NPRB Announces Structure of IERP Synthesis/Assessment

RFP Anticipated Fall 2021
SUMMARY

NPRB has committed at least $1.4M to support a synthesis that will build on the Arctic Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (IERP, 2016-2021) and an assessment for a future IERP that will continue integrated research in the Bering and Chukchi Seas, centered in the Northern Bering Sea.

NPRB anticipates releasing a Request for Proposals (RFP) in early October 2021 with a deadline of December 15, 2021. NPRB is announcing the anticipated structure of the RFP in summer 2021 to allow the research community to begin discussing ideas with potential collaborators.
BACKGROUND

Proposals will be solicited independently in the following categories and sub-categories:

**Synthesis (target $1M)**
- Synthesis – general (proposal cap $800K)
- Modeling sub-category (proposal cap $200K)

**Assessment (target $400K)**
- Sub-category – Science to synthesize existing knowledge/articulate important research questions (proposal cap $200K)
- Sub-category – Identification of research needs – commercial fisheries (proposal cap $100K)
- Sub-category – Identification of research needs – marine species of subsistence importance (proposal cap $100K)

An individual (or team of collaborators) may submit multiple proposals under any or all of the categories and sub-categories.

New field data collection will not be supported by the Synthesis or Assessment.

The Assessment represents a forward-looking exercise that will provide input to NPRB that will be used to develop the next IERP. The Board has stated that the next IERP will continue integrated work in the Bering and Chukchi centered in the Northern Bering Sea. Areas of interest include how shifts in environmental conditions and processes may influence species of commercial, ecological and subsistence importance, and implications for state and federal fisheries management and communities that depend on these resources.

Several other organizations have expressed interest in funding the synthesis/assessment in partnership with NPRB. The North Slope Borough/Shell Baseline Studies Program has already committed additional funds. Other partners are welcome. Proposers will be asked to confirm that NPRB may share their proposal with partner organizations that may be interested in supporting their research. Depending on partner contributions, the total funding awarded via this competition may exceed $1.4M.

NPRB welcomes a variety of approaches to research, including cooperative research with industry, data rescue, community involvement, validation of new technology, Indigenous-led research, or co-production of knowledge with Alaska Native Tribes and/or Tribal Organizations.
NPRB EXPECTATIONS BY CATEGORY/SUB-CATEGORY

Synthesis (target $1M)
No proposal may exceed $800K. Any proposal may include modeling as a component of a larger project. A separate sub-category will welcome modeling proposals specifically, and those proposals may not exceed $200K.

NPRB expects Synthesis proposals to use data collected by the Arctic IERP and data collected by other research programs (e.g., Bering Sea IERP, Bering Ecosystem Study, Pacific Marine Arctic Regional Synthesis, Distributed Biological Observatory). Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge is encouraged.

NPRB recommends that synthesis proposals include plans for a workshop(s) to synthesize information across disciplines. NPRB staff will attend and participate in such events at NPRB’s expense.

Assessment (target $400K)
Products developed in the Assessment category must be delivered to NPRB by January 2024 to inform the development of the next IERP.

If assessment proposals include plans for workshops, NPRB staff will attend such events at NPRB’s expense.

- **Sub-category – Science to synthesize existing knowledge/articulate important research questions (proposal cap $200K)**
  NPRB expects proposals submitted in this sub-category to synthesize existing information, including Indigenous Knowledge, and articulate pressing research questions that require an integrated ecosystem research approach (i.e., multi-disciplinary and focused on understanding mechanistic processes in marine ecosystems). Attention should be given to NPRB’s stated areas of interest for the future IERP that include “how shifts in environmental conditions and processes may influence species of commercial, ecological and subsistence importance, and implications for state and federal fisheries management and communities that depend on these resources.”

- **Sub-category – Identification of research needs – commercial fisheries (proposal cap $100K)**
  NPRB expects proposals submitted in this sub-category to identify research needs with respect to species of commercial importance and implications for state and federal fishery management. The perspectives of various sectors of the commercial fishing industry should be included.

- **Sub-category – Identification of research needs – marine species of subsistence importance (proposal cap $100K)**
  NPRB expects proposals submitted in this sub-category to identify research needs with respect to marine species of subsistence and/or cultural importance and implications for coastal communities (e.g., food security) and management. NPRB encourages Indigenous-led proposals. All applicants should articulate plans to incorporate the perspectives of Alaska Native communities, Alaska Native Tribes and Tribal organizations, Alaska Native co-management organizations, and/or Alaska Native corporations.
NEXT STEPS

NPRB anticipates releasing the RFP in early October 2021 and will share information over the coming months via the NPRB website (https://www.nprb.org/nprb/integrated-ecosystem-research-program/#2021-rfp_ierp_synthesis_assessment). NPRB anticipates a proposal submission deadline in mid-December 2021.

Anticipated NPRB products forthcoming in summer/fall 2021 include:

- a brochure describing the important results of the Arctic IERP;
- a data portal to facilitate discovery of Arctic IERP data and metadata; and
- a contact list of Arctic IERP investigators by discipline.

NPRB will maintain a list of interested parties on its website to facilitate the development of new collaborations and a link to a form will be provided via the website.

NPRB plans to host an informational webinar following the release of the RFP.

Questions may be directed to Danielle Dickson, Senior Program Manager/Chief Officer for Collaboration & Synthesis (Danielle.Dickson@nprb.org) or Matthew Baker, Science Director (Matthew.Baker@nprb.org).