Research Opportunity

Call for Letters of Intent

Deadline: May 27, 2016

1. The Coastal Marine Institute
The University of Alaska Coastal Marine Institute (CMI) was established by Memorandum of Agreement between the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the University of Alaska. BOEM oversees the exploration and development of the nation's offshore energy resources and, through their Environmental Studies Program, supports scientific studies to inform responsible management of energy and marine mineral resources on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

The Alaska CMI was established to use highly qualified scientific expertise within Alaska to collect and disseminate environmental information needed for OCS oil and gas, renewable energy, and marine minerals management decisions; to address local and regional OCS-related environmental and resource issues of mutual interest; and to strengthen the BOEM-State partnership in addressing OCS oil and gas, renewable energy, and marine ecosystem information needs. Since 1993, the CMI has awarded more than $22M to fund over 85 projects and 135 years of student support.

The CMI is currently soliciting Letters of Intent toward funding research in topical areas appropriate for the Environmental Studies Program. Letters of Intent (LOI) will be jointly evaluated by BOEM and the CMI Technical Steering Committee. Study concepts selected for full proposal development will have technical merit, applicability to BOEM information needs, and will address CMI program objectives.

2. CMI Objectives
- Respond to state, local and BOEM information needs and interests relevant to OCS resource management issues utilizing local expertise of national caliber from a major research university;
- Utilize the interdisciplinary environment of a research university to foster process oriented studies, needed technologies and concepts, and syntheses of information that will benefit environmental and resource management;
- Enhance existing local capabilities and facilities for innovative scientific research;
- Achieve consensus between BOEM and the State of Alaska regarding the most important environmental research needs relevant to the OCS Program;
- Reduce the costs to the State of Alaska and BOEM of obtaining resource management information by co-funding information acquisition activities.

3. Eligibility
Research projects funded through the CMI must have a University of Alaska faculty or staff member as Principal Investigator. However, CMI welcomes LOI that include collaboration with state and local stakeholders and other scientific researchers and organizations. Student involvement is strongly encouraged.

4. The Nature of CMI Projects
The CMI is intended as a flexible funding avenue that encourages innovation, local involvement and outreach, co-funding and collaborative efforts, and participation by students, individuals and smaller teams of investigators. Successful proposals will be technically meritorious and relevant to the BOEM mission and CMI programming. Projects will be funded as individual cooperative agreements, and a BOEM Project Officer from the Alaska OCS Regional Office will be assigned to actively participate with the project. Project deliverables and timetables will be specified in individual cooperative agreements for each funded project.
5. Framework Areas
The CMI framework areas provide broad guidance for the development of specific research projects. Research should be pertinent to the OCS offshore energy and marine minerals program and provide information to support management decisions and scientific understanding of the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects of development activities. Within this context, CMI projects should address one or more of the following:

1. Scientific studies for better understanding of marine, coastal, or human environments affected or potentially affected by oil & gas exploration and extraction or renewable energy development on the OCS;
2. Modeling studies of environmental, social, economic, or cultural processes related to OCS oil & gas or renewable energy activities in order to improve scientific predictive capabilities;
3. Experimental studies for better understanding of environmental processes or the causes and effects of OCS activities;
4. Projects that improve collection or sharing of data or scientific information regarding marine or coastal resources or human activities to support prudent management of oil and gas resources; and
5. Synthesis studies of scientific environmental or socioeconomic information relevant to the OCS oil and gas and renewable energy program, including workshops and literature syntheses.

6. Environmental Studies Program Study Areas
The most relevant studies will supply information to support the analysis of the potential effects of offshore development, including oil spill risk analysis and mitigation of potential impacts on the biological and human environment. The geographic area of interest is generally limited to the Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Region, with a strong emphasis on the State and Federal oil and gas lease areas in the Beaufort Sea, Chukchi Sea, Cook Inlet and Shelikof Strait. However, research efforts outside of the Alaska Region may be considered if applicable to CMI priorities.

7. Required LOI Content
The purpose of the LOI is to identify project concepts that have sufficient merit and relevance to justify development of a full proposal. Review of LOI will emphasize the quality and usefulness of the identified research concept or study focus, general methodological approach, overall relevance to BOEM information needs and CMI programming, and student involvement and outreach.

All LOI must include:
- Cover sheet in with required content.
- Narrative of 3 pages or less, including budget table.
- Single page resumes for Principal Investigator and each Co-PI.

Required LOI Cover Page Content:
1. Base Information: Preliminary title, Principal Investigator name/affiliation/contact information;
2. Co-Investigators: Names/affiliations
3. Project Cost Estimate: Include Funding Request, Cost-share contributions, and Total Project Estimate
4. Project duration
5. Signatures: Principal Investigator and appropriate Administrative Authority (e.g. Dean/Director).

Required Narrative Sections:
1. Proposed Project: Briefly describe the project concept emphasizing the question to be asked or problem to be solved. If appropriate, state formal null hypotheses.
2. Relevance: Briefly describe the type of information that the project will produce and explain its relevance to the CMI objectives and the Framework Issues.
3. Methods: Briefly summarize methods to be used in analysis and sampling design. Indicate level of PI experience with the proposed methods. Full protocols will be requested at proposal stage.
4. Student Support: Describe anticipated student involvement /support.
5. Outreach: Describe likely outreach activities.
6. Budget: Provide a simple budget summary table (by major category); identify potential cost-share partners.
7. References: only those essential to critique project concept.

8. Format
Exclusive of the cover sheet and resumes, LOI are limited to 3 pages, using 11 point font. Non-conforming LOI will not be considered.

9. Budget and Duration
The duration and cost of CMI projects should be scientifically justified and will be carefully considered during review. Individual proposals are restricted to an award maximum $150K per project. Work performance under these awards must start before September 30, 2017 and be completed no later than two years from the start date. Total awards from this competition cycle are subject to availability of funds and will not exceed $500,000.

The LOI cover must include preliminary budget estimates, which should be based upon the actual estimated cost of research using current overhead rates and fringe benefit figures. If vessel costs are included, they should be based on current operating costs. Anticipated equipment purchases must be strongly linked with the research proposed and BOEM will retain title to equipment purchased with BOEM funds.

10. Cost-share Requirements
The LOI process is intended to stimulate research ideas and it is understood proposed budgets and matching funds will be estimates. However, CMI project awards will require 1:1 cost-share and LOI should clearly identify likely non-federal sources of match and/or in-kind contributions.

11. Routing
CMI requires signature of the Principal Investigator and appropriate Administrative Authority. Investigators should also refer to the specific submission policies of their sponsoring university, agency, department, or research unit.

12. Processing Schedule
Letters of Intent will be reviewed by the CMI Technical Steering Committee and BOEM representatives. Investigators with concepts selected for full proposal development will be notified in June 2016 and invited to respond to a subsequent NOFA anticipated for fall 2016.

13. Questions
You are encouraged to contact colleagues in the BOEM Alaska Region office to discuss concepts and ideas for LOI. If you are unsure who to contact, call Heather Crowley at (907) 334-5281 or via email at heather.crowley@boem.gov. For general questions, contact the UA CMI Program Manager, Ruth Post at rmpost@alaska.edu or (907) 474-6782.

14. Submission
Completed LOI, including cover signatures and resumes, must be submitted as a single PDF file by 5:00 PM, Friday May 27, 2016 to CMI at: cmi@alaska.edu