



LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

ENHANCEMENT AWARD PROGRAM 2011 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

November 2011 (Revised December 9, 2011)

The New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) is inviting proposals for evaluation of existing near-shore water quality monitoring efforts and subsequent development of a framework for coordinated near-shore water quality monitoring throughout the Sound. The work described in this RFP is viewed as the first phase of a two-phase effort. As stated, the first phase is to evaluate current efforts and develop a framework (see Appendix A). The second phase, which will be informed by the findings and recommendations of Phase I and will be funded through a similar competitive process at a later date, will be to support implementation of the framework and to provide technical support to citizens monitoring groups. This project is intended to improve access by Long Island Sound Study (LISS) partners to quality-assured embayment water quality monitoring data, and ultimately to improve scientific understanding for more holistic management of the Sound.

This request for proposals (RFP) includes information on:

- I. Background of Long Island Sound Study (LISS) and its use of water quality monitoring data
- II. Overview of the Enhancement Award Program
- III. Enhancement Award Program General Guidelines
- IV. Guidelines for Proposal Preparation
- V. Proposal Content
- VI. Submission Process
- VII. Proposal Evaluation Process
- VIII. Contacts

Appendix A. 2011 Enhancement Award Program Priority Topic: LIS Embayment Water Quality Monitoring Coordination Phase 1: Evaluation and Development of Framework

Appendix B. Title Page Format

Appendix C. Budget Format

I. Background of Long Island Sound Study (LISS) and its use of Water Quality Monitoring Data

Long Island Sound is one of North America's most urban and biologically diverse estuaries. Although the Sound is a resource of extraordinary productivity, it is under significant stress. Accordingly, in 1987 the states of Connecticut and New York and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognized the Long Island Sound as an Estuary of National Significance. In 1994, the state and federal partners approved the Long Island Sound Study Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (LISS CCMP), which established an overall plan to restore and protect the Sound.

Periodically, the LISS has developed agreements to guide and prioritize implementation of the CCMP – such agreements were developed in 1996, 2003, and 2006. Most recently, the LISS adopted the *Action Agenda 2011-2013*, which identifies priority actions to implement the 1994 CCMP beginning in 2011 through 2013. Action 3 from the Science and Management section relates directly to this RFP (“Evaluate options for enhancing and coordinating citizen and other monitoring in embayments and harbors and analyzing these data to improve sound-wide assessments of conditions. Subsequently, make recommendations based on the feasibility, efficacy, and available funding.”)

Water quality monitoring appears in the LISS CCMP as one of the key components of the strategy to manage and reduce hypoxic conditions in the Sound. Monitoring is the only way to evaluate the Sound’s response to management actions and is a cornerstone of adaptive environmental management. To this end, LISS provides ongoing support for water quality monitoring programs, including that of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The University of Connecticut’s Department of Marine Sciences also provides continuous, real-time collection and reporting of data for certain water quality parameters through the Long Island Sound Integrated Coastal Observing System (LISICOS). While the summertime water quality surveys conducted by the Interstate Environmental Commission in the western Long Island Sound do include some embayment locations, the majority of the sampling locations for these efforts are in open water areas of the Sound due primarily to the sampling methodologies used and the objectives of these programs. .

The LISS science and management communities are becoming increasingly aware of the important roles that near-shore areas and embayments play in nutrient cycling and circulation patterns for the Sound as a whole. Embayments, harbors and inlets are the portions of the Sound that are most easily and frequently accessed by the public. They are also the areas where water quality problems and their consequences, such as beach closures, shell fisheries closures, and nuisance algae blooms, are most likely to affect local communities. As a result, several community groups around the Sound have initiated citizens monitoring programs with the goals of encouraging the people to engage with their waterfront, collecting water quality data, and raising awareness about local water quality. Some such citizens groups have sought financial support from LISS, primarily through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, to cover basic expenses such as equipment replacement/repair and lab fees. While the LISS takes a continued interest supporting and embayment monitoring programs, it is important to ensure that the data sets resulting from these myriad efforts are of suitable consistency, quality and accessibility so as to be useful to the LISS at to further scientific understanding of the Sound. This RFP solicits proposals to evaluate LISS needs for near-shore water quality monitoring data, to evaluate the current status of such monitoring efforts, and to develop a framework and quality assurance procedures to ensure more holistic and coordinated monitoring and assessment in the future. Please see Appendix A for a complete description of the work being sought.

II. Overview of the Enhancement Award Program

The LISS CCMP Enhancement Award Program is administered by NEIWPC. This RFP solicits project proposals that support the mission and goals of the LISS CCMP and LIS Action Agenda 2011-2013. . Further, project proposals submitted in response to this year’s RFP must specifically address the priorities outlined in **Appendix A**. Enhancement awards are designed to help the LISS partners implement actions consistent with the CCMP and to meet the LIS Action Agenda 2011-2013. Innovative, cost-effective proposals are sought to accomplish these goals. Proposals that do not address the specific outcomes desired will be eliminated from competition.

Applicants are encouraged to review the LISS website (<http://www.longislandsoundstudy.net>) for general information about the LISS program. Information on the LIS Action Agenda 2011-2013 is available at <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/our-mission/sound-agreements/action-agenda-2011->

2013/ Applicants are also encouraged to discuss their project plans with the priority topic contact identified in Section VIII).

III. Enhancement Award Program General Guidelines

The timeline for the 2011 LISS Enhancement Award Program is as follows:

Proposals Due to NEIWPC	January 13, 2012 February 3, 2012
Applicants Notified of Funding Decisions	February 10, 2012 March 2, 2012
Detailed Project Work plans Due	February 24, 2012 March 16, 2012
Project Start Date	March 5, 2012 April 2, 2012

Eligibility

Applicants that are eligible to submit proposals in response to this RFP include: state or local government agencies, interstate water pollution control agencies, private non-profit organizations and institutions, for-profit organizations, and educational institutions, including colleges, universities, and public or private elementary and secondary schools. Eligible applicants located outside of the Long Island Sound watershed may submit a proposal as long as the proposal documents that its objectives support the technical and logistical requirements and management priorities of the LISS.

Funding

There is \$60,000 available for this project. Proposals with budgets that exceed the identified funding need to provide justification for why the funding request is warranted to accomplish the stated objectives. Although cost share or match is not required, projects providing non-federal cost share or match will receive favorable consideration over projects without cost share or match. Cost share may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, but must be clearly explained in the proposal and must be verifiable. Awarded funds may be used for expenses directly related to the proposed project, including wages and consultant fees. Expendable and non-expendable equipment directly related to the proposed project qualify for funding; however, the purchase of high-cost items (e.g., computers, boats, etc.) is not allowed. Additional funds may be allocated in the future for model improvement and application depending on funding availability and priorities.

Quality Assurance & Quality Control Requirements

The work being requested as described in Appendix A does not constitute collection or analysis of environmental data, and thus does not require a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). However, the work does include the development of a QAPP outline for coordinated LISS embayment monitoring efforts. It is recommended that applicants be familiar with EPA QAPP requirements and procedures. It may be helpful to review EPA's Volunteer Monitor's Guide to QAPPs: <http://water.epa.gov/type/rs/monitoring/qappcovr.cfm>.

Notification of Award

Award notification to applicants is expected by ~~February 10, 2012~~ **March 2, 2012**. Funding recipients may be asked to submit a revised work plan, timeline and budget at this time. Projects cannot start until the contract is signed by both parties. NEIWPC will not reimburse any expenses incurred prior to the contract start date. Recipients will be required to submit quarterly reports documenting the project's

progress. Guidelines for preparing quarterly reports will be provided to award recipients. Recipients may be asked to prepare public-friendly articles on the project results for LISS-related publications. Recipients may also be asked to make presentations on the project results at LISS meetings after the conclusion of the project.

IV. Guidelines for Proposal Preparation

Proposals are due on Friday, ~~January 13, 2012~~ February 3, 2012, at Midnight EST. Each proposal must include a title page, a narrative, and a budget form. Proposals that do not contain all of the information requested in Section V and/or do not meet the format requirements will be eliminated from consideration. Please include a cover letter, printed on official letterhead and signed by an authorized representative of the lead agency, with each proposal.

The title page must adhere to the format provided in **Appendix B**. For your convenience, an electronic version of the title page is available as a Microsoft Word document on NEIWPC's website (<http://www.neiwpc.org/lisseqp.asp>).

The proposal narrative must address all of the information requested in **Section V.2** of this RFP, using a maximum of ten single-spaced, one-sided typed 8.5" x 11" pages with 11-point font and 1" margins. The ten pages must include all required information, including literature cited. Proposals with narratives exceeding ten pages will be eliminated from the competition. The required title page and standard budget form are not included in the ten page limit. Optional supporting materials, such as resumes and brief descriptions of relevant experience are not included in the ten page limit for the narrative, but should also not exceed five additional pages.

The budget page must adhere to the format provided in **Appendix C**. For your convenience, an electronic version of the budget form is available as a Microsoft Word document on NEIWPC's website (<http://www.neiwpc.org/lisseqp.asp>).

V. Proposal Content

1. **Title Page.** The title page must adhere to the format provided in Appendix B and include all of the following information, using a maximum of one single-spaced, one sided typed 8.5" x 11" page with 11-point font and 1" margins:
 - Title: Use the exact project title as it appears throughout the proposal.
 - Project Leader: Provide the name, title, and agency affiliation of the project leader (i.e., lead principal investigator).
 - Project Leader Contact Information: Provide the complete contact information for the Project Leader, including mailing address, phone and fax numbers, email address, and agency web site address.
 - Project Support: Provide the names, titles, affiliations, and complete contact information for each of the additional investigators or support staff who will significantly contribute to the project.
 - Project Cost: Provide the total project cost (i.e., funding request), as well as total project match (if any).
 - Abstract: The abstract must accurately describe the project being proposed and include: (1) the objectives of the project, (2) the methodology to be used (which should give an accurate description of the project as described in the proposal), and (3) the expected outputs and outcomes of the project and how it addresses this RFP, including environmental benefits to Long Island Sound. **The abstract must fit within the title page.**

2. **Proposal Narrative.** The proposal narrative must not exceed ten (10) consecutively numbered (bottom right), single-spaced, one-sided typed 8.5" x 11" pages with 11-point font and 1" margins. Documents substantiating project team qualifications (resumes, CVs, descriptions of past projects, etc.) and letters of support do not count towards the ten page limit. The ten pages must include all of the following information and must cite sources where appropriate:

- **Problem Descriptive:** Briefly describe this RFP’s topic and the Long Island Sound management need your project will address. This section can also include brief background or introductory information.
- **Objectives:** Outline the project’s objectives.
- **Methodology:** Outline the project design and describe the tasks (i.e., methods and techniques) that will be conducted to meet the project’s objectives. QAPP development must be identified as a task.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Define the roles and responsibilities of all project participants.
- **Expected Outputs and Outcomes:** Describe the project’s expected outputs and outcomes, including environmental benefits to Long Island Sound. List and describe each of the specific deliverables and end-products. An example environmental output/outcome table is below. In addition to a discussion of the environmental outcomes and outputs associated with your projects, briefly discuss the process to be used to evaluate the effectiveness and success of the project and your plans to disseminate projects results and end-products (see Appendix A for more detail on expected tasks and deliverables).

SAMPLE Environmental Outputs/Outcomes				
Project Element	Work Plan Activity/Task	Target Date(s)	Environmental Output	Environmental Outcome
Coordination Outreach Program	Sound Health Report	Month 8	Full-color, 16-page report that highlights environmental trends impacting Long Island Sound and the progress made in the effort to restore and protect the Sound.	Reduced pollution as a result of increased stewardship by an informed public.
	Web Site	Ongoing	Weekly updates on general information and current news about LISS and Long Island Sound; mechanism for accessing LISS reports and documents.	Reduced pollution as a result of increased stewardship by an informed public.
	Outreach Material	Month 12	New polluted runoff brochure, habitat restoration brochure, update habitat restoration map, update LISS general brochure, reprint curbing polluted runoff brochure and posters.	Reduced pollution as a result of increased stewardship by an informed public.

- **Timeline:** Provide a detailed timeline for meeting project objectives and identified tasks and listed deliverables. Projects should be completed within the period identified for this RFP. All timelines should be stated in terms of Month #1, #2, #4, etc. rather than specific dates, e.g.

"March 5, 2012." Although project start date is anticipated to be ~~March 5, 2012~~ **April 2, 2012**, this date may change based on the time the actual agreement is established.

- **Budget:** State the total project budget. Provide a brief justification for the proposed costs in terms of meeting project objectives. Include an explanation of how indirect costs are calculated. Justify subcontracts, if any. Identify and describe current and pending financial resources (including the source) that are intended to support the project.
3. **Project Budget Form.** Attach a detailed, itemized budget form for the entire project in the format provided in Appendix C. The budget must fit on one single-spaced, one sided typed 8.5" x 11" page with 11-point font and 1" margins.

VI. Submission Process

Applicants must submit proposals by email to Clair Ryan, cryan@neiwpsc.org, **by Midnight, EST, on Friday, ~~January 13, 2012~~ February 3, 2012**. If the proposal file size is very large (≥ 20 MB), the applicant should email Clair **before ~~January 13~~ February 3** to make alternate arrangements for transmittal.

VII. Proposal Evaluation Process

NEIWPC will screen all proposals to ensure that they meet all requirements of this RFP. If a proposal is found to be incomplete, the proposal will be eliminated from the competition, and NEIWPC will notify the applicant. Complete and eligible proposals will be reviewed by a panel composed of scientists and managers from LISS partner agencies. Proposals will also be submitted for external peer reviews. The review team will evaluate the proposals based upon the following criteria:

1. **Addresses Desired Outcome (0-25 points).** Degree to which the proposal can accomplish the desired outcomes. Clarity and measurability of deliverables/outputs within specific and reasonable time frame(s), including relationship of expected results/benefits to addressing this RFP's topic and improving management of LIS. *Please note that this Enhancement Priority Topic (Appendix A) contains five priorities. High quality proposals that address the two mandatory priorities **and** one or more of the optional priorities are likely to score higher in this category than proposals that address only the mandatory priorities.*
2. **Technical Merit (0-25 points).** Adequacy of the proposed methodology, project design, and/or technical approach to accomplish stated project objectives. If appropriate, inclusion of a technically valid, specific performance assessment plan describing measurement and reporting of outputs and outcomes.
3. **Performance Capability (0-20 points).** Ability of the applicant to accomplish the proposed project on schedule with quality, given its history of past performance, experience, qualifications, facilities, and resources.
4. **Appropriate and Cost-Effective Budget (0-10 points).** Proposals with costs up to \$270,000 will be considered, but cost and the relative value of work products will be a factor in evaluating submissions. Adequacy of the proposed budget to accomplish objectives, and adequacy of justification in explaining the need for resources for this project. If reviewing similar projects, is this project cost-effective compared with other similar projects under review? Indication of leveraged funds from other organizations. Provision of matching non-federal funds.
5. **Transferability of Results to Similar Projects and/or Dissemination to the Public (0-10 points).** Degree of transferability of data or project results to the LISS program partners. If applicable, inclusion of a public outreach or public education component that documents and/or

distributes results of the project to the appropriate audience or summarizes data for LISS distribution.

6. **Coordination with Ongoing Efforts (0-10 points).** Degree to which the project builds upon existing efforts. Demonstration of knowledge of similar efforts occurring in the watershed.

Proposals will be ranked and evaluated based upon the review teams' recommendations, external peer reviews, and the relative priority of commitments in LIS2003 and the CCMP. NEIWPCC will present the recommended project proposals to the LISS Management Committee. In turn, the Management Committee will approve or disapprove of the recommendations. Award notification is expected by Friday, February 10, 2012.

Section VIII. Contacts

For information regarding the application process, please contact **Clair Ryan**, NEIWPCC's Long Island Sound Program Coordinator, at:

Clair Ryan
New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission
116 John Street
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 349-2522
cryan@neiwppcc.org

For information regarding the embayment monitoring topic, please contact **Jim Latimer**, the Science Coordinator for the Long Island Sound Study at:

Jim Latimer
US EPA Environmental Effects Research Laboratory
27 Tarzwell Drive
Narragansett, RI 02882
(401) 782-3167
latimer.jim@epa.gov