

FY25 INTERCEPTION TECHNOLOGY APPLICANT WEBINAR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: Are recurring applicants encouraged to apply?

A: Yes, previous applicants are welcome to apply. Applicants proposing applications to renew or supplement previously-awarded NOAA projects are allowed; however such proposals will be subject to the competitive process and will not receive preferential treatment.

As a point of clarification about an FY26 competition, please note, there is no guarantee that we will have another competition in FY26; future funding opportunities are dependent on future BIL appropriations and our programmatic and agency priorities, and given our focus right now on this (FY25 competition) we, as a program, have not had any concrete discussions about our competition plans for FY26.

Q: How much of the \$54M is allocated to the Marine Debris Interception Technologies portion of the NOAA grant?

A: NOAA anticipates up to \$7,000,000 will be available for this grant solicitation. The exact amount of funds to be awarded and the number of awards made will be dependent on our budget appropriations from congress and will also be at the discretion of NOAA following pre-award negotiations with highly meritorious applicants.

Q: Can councils of government apply?

A: Yes, councils of government would be eligible applicants.

Q: Could these technologies be used in bi-national watersheds like the Tijuana River?

A: As stated previously, project activities must directly benefit NOAA trust resources and take place within the United States, its territories, or Freely Associated States. Interception technologies would therefore need to be installed within US waters for those projects occurring in crossboundary waters.

Q: Please address any requirement for, or exclusions from environmental assessments and give examples of eligible equipment.

A: NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist.

Equipment costs can be included in proposals for this competition as long as the specific need for the equipment to conduct the proposed project activities is clearly explained in the proposal in addition to a clearly stated plan for the equipment's maintenance/use following the award period. This explanation should include why the equipment is being purchased rather than leased which could include: it will be used and maintained following the award period, it is more cost-effective to purchase than lease, there are no leasing options for the equipment etc. Please note, that NOAA budget guidelines defines equipment as a purchase that has a useful life of

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more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost equal to or greater than \$5,000. Any items that cost less than \$5,000 individually should be included as supplies in your budget.

Q: I would like to know whether procedures for reducing fishery debris will be included in the scope.

A: For the purpose of this funding opportunity, marine debris interception technologies include devices (such as storm drain catchments, shoreline removal technologies, booms, skimmers, conveyors with receptacles, floating collection devices, etc.) that capture trash, plastics, and other litter or debris. Proposals that do not include the installation of these types of technologies will not be competitive.

Q: Can our program of setting up recycling infrastructure for end of life fishing nets be considered for the interception technology opportunity?

A: Again, the highest priority for this funding opportunity is to fund projects focused on the deployment of proven marine debris interception technologies in riverine, shoreline, estuarine, and urban environments where trash, plastics, and other persistent, reaccumulating litter and marine debris can be captured and removed. Recycling infrastructure is not a priority for this competition and would not be competitive.

Q: Does it hurt our chances of being selected for a preproposal if we have several NGO's teaming together?

A: No, we encourage you to include partners as necessary for a successful project. Please be sure to list the primary project partners and their roles/contributions in the LOI.

Q: Are projects such as debris interception at public drinking watersheds eligible for this funding opportunity?

A: Project activities must directly benefit NOAA trust resources and take place within the coastal United States, its territories, or Freely Associated States. Drinking water reservoirs or ponds would therefore not be competitive in this opportunity.

Q: Can for-profit companies apply for the grant to install their manufactured devices in communities who need stormwater filters?

A: Yes, commercial (or for-profit) organizations are eligible applicants for this funding opportunity.

Q: Is a designated Port Authority in the USA qualified as an applicant? Would there be any restriction for a Port Authority administered by State or a County or a City?

A: Yes, a Port Authority within the United States, territories, or Freely Associated States would be an eligible applicant. Generally there are no restrictions on them being administered by a state, county, or city.

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Q: Is there a list of registered marine contractors who perform actual debris removal?

A: No, NOAA does not provide a list of contractors, there are simply too many throughout the country for us to do that. It is up to the applicant to find appropriate contractors, typically through a competitive bidding process.

Q: Is this project to create an interception technology or award a collection technology device?

A: The overall objective of this funding opportunity is to support the installation, monitoring, and maintenance of proven marine debris interception technologies to benefit marine and coastal NOAA trust resources. This competition is not for applicants proposing to create an interception technology that has not already been proven as an effective means of intercepting marine debris in the proposed project environment. Projects that propose the deployment of prototype technologies or for technology 'R&D' will not be considered.

Q: Does the money need to be used within a certain time frame after the award?

A: The funding must be expended by the end date of the award and applications should cover a project period of two to four years in duration. This period of performance is something that you as the applicant would determine for your project.

Q: I am wondering if funds can be used to purchase laboratory instrumentation (e.g., FTIR, Raman) to support long-term monitoring efforts.

A: Generally yes, as I just mentioned equipment purchases are allowable but must be justified for the actual grant's objectives within the competition priorities. If there are long-term uses for any equipment or supplies purchased through a NOAA grant, those would be explored at the end of an award and the disposition of any equipment determined in coordination with us and our Grants office.

Q: Could we send a one-page idea description to the program office and get feedback before LOI?

A: No, we will not review any written materials ahead of the official LOI review process. However, we are happy to make ourselves available to generally discuss your project ideas and clarify any questions you may have about the competition priorities over a call.

Q: Can this Grant be used for maintenance of the existing Boom and Regular cleaning of the boom?

A: Maintenance of existing interception devices is allowable, but the proposal should be sure to emphasize the need and importance of maintaining an existing device. The highest priority for this funding opportunity is to fund projects focused on the deployment of proven marine debris interception technologies in riverine, shoreline, estuarine, and urban environments where trash, plastics, and other persistent, reaccumulating litter and marine debris can be captured and removed.

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Q: Do you need a partnership with the technology maker first before applying?

A: No, you do not need to have a formal partnership agreement with the technology manufacturer before applying. It is recommended that you do initial scoping on cost, availability, and other maintenance requirements to fully understand the scope and scale of your proposed request and to ensure the appropriate technology is being proposed to meet the needs of the project and the location.