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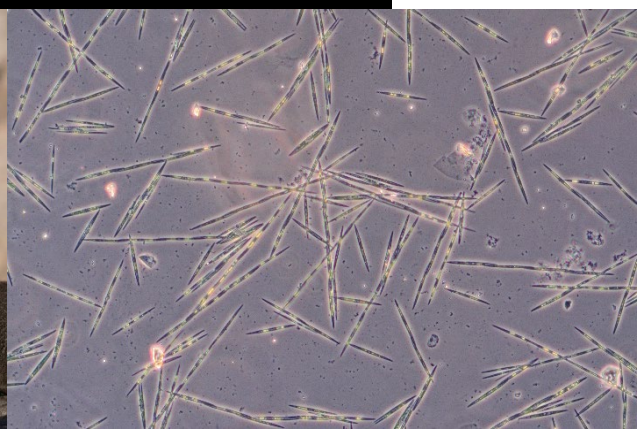

Monitoring, Research, and Modeling to Support Ocean Acidification, Hypoxia, and Marine Harmful Algal Bloom Management in California

Grant Program Funded by California Climate Investments

Grant Proposal Solicitation and Application Instructions

Contents

I. Introduction

A. Essential Background and Information

Background on OPC and the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund

The California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) was created to ensure that California maintains healthy, resilient, and productive ocean and coastal ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. OPC works with state, federal, tribal, and local entities to further the Council's goal of protecting, conserving, and maintaining California's healthy coastal and ocean ecosystems and the economies they support. The role of OPC is to recommend policy, lead and promote coordination, seek and leverage funding, inform government decision-making with the best available science, and to operate with transparency and accountability.

The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) is the funding source for California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Invest dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment – particularly in disadvantaged communities. The Budget Act of 2024 (Assembly Bill 107, Chapter 22, Statutes of 2024) appropriated $27.5 million to OPC from GGRF for grants or expenditures supporting resilience projects that conserve, protect, and restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems. Additionally, Assembly Bill 157 (Chapter 994, Statutes of 2024) further authorized certain expenditures from GGRF to improve climate change adaptation and resiliency, or to enhance environmental quality and public health for disadvantaged communities or low-income households or communities.

OPC approved updated General Grant Guidelines (Grant Guidelines) on June 10, 2025. These Grant Guidelines, which are available on the OPC funding webpage, establish the high-level process and criteria that OPC uses to solicit competitive applications, evaluate and select proposals, and distribute awards. Please review the Grant Guidelines, this Solicitation, and the Key Documents called out below very carefully and thoroughly before proceeding with the grant application process.

Background on Ocean Acidification, Hypoxia, and Harmful Algal Blooms

A consequence of increased global carbon dioxide emissions and land-based nutrient loading, **ocean acidification and hypoxia (OAH)** trigger a wide range of marine ecosystem impacts, presenting a collective management challenge for coastal California. The impacts of ocean acidification disproportionately affect sensitive species, such as calcifying marine organisms, many of which are ecologically important or support commercial and recreational fisheries. Additional evidence indicates that ocean acidification impacts may also extend throughout food webs. Similarly, low dissolved oxygen or hypoxic events are increasing in frequency and extent across the west coast, threatening the resilience and stability of marine ecosystems. Further investigation is needed to understand the biological impacts of these changes in seawater chemistry. **The main findings from awarded proposals will be used by the state to support actions to assess and manage OAH** (e.g., informing new water quality objectives and/or nutrient limits in the California Ocean Plan, informing the management of specific sources of nutrient pollution [e.g., stormwater and non-point sources], providing coastal stakeholders and managers with information about OAH conditions, developing a biological OAH indicator for OPC to assess the health of California's coast and ocean, etc.).

Marine harmful algal blooms (HABs) negatively impact California's coastal ecosystems, marine mammals and birds, fisheries, and local economies. Toxic blooms have occurred on an annual basis for the last four years in California, impacting both ecosystem health (e.g., sea lion strandings) and commercial and recreational fisheries (e.g., harvest restrictions).

Recent evidence suggests that land-based nutrient loading is increasing the window of opportunity for toxic *Pseudo-nitzschia* blooms in the Southern California Bight. In recent years some of these blooms are beginning offshore, evading detection by current monitoring systems and prohibiting early warning to coastal managers. Furthermore, dermal and respiratory irritation in humans has been reported during some dinoflagellate blooms. Early warnings of these events are critical for coastal managers, marine mammal rescue centers, recreational and commercial fisheries, aquaculturists, and public health entities to prepare for and manage the impacts of HABs. Critical to

improving early warning systems is (a) understanding the environmental drivers (both chemical and physical) of toxic blooms, (b) monitoring California waters for early signs of a bloom event, and (c) rapid and clear communication of information about blooms to stakeholders. However, further investigation is needed to develop a more comprehensive picture of HAB drivers and processes in California marine waters. Similarly, increased spatial coverage of routine monitoring (e.g., offshore and the north coast), as well as more advanced sampling tools, analytical methods, and bloom indicators are necessary to improve early warning systems. **The main findings from awarded proposals will be used by the state to support actions on HABs** (e.g., informing new water quality objectives and/or nutrient limits in the California Ocean Plan, informing the management of specific sources of nutrient pollution [e.g., stormwater and non-point sources], improving routine HAB monitoring and agency responses to HABs, providing coastal stakeholders and managers with early warning of HAB events, etc.).

The California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) is now soliciting proposals for monitoring, research, synthesis, and modeling projects that will enhance our understanding of biological vulnerability to OAH (Track 1) and the drivers, early indicators, and impacts of toxic marine HABs* (Track 2) in California. This funding opportunity will support the collection of paired chemical/biological observations or species response data related to OAH or HABs, studies that explore the efficacy and impacts of HAB control, and synthesis efforts that promote broad access and sharing of OAH or HAB data and information. This opportunity will also support modeling efforts to better understand (a) the drivers of toxic marine HABs and (b) how OAH may impact ocean biology and ecosystems. Only proposals studying California-relevant species, sampling in California waters, and/or analyzing California data will be considered.

* Cyanobacterial HABs will not be considered for funding.

B. Solicitation Overview

Funding Information

The funding information for this solicitation is as follows:

- Anticipated funding available for Tracks 1 (OAH) and 2 (HABs): $6,000,000
- Minimum and maximum award amounts: $200,000 to $3,000,000
- Anticipated maximum project length: 2.5 years
- Projects begin October 1, 2026 or later

Solicitation Schedule

The schedule for this solicitation is as follows:

Milestone	Time Period
Informational Webinar - Register Here	February 10, 2026 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. PT
Virtual Office Hours (Open Q&A Session) – Register Here	February 12, 2026 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. PT
Letters of Intent Due	March 6, 2026 5:00 p.m. PT
Letters of Intent Review and Evaluation	March 9 – April 10, 2026
Selected Applicants Invited to Submit Full Proposal	April 13, 2026

Full Proposals Due	June 12, 2026 5:00 p.m. PT
Full Proposals Review and Evaluation	June – August, 2026
OPC staff recommend selected projects to OPC for approval at quarterly Council Meeting	September 22, 2026
Grant agreements executed, projects begin	October – December, 2026

II. Solicitation Priorities

The California Ocean Protection Council was established to improve the management and protection of ocean and coastal resources and ecosystems. One of the many ways the OPC achieves this purpose is by supporting innovative research that directly informs and improves science-based policy and management. The intent of the planned solicitation is to meet the following objectives and targets of the 2026-2030 OPC Strategic Plan: Safeguarding Our Coast and Ocean for All Californians:

- Objective 1.2: Limit causes and impacts of ocean acidification, hypoxia, and harmful algal blooms.
    - Target 1.2.1: By 2027, fund at least three monitoring, research, or modeling projects that increase the state's ability to understand, anticipate, and respond to the effects of ocean acidification and hypoxia on ecosystems and coastal economies
    - Target 1.2.2: By 2028, enhance early warning systems for coastal harmful algal blooms, improving detection and real-time response to protect marine life, fisheries, public health, and seafood safety.

    - Target 1.2.3: By 2030, address nutrient impacts on coastal and ocean health by achieving the State Water Resources Control Board's existing requirements and supporting its establishment of new water quality objectives, as needed.
    - Target 1.2.4: Through 2030 and beyond, work with the State Water Resources Control Board to achieve wastewater recycling goals, consistent with the Water Supply Strategy for a Hotter, Drier California; advance coordinated investments for multi-benefit infrastructure upgrades for wastewater recycling that reduce nutrients to California's coast and ocean
- Objective 2.3: Increase safe and equitable access to the coast.
    - Target 2.3.4: By 2030, through the California Water Monitoring Council, improve seafood contamination monitoring, focusing on subsistence fishing and pollution hotspots, particularly areas impacted by PFAS and harmful algal blooms; work with tribes and local agencies to update and communicate fish advisories to minimize impacts to public health.

In addition, proposed research should align with the guiding documents listed below.

- **For Track 1: Advancing Knowledge of the Biological Impacts of OAH**
    - Biological and Chemical Monitoring Coordination Recommendations to the Ocean Protection Council from the California Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Monitoring Expert Panel
    - The West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel: Major Findings, Recommendations, and Actions
    - Enhancing California's Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Monitoring Network
    - California Ocean Acidification Action Plan
- **For Track 2: Marine HAB Research Monitoring, and Synthesis for Early Warning, Control, and Ecosystem Resiliency**
    - Framing the Scientific Opportunities on Harmful Algal Blooms and California Fisheries: Scientific Insights, Recommendations and Guidance for California

- Harmful Algal Blooms Workshop: Summary of Key Themes, Discussion Highlights & Next Steps
- Harmful Algal Bloom Control in California Coastal Waters: Workshop Proceedings, (See e.g., Finding & Recommendation #1, efficacy of HAB control technologies on California HAB species)

Details on individual solicitation tracks are provided below.

A. Track 1: Advancing Knowledge of the Biological Impacts of Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia

While chemical observations of OAH are incorporated into many routine monitoring programs, several knowledge gaps remain regarding biological impacts. Understanding how eutrophication-driven OAH impacts ecologically and economically important species is critical for enabling California to improve marine water quality and better support healthy marine ecosystems and fisheries. The objective of this track is to increase the State's ability to understand and respond to the biological effects of ocean acidification and hypoxia by supporting monitoring*, research, modeling, and synthesis activities. For monitoring projects, OPC cannot guarantee sustained monitoring support beyond the grant period. Project outcomes should be actionable and directly inform management decisions to address threats to marine water quality and fisheries, and (where appropriate) include recommendations for long-term monitoring and evaluation to support coastal and marine ecosystem health. Other management actions to be supported include establishing water quality objectives and nutrient loading standards, providing coastal stakeholders and managers with information on OAH conditions, and developing a biological OAH ocean health indicator.

Examples of priorities for this track include, but are not limited to:

- Monitoring to study the biological impacts of OAH (i.e., pairing *in situ* biological and chemical measurements).

- Developing biologically relevant thresholds and indicators for harm to/impairment of economically and/or ecologically important species sensitive to OAH in specific offshore regions or vulnerable ecosystems that are influenced by land-based OAH drivers.
- The use of molecular tools (e.g., DNA and RNA) to better understand and monitor the biological impacts of OAH.
- Food web studies that demonstrate how the impacts of OAH at lower trophic levels propagate through the rest of the ecosystem.
- Synthesis efforts that promote broad public access to biological OAH data and information.

*While place-based work is valuable, OPC will prioritize data and information collected regionally in a coordinated fashion. OPC also recommends leveraging and/or building on existing monitoring efforts where possible.

B. Track 2: Marine HAB Research, Monitoring, and Synthesis for Early Warning, Control, and Ecosystem Resiliency

Critical to improving marine HAB early warning systems is understanding the environmental drivers of toxic blooms and monitoring California waters for early signs of a bloom event. Similarly, increased spatial coverage of routine monitoring, as well as more advanced sampling tools, are necessary to improve early warning systems. The objectives of this track are to (a) better understand drivers, timing, and provenance of toxic marine HABs to inform management actions aimed at HAB prevention; (b) enhance early warning systems for coastal HABs, improving detection and real-time response to protect marine life, fisheries, public health, and seafood safety; (c) develop HAB-related water quality indicators; and (d) investigate efficacy and impacts of potential HAB bloom control strategies. These objectives may be supported by monitoring*, modeling, research, and synthesis activities. For monitoring projects, OPC cannot guarantee sustained monitoring support beyond the grant period. Project outcomes should be actionable and directly inform management actions to address threats to human, ecosystem, and economic health, and

(where appropriate) include recommendations for long-term monitoring and evaluation to support marine ecosystem and human health.

Examples of priorities for this track include, but are not limited to:

- Filling spatiotemporal gaps in marine HAB monitoring programs, especially in under-sampled areas (e.g., north coast and offshore) or identified as hotspots for HAB formation.
- Developing biologically relevant thresholds and indicators (e.g., chlorophyll a, particulate domoic acid, tissue domoic acid, etc.), related to water quality parameters, of harm to or impairment of economically and/or ecologically important species sensitive to HABs.
- Developing and/or piloting new technology to monitor and provide early warning of offshore HAB events (e.g., molecular tools, gliders, autonomous underwater vehicles, autonomous surface vehicles, Seasats Lightfish, Environmental Sample Processors).
- Expanding and standardizing the suite of variables collected during routine HAB sampling (e.g., paired biological, chemical, and physical samples; additional toxins; etc.) to better understand toxic HAB drivers.
- Improving mechanistic HAB modeling to better understand drivers of toxic blooms.
- Improving marine HAB forecast models, including tuning forecasts to important regional differences.
- Research that explores the efficacy and impacts (both costs and benefits) of real-time HAB event control strategies.**
- Food web studies that demonstrate how toxins move through trophic levels to have impacts throughout the entire ecosystem to better inform seafood safety and marine mammal care.
- Explore mechanisms of adverse effects (dermal, respiratory, gastrointestinal) in humans from dinoflagellate HAB exposure (inhaled, skin contact, incidental/non-seafood related ingestion during recreation).
- Synthesis and standardization efforts that promote consistent data quality and reporting standards, as well as broad public access to marine HAB data and summarized information.

* While place based work is valuable, OPC will prioritize data and information collected regionally in a coordinated fashion. OPC also recommends leveraging and/or building on existing monitoring efforts where possible.

** For studies examining the efficacy of HAB control technologies on California HAB species, OPC encourages applicants to submit short-term, tier 1 (laboratory experiments) studies.

C. Additional Project Characteristics

This solicitation is intended to prioritize projects that include the following characteristics, to the extent practicable:

- Projects that are innovative; demonstrate new approaches or solutions to ocean and coastal problems; employ community-based approaches; and/or address important unmet needs or gaps.
- Projects that are located in California or involving California-relevant species, California waters, and/or analyzing California-derived data.
- Projects that leverage private, federal, or local match funding or produce the greatest public benefit will be ranked higher during application scoring. Match funding is not required and interested applicants are still encouraged to apply without match funding.
- Projects that have completed and/or demonstrated progress towards acquiring required permits, if applicable to the project type and scope.

Additionally, where relevant, funded projects must include signage, acknowledgement, and/or other communication materials in accordance with OPC's Signage and Communications Materials Guide.

Environmental Documents and Permitting

OPC is required to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Applicants must consider whether their proposed project will require an environmental impact report, negative declaration, or whether a CEQA exemption applies. The status of CEQA compliance must be

addressed in the application. The project must also comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other environmental permitting requirements (e.g., Scientific Collecting Permits). If relevant, applicants will be expected to provide information about required permits and their status. If invited to submit a full proposal, applicants must include a list of all state and federal permits/authorizations required to complete the project, including whether these permits/authorizations have already been acquired.

Applicants are solely responsible for receiving and fulfilling all permitting requirements.[1] All projects must provide CEQA compliance or exemption documentation prior to project start date.

Long-Term Benefits and Data Management

All projects funded through this solicitation must provide long-term benefits to the state; "long-term benefits" are generally considered to be a minimum of 15 to 30 years. Pilot projects or scientific research projects should provide information, data, and lessons learned that would be valuable to the state over the long term.

OPC's DataONE platform will serve as the formal vehicle for delivery of all data associated with projects funded through this solicitation. OPC will work with project applicants to support data upload and compliance with OPC's data and metadata standards.

Projects collecting in situ monitoring data* should submit data for consideration in the State Water Resources Control Board Integrated Report. Submission timeframes for Integrated Report cycles and instructions, including requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs), can be found

1 Please refer to the definition of activities that are "projects" under CEQA, see Pub. Res. Code section 21065; please refer to the list of activities that are categorically exempt from CEQA, see Cal. Code of Regulations Title 14. Division 6. Chapter 3. Article 19. Categorical Exemptions.

on the State Water Resource Control Board's website.[2] Therefore, proposals including this kind of data should include a QAPP or QAPP-equivalent document as a deliverable, or reference as appropriate.

* Modeling projects that produce water quality data in state waters may also require a QAPP.

Projects that Benefit Vulnerable and Priority Populations

OPC prioritizes projects that demonstrate meaningful and direct benefits to diverse populations, particularly minority, low-income, and disabled populations, and tribal communities. OPC also prioritizes projects that demonstrate significant benefits to communities disproportionately burdened by environmental injustice and those historically excluded from decision-making processes.

Whenever possible, California Climate Investments projects should have direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to priority populations defined as disadvantaged communities[3] or low-income communities or households with incomes either at or below 80% of the statewide median or below

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2 State Water Resources Control Board, Submitting Data and Information for the Integrated Report, available at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/data-submission.html

3 The California Environmental Protection Agency currently defines disadvantaged communities as: the top 25% of census tracts experiencing disproportionate amounts of pollution, environmental degradation, and socioeconomic and public health conditions according to the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's tool; Census tracts lacking overall scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 due to data gaps but receiving the highest 5% of CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Pollution Burden composite scores; Census tracts identified in 2017 as disadvantaged, regardless of their scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0; and lands under the control of federally recognized tribes.

a threshold designated as low-income by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Applicants are asked to determine whether a project is located within or directly benefits a priority population, using the Priority Populations Map. Applicants, where applicable, must identify an important community and household need for the identified priority population, and describe how the project will provide at least one direct, meaningful, and assured benefit that addressed the identified need for the priority population.[4]

Applicants are encouraged to incorporate community engagement or workforce development, including across academic institutions and to provide early career opportunities, that target priority populations in the proposed project. OPC will use its discretion to determine whether proposed projects benefit communities and expects applicants to describe and justify how the community is served by the proposed project. Projects can demonstrate intentional community benefits through describing community partnerships and collaboration, community workforce employment, and other forms of meaningful community engagement.

III. Application Process and Requirements

This section contains instructions for proposal submission. It is the responsibility of the applicant to carefully read and follow all proposal requirements within this RFP. Compliance with the RFP instructions is mandatory for your proposal to receive full consideration. Failure to comply with the RFP instructions may cause your proposal to be deemed ineligible.

4 More information to identify community needs is available at https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/benefit-assessment-guide.

A. Grant Eligibility

Eligible Entities

Applicants that are eligible to apply consist of:

- Local, state, and federal agencies
- Public or private universities
- Nonprofit organizations (must be a 501(c)(3) as verified by the Internal Revenue Service)
- Private entities
- Federally recognized tribes: Federally recognized tribes must provide evidence of inclusion in the annually published federal register from the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to 25 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 83, Section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994.
- Non-profit organizations applying on behalf of non-federally recognized tribes, an inter-tribal consortium, tribal conservation district, or tribal partnerships: Qualified 501(c)(3) organizations must provide an IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter or printout from the IRS tax-exempt organization search tool on the official IRS website, see https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos.

All selected projects will require governing board approval or other verification that the Applicant can accept funding from the state. Applicants will be required to submit this verification before grant execution. The proposal must adhere to OPC's General Grant Guidelines.

California Native American Tribes or Partnerships with Tribes

OPC encourages applications on behalf of California Native American tribes or applicants that partner with California Native American tribes to co-design and implement the project. For any proposals submitted that include tribal partnerships, OPC will require proof of partnership in the form of a signed letter from the tribes' leadership council or chairperson, signed tribal council resolution authorizing and consenting to partnership with entity for the purpose of pursuing the project proposal, or other appropriate documentation.

Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity: Projects involving federally recognized California Native American tribes may require a limited waiver of sovereign immunity. The need for a waiver will be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the type and scope of the project. Projects that require a limited waiver include, but are not limited to:

- Land acquisition
- Capital improvement projects
- Advance payment eligibility

OPC is committed to working collaboratively with California Native American tribes to tailor waiver terms in a way that supports tribal priorities while meeting the State's legal obligations. Additionally, OPC is available to meet with a tribe should they wish to discuss this matter further prior to an application submission.

B. Solicitation Webinar and Pre-Proposal Office Hours

OPC staff will hold an **informational webinar** on **February 10, 2026, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. PT**. The webinar will provide a venue to share solicitation priorities, the proposal review process, and answer any questions prospective applicants may have. Register for the informational webinar.

OPC staff will also host **virtual "office hours" February 12, 2026, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. PT** to answer questions and provide technical assistance. Register for the office hours.

For further questions, please contact: kyla.kelly@resoucres.ca.gov

C. Letter of Intent Phase

Applicants must submit a complete Letter of Intent (LOI) in response to this solicitation. The deadline for submission is **March 6, 2026, 5:00 p.m. PT**. The LOI is the first phase of the grant application process describing the project proposal and will only be accepted during the solicitation period. The LOI is intended to provide a brief summary of the proposed project and should be

concise (no more than two pages in length). Supplementary materials such as maps, site photos, and other relevant attachments do not count toward the page limit.

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent to be eligible to submit a full proposal. Applicants must complete the following steps:

- Carefully review the OPC General Grant Guidelines and this entire Grant Solicitation.
- Download Letter of Intent template and complete per instructions
- Submit Letter of Intent (including any maps/photos/attachments) to kyla.kelly@resources.ca.gov with the subject "OAH/HABs Solicitation LOI – [Your Organization]".

Letter of Intent Screening and Review

During the Administrative Evaluation, OPC staff will review each LOI to check for completeness of all required information and to ensure that the Applicant meets the Eligibility Requirements. If the LOI is incomplete, OPC has discretion to either return the LOI to the applicant or assist the applicant with gathering additional information.

LOIs that pass the Administrative Evaluation will be scored according to the table below:

SCORING CRITERIA FOR LOI	**Points**
The applicant is an eligible entity (see section III. A. Grant Eligibility)	1
Project meets solicitation program priorities, as described for Track 1 (OAH) or Track 2 (HABs) (see section II. Solicitation Priorities)	1

The project addresses at least one of the purposes consistent with GGRF • The project supports resilience projects that conserve, protect, and restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems. • The project improves climate change adaptation and resiliency, or enhances environmental quality and public health for disadvantaged communities or low-income households or communities.	1
The project consists of work that is eligible as described in this solicitation, in terms of both project activities and long-term public benefit	1
Project is well organized, has a high likelihood of success, and is likely to be completed within the funding timeframe	1
Total Required Points	**5**

LOIs that do not receive all required points during scoring will not receive an invitation to complete a full proposal. All Applicants will be notified of the application status and reason(s) if the application is not invited to the full proposal phase.

D. Full Proposal Phase

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be provided with a full proposal template, specific instructions, and required forms to be completed. Full proposals must include a detailed scope of work, schedule, and budget for the project. The full proposal will require a complete description of the project including, but not limited to:

- Detailed description of the proposed scope of work, including long-term results and outcomes.

- Project schedule with explicit task completion dates, including a clear depiction of timing of project phases and components.
- Budget that is tied directly to the explicit task list that includes estimated rates, hours, equipment, and potential sub-contractors.
- Resumes or Curriculum Vitae of principal investigators or contractors, including previous projects that reflect sufficient aptitude in the project's focal area.
- Proof that all environmental compliance and permitting requirements will be met before OPC considers approval of the project.
- Letters of support both from within and outside of the community where the project will take place.
- A completed Corps Consultation Review Document or other evidence of consultation with the California Conservation Corps and Local Certified Community Conservation Corps.
- Consistency with, and a description of, how the proposed project aligns with GGRF and the priorities outlined in this solicitation.

E. Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals will be reviewed and scored by a minimum of three professionals with relevant expertise. Reviewers may include state and federal agency staff and others with relevant expertise, including consultants, community partners/experts, knowledge holders, and academic professionals. All reviewers other than OPC staff will be required to document that they do not have a conflict of interest in reviewing any proposals. Reviewers will be selected based on their knowledge of the priority topic areas described in the individual grant solicitation.

When evaluating project proposals, scores will be used to determine initial rankings and facilitate discussion among the review committee. After scores are collected, the review panel will meet to make their final recommendations. Scoring information on all proposals will remain confidential. To ensure a fair distribution of funds, OPC may also consider factors beyond scores such as geographic distribution of funds, previous grant performance, the likelihood of successful project

implementation, and feasibility to accept partial funding; OPC retains full discretion in approving projects to be recommended for funding.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated and scored using the evaluation criteria below. Applicants are expected to carefully review this solicitation and the provided proposal template.

SCORING CRITERIA FOR PROPOSALS	**Points**
Alignment with GGRF, OPC Priorities, and Solicitation Priorities • Does the project advance OAH or HAB science, research, monitoring, modeling, and/or synthesis, as described by Track 1 or Track 2? • Does the project support efforts to conserve, protect, and restore marine wildlife and healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems? • Does the project improve climate change adaptation and resiliency, or enhance environmental quality and public health for disadvantaged communities or low-income households or communities?	30
Actionable Outcomes and Management Relevance • Are project outcomes actionable for state water quality practitioners and management communities? • Does the project advance management and provide direct benefits to marine water quality and ecosystem and human health? • Does the project advance community benefits, such as workforce development or early career training?	25

Project Proposal Scope, Readiness, and Applicant Capacity • Does the project team have the qualifications and capacity necessary to successfully complete the project?	20
Project Methodology, Innovation, and Effectiveness • Are methods appropriate for the goals of the project, and do they include a plan for monitoring and evaluating project effectiveness?	20
Leveraging of Funding Sources • Are there any in-kind resources or leveraged funding being provided as match or leverage for the project? (Not required, but encouraged)	5
Total possible points	**100**

IV. Solicitation Updates and Contacts

Please check the OPC funding webpage regularly, subscribe to our listserv, and follow our social media for the most recent updates on this solicitation process.

Contact Information

If you have further questions about this solicitation and application process, please contact: kyla.kelly@resources.ca.gov.