

Research Opportunity

Call for Letters of Intent

Deadline: November 21, 2019



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 CMI partnership promotes use of highly qualified scientific expertise within Alaska to address local and regional OCS-related environmental and resource issues of mutual interest, to strengthen the BOEM-State partnership in addressing information needs, and to collect and disseminate environmental information needed for OCS oil and gas, renewable energy, and marine minerals management decisions.

The CMI is currently soliciting Letters of Intent (LOI) toward funding research in topical areas relevant to the Environmental Studies Program. Project concepts will be jointly evaluated by the CMI Technical Steering Committee and BOEM. Study concepts selected to advance to full-proposal development will have technical merit, address BOEM information needs, and align with CMI Framework Areas.

Key Topical Areas of Interest

- Projects examining the fate and behavior of oil in the environment
- Studies of impacts from sedimentation to benthic habitats in Arctic areas
- Studies of multi and single stressors (both natural and anthropogenic) that will improve understanding of cumulative effects on the Alaska OCS environment
- Projects to support Arctic marine biodiversity monitoring
- Studies of contaminants and trace metals in Cook Inlet water
- Projects that examine adaptation and resiliency of people in the changing environment with respect to subsistence harvests, social systems, health and socioeconomic well-being, and community involvement

Geographic Regions of Interest

The geographic area of interest includes the Alaska OCS Region, with a strong emphasis on the State and Federal oil and gas lease areas in the Beaufort Sea and Cook Inlet. Other areas of focus include the Chukchi and Bering Seas. Projects outside of the Alaska Region may be considered if applicable to CMI priorities. 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. and other scientific researchers and organizations. Student involvement is strongly encouraged.

Eligibility

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

CMI 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:

- 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;
- 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;
- Experimental studies for better understanding of environmental processes or the causes and effects of OCS activities;
- 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
- Synthesis studies of scientific environmental or socioeconomic information relevant to the OCS oil and gas and renewable energy program, including workshops and literature syntheses

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.

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:

1. Cover sheet in with required content.
2. Narrative with required content (maximum 3 pages)
3. Budget, budget justification, and likely cost-share sources (maximum 2 pages)
4. Single-page resumes for Principal Investigator and each Co-PI.

Required LOI Cover Page Content:

- a. Preliminary Title, Principal Investigator name/affiliation/contact, Co-Investigators names/affiliations
- b. Project Cost Estimate: Include Funding Request, Cost-share contributions, and Total Project Estimate
- c. Project Duration
- d. Signatures: Principal Investigator and appropriate unit Administrator (LOI are not used in final awards)

Required Narrative Sections:

- a. Project Concept: Briefly describe the project concept emphasizing the question to be asked or problem to be solved. If appropriate, state formal null hypotheses.
- b. Relevance: Briefly describe the type of information that the project will produce and explain its relevance to the CMI Framework Areas.
- c. Methods: Identify 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.
- d. Student Support: Describe anticipated student involvement/support.
- e. Outreach: Describe likely outreach activities.

*****Optional*** References: only those essential to critique project concept.

Format

Exclusive of the cover sheet and resumes, LOI are limited to maximum 3-page narrative and 2-page budget. Minimum 11-point font and 1" margins. Non-conforming LOI will not be considered.

Budget and Duration

The duration and cost of project concepts should be scientifically justified and will be carefully considered during review. Individual proposals are restricted to an award maximum of \$200K per project year and \$400K per project. Work performance under these awards must start before **September 30, 2020**, 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 \$650,000.

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.

Cost-share Requirements

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. The LOI process is intended to stimulate research ideas, and it is understood proposed budgets and matching funds will be estimates.

Routing

LOI are preliminary in nature and may lead to a request for proposal. While LOI are not referenced in CMI funding agreements, CMI requires signature of the Principal Investigator and an appropriate administrative authority. Investigators should also refer to the specific submission policies of their sponsoring unit.

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 mid-December 2018 and invited to respond to a subsequent federal NOFA through grants.gov.

Questions and Submission

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 CMI Program Manager, Ruth Post, at rmpost@alaska.edu or (907) 474-6782.

Submit LOI to the CMI as a single PDF file by **5:00 PM, Thursday, November 21, 2019**, to: uaf-cmi@alaska.edu