor models
13. Develop tools to aid in navigation safety

Community-based projects that are both highly leveraged and include a university partner will be given preference. More information on the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Storms Program can be found at: masgc.org/coastalstorms.

Ecosystem Services Valuation Priorities

Successful applicants will assess the economic value of critical coastal ecosystems resources in the Gulf of Mexico including oyster reefs, saline marshes and/or mangrove habitats. Successful applicants will identify values for a range of important ecosystem services that are relevant to the given habitat, including but not limited to hazard mitigation. The priority habitats outlined above were selected based on their overall importance for the Gulf of Mexico region and the limited availability of ecosystem services valuation studies in these areas. Pre-proposals that choose to focus on habitats that are not included in this list should describe both the importance of that habitat to the Gulf of Mexico region and the utility of resulting information. While proposed research may be conducted in specific geographic areas within the Gulf, all proposals should ensure regional applicability. Projects should include valuing the habitats in multiple Gulf of Mexico states. Projects should demonstrate familiarity with and an ability to complement relevant efforts and priorities within the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Priority Issue Teams (i.e. Ecosystem Integration and Assessment, Habitat Conservation and Restoration and Coastal

Community Resilience). Favorable preproposals will identify decision frameworks that incorporate ecosystem service valuation (ESV) and describe improvements or strategies to include ESV into other frameworks.

Pre-proposals addressing two or more of the following priorities will be scored more favorably under the “scientific merit” evaluation criterion.

1. Estimate values of important ecosystem services provided by two or more habitats in the Gulf of Mexico
2. Incorporate innovative methodologies and/or address key gaps in ecosystem valuation methodologies and apply them to habitats in the Gulf of Mexico.
3. Account for natural resource and climate impacts

Sea-Level-Rise Data, Products and Tools Priorities

The sea-level-rise funding area is designed to utilize a regional sea-level-rise visualization tool under development by the NOAA Coastal Services Center. The tool is currently available for Galveston, Texas, and Alabama and Mississippi. By the fall of 2011 the tool will be available for the entire Gulf of Mexico region. The tool is available at:

csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/slrviewer/.

1. Development of new data to characterize local vulnerabilities and impacts of sea-level rise: This includes information and analysis of community characteristics to improve our understanding of how natural resources, demographics, economics, land use, policies, social values and attitudes can influence risk. Meta-analysis of existing data and regional work that is locally relevant will also be considered.
2. Legal frameworks and administrative structure: This includes data on zoning, permitting regimes, legislative restrictions, etc.
3. Local implementation of sea-level-rise tools: This includes the use of an existing sea-level-rise tool with a local Gulf of Mexico community; documentation of incorporating existing data layers into the local framework and local natural hazards mitigation plans; development of case studies that can serve as models for other coastal communities.
4. Socioeconomic costs and benefits of implementing different adaptation and resilience actions for communities or states.
5. Determine rate of sea-level-rise and subsidence and its effects on coastal shorelines and ecosystems.
6. An educational/training resource for local elected officials on sea-level-rise risk, vulnerability and local adaptation practices; practical within existing planning and program frameworks.

Extension, outreach and education (EOE) for this effort will occur through the Gulf of Mexico Climate Community of Practice (masgc.org/climate/cop). For more information on how EOE plans will be developed see the evaluation criteria section of this RFP.

Evaluation Procedure for Pre-Proposals

Pre-proposals will be reviewed by panels consisting of scientists, resource managers and representatives of private industry, educators and others who are experienced and familiar with current coastal issues in Gulf of Mexico region. Full proposals will be encouraged from pre-proposals that receive the most favorable reviews. A “not encouraged” declaration, however, does not preclude an applicant from submitting a full proposal.

Evaluation Criteria

All pre-proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Rationale (10%)** – Evaluates whether the proposed project addresses important issues, problems or opportunities in the development, use or management of marine or coastal resources, as identified under the priorities within each funding area.
1. **Scientific and Professional Merit (40%)** – Assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, whether there are clear goals and objectives, if methods are appropriate and whether the research will advance the state of the science or discipline. The degree to which state-of-the-art methods or novel approaches are used to solve problems or focus on new resources, timely issues or opportunities. The potential to reach stated goals for one or more priorities and likelihood that the proposed project will attain the stated objectives.
2. **Expected Outcomes, Impacts and Application of Results (25%)** – Evaluates the overall impact and anticipated outcomes of the completed project; whether results can be applied to improve governmental or other management decisions, and potential to improve technological and economic efficiency or provide other benefits to users.
3. **End-users, Participants and Co-Sponsors (20%)** – Assesses the degree to which users or potential users of the results of the proposed project have been brought into the planning and funding of the project, will be brought into the execution of the project and will use the results. Incorporating support from local, state or federal agencies in real or in-kind funding will enhance the project. Funding from other federal agencies will be a plus, but cannot count toward any non-federal match requirement.
4. **Investigator Qualifications (5%)** – The degree to which the funding applicant and identified collaborators possess the necessary education, training and/or experience to execute the proposed activity. This criterion will also assess stage of career development and record of productivity with previous funding (if applicable).

Outreach and Education

Successful proposals will develop an outreach and education plan in collaboration with extension, outreach and education professionals around the Gulf of Mexico region during meetings convened after the proposal review process. Final funding decisions will be contingent on development of an acceptable extension, outreach and education plan.

Pre-Proposal Development Instructions

Detailed pre-proposal guidance and forms can be found at: masgc.org/regionalresearch. A 12-point or larger font size and Times New Roman or an equivalent serif typeface should be used with 1-inch margins all around. Incomplete pre-proposals will not be considered.

Cover Page

Investigators must use the Gulf Mexico Region 2012-2013 cover form.

Project Narrative

The maximum length for the narrative is **three pages, either single- or double-spaced**. Do not number pages. Additional pages will not be considered. The narrative should provide a brief description of the proposed work, the problem(s) to be solved or hypotheses to be tested, the identification of resources involved, the ultimate value of the work, how the work will be used, and the work's benefit to end-users. Existing or preliminary data that serve as a foundation to advance the proposed research may be included. The project narrative must include the following subsections: **rationale, objectives/hypothesis(es), approach, expected outcomes, expected impacts, and application of results**. Literature cited, budgets, budget justification, curriculum vitae and letters of support are not included in the three-page limit.

Budget and Budget Justification

One- or two-year budgets will be accepted. Two-year budgets requests are expected to fit within the range listed in Table 1. Pre-proposals must use the latest version of the budget form (90-4) and budget justification form. A budget form and a budget justification form must be submitted for each year of funding.

Letters of Support

Letters of support/commitment are required for each co-principal investigator and collaborators identified within the pre-proposal. Strong pre-proposals will include letters of support from potential user groups.

Submission Information and Checklist

Electronic mail submissions should be addressed to Loretta Leist (loretta.leist@usm.edu) and contain the two files described below.

- I. In a single Adobe PDF file
 1. Signed cover page (signed by institutional or signatory authority)
 2. Project Narrative (maximum of three pages)
 - a. Rationale and Societal Benefits
 - b. Objectives
 - c. Approach
 - d. Expected Outcomes
 - e. Expected Impacts
 - f. Application of Results
 3. Literature Cited (no page limit)
 4. Budget Form (one budget for each year)
 5. Budget Justification (one justification for each budget year)
 6. Curriculum Vitae (2 pages per investigator)
 7. Letters of Support (no page limit)
- II. A second file containing a completed and unsigned copy of the cover page saved in a word processing format.

If submitting by hard copy, pre-proposals should be sent to:

Pre-Proposals
Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium
703 East Beach Drive
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
Telephone: 228-818-8835

One hard copy should be submitted along with a CD or other electronic media device containing a single PDF file of the pre-proposal and a completed and unsigned copy of the cover page saved in a word processing format.

Please note: Full proposal guidance will be distributed to principal investigators after the evaluations of the pre-proposals are completed.

Contact Information

Points of contact for questions regarding each funding area are:

- **Coastal Storms:** Tracie Sempier, Coastal Storms Program outreach coordinator, (tracie.sempier@usm.edu) or 228-818-8829
- **Ecosystem Services Valuation:** Robert Stickney, Texas Sea Grant Director, (stickney@neo.tamu.edu) or 979-845-3902.
- **Sea-Level-Rise Data, Products and Tools:** Thomas Ruppert, Florida Sea Grant legal specialist, (truppert@ufl.edu) or 352-392-5870.
- **Submission questions:** Loretta Leist, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant research coordinator, (loretta.leist@usm.edu) or 228-818-8835 on pre-proposal guidance, submission procedure and competition requirements.
- **Fiscal questions:** Devaney Cheramie, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant fiscal officer, (devaney.cheramie@usm.edu) or 228-818-8839.