



Request for Letters of Interest (RFLOI) MARACOOS Engagement

Introduction

[MARACOOS](#) is inviting Letters of Interest (LOIs) describing projects for consideration for inclusion in our proposal for the next 5-year cooperative agreement (June 1, 2021-May 31, 2026) with the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). This RFLOI focuses on ENGAGEMENT across MARACOOS. A separate RFLOI is targeted at OPERATIONS and can be found [HERE](#).

There are ten states (and D.C.), five estuaries, and 25 percent of the U.S. population living in the MARACOOS region. From Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras, we make over 48 million observations of our oceans, coasts, and estuaries, supporting extreme weather forecasts, fisheries, coast guard search and rescue, maritime shipping, beach safety, water quality tracking, and much more.

MARACOOS has been providing value to the region since 2005. Every five years, we review and renew our funding proposal to ensure we are meeting the region's most pressing and current needs. As an IOOS Regional Association with an emphasis on sustained, reliable observations that serve the information needs of our stakeholder communities, we prioritize our robust observing infrastructure while developing and expanding our reach and impact through new and enhanced partnerships across the Mid-Atlantic region.

MARACOOS will submit a proposal in response to the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) FY 2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). This opportunity will cover the 5-year period from June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2026 with the goals of sustaining critical observing, modeling, products, and service activities while also seeking opportunities to expand project areas. To develop the proposal, MARACOOS is soliciting LOIs from a broad stakeholder base. Responses that comply with the LOI requirements will be evaluated by a Review Committee, and selected projects will be assembled as part of the MARACOOS 5-year proposal.

Engagement as defined by MARACOOS is: A purposeful, continuous exchange between MARACOOS and its stakeholders to identify, assess, and address stakeholder needs through tailored data products and solutions.

The MARACOOS Strategic Plan will serve as a guide for our 5-year proposal, and is available [HERE](#).

Funded engagement projects will contribute to the MARACOOS mission, vision and strategic plan. LOIs should:

- Demonstrate ability to engage with stakeholders that represent the MARACOOS focus areas: (1) coastal hazards; (2) fisheries; (3) maritime commerce & safety; (4) energy; and (5) water quality
- Demonstrate ability to respond to new or changing needs with the capacity to plan and begin implementation in emerging areas of need
- Demonstrate ability to utilize a variety of tools and strategies to engage with different audiences
- Demonstrate ability and willingness to contribute to MARACOOS engagement tools such as the stakeholder database
- Commit to work with the MARACOOS operations team to incorporate data into tools or products that meet stakeholder needs
- Include a regional (Mid-Atlantic bight) or sub-regional (bay or estuary scale or section of a coast along the Mid-Atlantic coast) understanding and focus

Please Note: MARACOOS does not require formal institutional approval for the purposes of the LOI. MARACOOS will work with the selected project leads to begin the formal proposal writing process that will include formal institutional approval. Contact info@maracoos.org with questions.

Timeline

- June 1, 2020
 - Request for LOIs announced
- June 8, 2020 at 11:00 am ET
 - Community Q&A Session
 - [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)
- July 17, 2020 at 11:59pm ET
 - LOIs are due
- August 31, 2020
 - Notification of selected projects
- November 15, 2020
 - Draft proposal complete
- December 15, 2020
 - MARACOOS submits proposal to NOAA IOOS

Budget

MARACOOS anticipates writing a 5-year proposal for \$30,000,000. MARACOOS' proposal will prioritize projects for funding based on the results of the review process. Annual funding levels will be determined based on annual Congressional appropriations.

Eligible projects will address at least one of the MARACOOS geographic areas, have close connections with local stakeholders within MARACOOS thematic areas, and support the implementation of our Strategic Plan. We anticipate funding between 3-6 partner engagement efforts in total over the next five-year period. We estimate annual amounts to range between \$10,000 - \$70,000 but will accept proposals outside of this range. Budgets should estimate salary time, travel, as well as potential workshop & event costs (more details are below.)

Collaborative and individual submissions are permitted. For LOIs submitted as collaborative efforts, individual partners/project roles, responsibilities, and budget must be provided for each. As necessary, MARACOOS will work with project leads to adjust the scale to fit into a cohesive proposal.

The final MARACOOS proposal, following review and acceptance by the federal government, will be funded based on available appropriations from Congress. Those aspects of the proposal for which available appropriations do not suffice will be prioritized for additional sources of funding by MARACOOS through other funding vehicles or through funding campaigns.

LOI Review Committee

The Review Committee will be composed of non-conflicted experts within and external to the MARACOOS stakeholder community of experts.

Guidelines for Evaluation

LOIs will be measured based on the criteria below:

Demonstrated ability to connect with stakeholders - 35%

LOI should identify specific stakeholders, relevant to MARACOOS focus areas, that the engagement would target. LOIs should demonstrate understanding of, and be in response to, diverse stakeholder needs in the Mid-Atlantic. LOIs should demonstrate the degree to which users have been brought into the development of the LOI and how the users will be engaged in project execution. Clear/direct links to a specific identified user will rank higher, with an indication of who would be willing to write a letter of support if the LOI is selected in the final proposal.

Connection to MARACOOS Strategic Plan - 25%

Project must demonstrate a commitment to MARACOOS mission, objectives, values, and priorities as outlined in the 2020 Strategic Plan. The LOI must identify the specific MARACOOS geographic area(s) and theme(s) (1. coastal hazards; 2. fisheries; 3. maritime commerce & safety; 4. energy; and 5. water quality) which the team is addressing.

Measurable goals and impacts - 20%

LOIs should estimate potential reach and impact of proposed activities including metrics that can be used as goals or deliverables. Examples include: number of participants, social media engagement, subscribers, improved perception, etc.

Leveraged Partnerships - 20%

The LOI should demonstrate collaborative relationships leveraging resources and knowledge with other MARACOOS or non-MARACOOS projects. LOIs should demonstrate the value provided by the project or activity and include any other projects that are or have the potential to leverage the work that is being proposed.

Review Process

The Review Committee will rank LOIs based on guidelines for evaluation above. They will provide recommendations to the MARACOOS management team for preparation of the MARACOOS proposal. Project leads of selected projects will be notified by August 31, 2020.

Next Steps

Project leads from the selected LOIs will integrate proposed activities as members of the writing team for the full proposal. Project leads must commit to supporting the writing team efforts through the completion date in mid-December.

MARACOOS Engagement Letter of Interest Format

The LOI should be no smaller than 11-point font and must identify the project leads, users, and their affiliations, and include a concise but detailed project description and budget narrative. Email your LOI as a PDF to info@MARACOOS.org with the email subject: MARACOOS 2020 Engagement LOI.

Cover Page (1 page):

- Project Title
- Primary project lead Name, Affiliation, email, and phone number
- Co-Investigators (Co-project leads) Name Affiliation, email, and phone number
- Project Duration (e.g. 1 yr, 2 yrs, 3 yrs, 4 yrs, 5 yrs)
- Project location – list cities/states/regions or other information that describes where the proposed effort will occur
- Total budget request

Project description (4 pages, including graphics):

- Project Description – address the following:
 - a. Goals and measurable objectives
 - b. Methodology (summary of the protocols/methods you will use to conduct the project)
 - c. Intended regional environmental, economic, and/or social benefits of activity
 - d. Articulate the outcomes of the project (what benefits/products will result from this project)
 - e. Identify other MARACOOS LOIs, if any, that this effort supports, including an explanation of personnel resources and economies of scale that will be achieved if the project(s) are funded
 - f. Explain how the results will be applied across the MARACOOS region. Explain how results will be applied across other IOOS regions, if teaming with other RAs

- Connection to stakeholders/users: As a “user driven” organization MARACOOS is charged with responding to needs in our region. All projects should address specific regional demands.
 - a. How will this project impact/connect with specific users?
 - i. Industry/users (name(s) of users, their affiliation)
 - ii. Need(s) addressed by project
 - iii. Describe any past or current coordination and communications between project team and user groups;
 - iv. Identify user contributions/partnerships if any (e.g. direct funding, in-kind support, event partnerships)

Other required documents (no page limit):

- Literature cited
- 2-page CV for PI and Co-PIs only
- Brief budget estimate following the following template:
 - a. **SENIOR PERSONNEL**
 Salary costs and amount of effort should be estimated and indicated separately for each individual involved in the project who will draw salary. Project role(s) should also briefly be explained.
 (If your LOI is selected, the formal proposal process will require additional detailed information on salary and effort.)
 - b. **OTHER PERSONNEL**
 Salary costs and amount of effort should be estimated and indicated separately for each individual involved in the project who will draw salary. Project role(s) should also briefly be explained.
 (If your LOI is selected, the formal proposal process will require additional detailed information on salary and effort.)
 - c. **FRINGE BENEFITS**
 Fringe benefit amounts.
 (If your LOI is selected, the formal proposal process will require additional detailed information, including justification and link to agreement.)
 - d. **EQUIPMENT**
 Estimate the cost of proposed equipment purchases and explain why this purchase is necessary to the success of the project.
 (If your LOI is selected, the formal proposal process will require additional detailed information.)
 - e. **DOMESTIC TRAVEL**
 Domestic travel requested for each individual, with estimated cost and the purpose of the travel.
 (If your LOI is selected, the formal proposal process will require additional detailed information.)
 - f. **OTHER DIRECT COSTS**
 ODC items should be explained in relation to the project scope of work.
 - g. **INDIRECT COSTS**
 Indirect cost rate
 (If your LOI is selected, the formal proposal process will require additional detailed information including link to agreement.)

h. **COST SHARING/MATCHING**

Please outline any cost share or matching funds dedicated to this project in the same format as above.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Senior Personnel					
Other Personnel					
Fringe					
Equipment					
Travel					
Other Direct Costs					
Institutional IDC Rate: XX%					
Total MARACOOS funding request					
Total Cost Share/Match					

Questions or comments can be directed to info@maracoos.org at any time and will be answered as received.