Integrated Ecosystem Research Program Request for Proposals
Synthesis/Assessment

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: December 15, 2021 4:00 PM AKST

Project Period: Synthesis: June 2022 – September 2025
Assessment: June 2022 – September 2024
Eligibility: Any federal, state, tribal, private, or foreign organizations/governments
Submission site: https://grants.nprb.org/ierp/2022

PROGRAM CONTACTS

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I. Background

The North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) was established by the U.S. Congress to recommend marine research to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. The enabling legislation states: "The Board shall seek to avoid duplicating other research activities and shall place a priority on cooperative research efforts designed to address pressing fishery management or marine ecosystem information needs. Approved research projects are funded through a competitive grant program, using a portion of the interest earned from the Environmental Improvement and Restoration Fund. These funds must be used to conduct research activities on, or relating to, fisheries and marine ecosystems in the North Pacific Ocean, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, and Arctic. NPRB prioritizes research that improves understanding of marine ecosystems and enhances effective fishery management and sustainable use of marine resources."

NPRB developed the Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (IERP) to support innovative multi-disciplinary research to improve understanding of the complex mechanistic processes that influence the structure and function of marine ecosystems. IERP investigations include, for example, studies of the processes that affect productivity, organize biological communities, shape species interactions, and influence ecosystem services for communities and industry. IERP research is explicitly intended to identify and characterize important ecosystem attributes and processes to improve our ability to forecast and respond to environmental change.

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The program promotes collaboration across disciplines (e.g., oceanography, fisheries, social science) and integration across ecosystem components (e.g., physics, chemistry, plankton, invertebrates, fishes, marine birds and mammals, humans). It also advances partnership and exchange among the wide range of entities and institutions responsible for implementing research and management in the North Pacific.

NPRB implements IERPs in three phases: assessment, field research, and synthesis. Once NPRB has determined the general area of focus for a future IERP, the assessment phase documents sources of existing knowledge provided by past studies to serve as a foundation that future work will build on and articulates priorities for future research. The IERP itself represents the field research phase and is typically five years in duration, with two or three years of intensive field data collection. The synthesis phase provides an opportunity to examine and further explore the data collected during the field program in ways that go beyond the original scope of the proposed research. The synthesis phase is intended to welcome new collaborators with fresh perspectives and to leverage opportunities to analyze data that were collected unexpectedly.

Arctic IERP

The Arctic IERP (2016-2021) invested approximately $18.6 M and advanced understanding of the linkages between the Northern Bering Sea and the Arctic. The program examined how productivity and biological rate processes established during spring in the Bering Strait region influence the ecology of the Chukchi Sea during summer and fall. It also facilitated discussion about the relative influences of environmental change and socioeconomics on food security for Arctic residents.

The Arctic IERP was funded in partnership with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, North Slope Borough/Shell Baseline Studies Program, and Office of Naval Research Marine Mammals and Biology Program. Significant in-kind support was provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, University of Alaska Fairbanks, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and National Science Foundation. Shell and ConocoPhillips provided $1.5 M to support the Pacific Marine Arctic Regional Synthesis (PacMARS) project that NPRB administered 2012-2014 that served as the assessment phase for the Arctic IERP.

Synthesis (Arctic IERP – Synthesis Phase)

This Request for Proposals (RFP) provides funding for the synthesis phase of the Arctic IERP. This phase of IERP programming aims to leverage program data and integrate new data to address new questions or a further developed set of questions. This phase is designed to further explore and apply research findings, exploit data collected opportunistically through the program to address new research questions, and explore means to integrate research results to inform applied management. For reference, the results of the Arctic IERP are summarized in a brochure available on the NPRB website. Outlines of the final reports of Arctic IERP projects that include abstracts for each chapter and the peer-reviewed publications published to date are available on the NPRB website.

Assessment (Northern Bering Sea IERP – Assessment Phase)

This RFP provides funding for the assessment phase of a new IERP centered in the Northern Bering Sea. The Arctic IERP documented significant changes in the physical and biological environment in the Northern Bering and Chukchi Seas. To build on this research, NPRB will devote funds to a future IERP that will further investigate the changing ecosystem in the Northern Bering Sea and adjacent regions. The future IERP will be centered in, but not limited to, the Northern Bering Sea. Research that links to adjacent regions (e.g., Pacific Basin, Bering Sea, Chukchi Sea, Arctic Basin) and related processes in those regions are welcome. 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. Assessment projects will provide NPRB input to guide the direction of the future IERP.

The Board intends to distribute funds during the Spring 2022 Board meeting.

Table 1. Categories, proposal caps, and target funding for the IERP Synthesis/Assessment.

CATEGORY	Proposal cap	Category target
Synthesis		$1,600,000
Synthesis - General	$800,000	
Synthesis – Modeling only	$200,000	
Assessment		$600,000
Assessment – Science to synthesize existing knowledge/articulate important research questions	$200,000	
Assessment – Research Needs-Commercial Fisheries	$100,000	
Assessment – Research Needs-Marine Species of Subsistence Importance	$100,000	

Funding limits apply to the entire project, not per year. Proposal caps indicate the maximum allowable request by an individual proposal. The category target indicates the total amount of money the Board plans to allocate to a suite of proposals for Synthesis or Assessment (actual funding amounts may differ from targets). The total amount of funding awarded may increase depending on the contributions of funding partners.

Applicants have the option to be considered for funding by partner organizations and must opt-in during the proposal submission process to authorize NPRB to share the proposal with partner organizations. Several organizations have expressed interest in partnership and proposers who opt-in authorize NPRB to share the proposal with any of these organizations. If applicants have concerns about sharing a proposal with a specific organization, contact Danielle Dickson, Senior Program Manager/Chief Officer for Collaboration and Synthesis (Danielle.Dickson@nprb.org).

An individual (or team of collaborators) may submit multiple proposals under any or all of the research categories. Independent proposals are required under each category.

RESEARCH CATEGORIES

SYNTHESIS

Synthesis - General

The individual proposal funding cap for this category is $800,000.

Any proposal in this category may include modeling as a component of a larger project. A separate Synthesis-Modeling category will welcome modeling proposals specifically, and those proposals may not exceed $200K.

NPRB expects the use of data collected by the Arctic IERP to figure prominently in Synthesis proposals. Synthesis proposals are also strongly encouraged to use data collected by other research programs (e.g., Bering Sea IERP, Bering Ecosystem Study, Pacific Marine Arctic Regional Synthesis, Distributed Biological Observatory, Arctic Marine Biological Observation Network, Russian-American Long-Term Census of the Arctic, Chukchi Sea Environmental Studies Program). Applicants are welcome to use any data that can be made public at the end of the project. Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge is encouraged.

Applicants should identify the datasets that will be used to meet each objective and demonstrate (e.g., via preliminary analyses) that the data planned for use in the analyses will support addressing the research questions posed in the proposal.

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.

Synthesis - Modeling

The individual proposal funding cap for this category is $200,000.

The Synthesis-Modeling category welcomes proposals that use a modeling approach exclusively to address the research questions. Proposals in this category may seek to develop and/or refine and validate models. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use data or results of the Arctic IERP and other research programs as the basis for model development, refinement, or validation.

Applicants should clearly describe the data and models planned for use in the analyses, including any assumptions. Applicants are strongly encouraged to demonstrate (e.g., via preliminary analyses) that the data planned for use in the analyses will support addressing the research questions posed in the proposal. NPRB welcomes modeling proposals that seek to hindcast and/or forecast or to explore interactions and processes. NPRB welcomes a variety of approaches to modeling ranging from conceptual to quantitative models.

If proposals include plans for workshops, NPRB staff will attend and participate in such events at NPRB's expense.

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Products developed in the Assessment category must be delivered to NPRB by January 2024 to inform the development of the next IERP. Projects must conclude by September 2024.

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

Assessment - Science to synthesize existing knowledge/articulate important research questions

The individual proposal funding cap for this category is $200,000.

NPRB expects proposals submitted in this category to synthesize existing information, including Indigenous Knowledge, and articulate pressing research questions that might be addressed in a future IERP. Research questions and priorities should be identified that would be best addressed using 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".

Applicants should identify the datasets that will be used to meet each objective and demonstrate (e.g., via preliminary analyses) that the data planned for use in the analyses will support addressing the research questions posed in the proposal. NPRB strongly encourages applicants to use data collected by the Arctic IERP, Bering Sea IERP, Bering Ecosystem Study, Pacific Marine Arctic Regional Synthesis, and/or Distributed Biological Observatory. Applicants are welcome to use any data that can be made public at the end of the project.

Assessment - Identification of research needs - commercial fisheries

The individual proposal funding cap for this category is $100,000.

NPRB expects proposals submitted in this category to identify research needs with respect to marine species of commercial importance and implications for state and federal fishery management. The perspectives of various sectors of the commercial fishing industry should be actively solicited, documented, and included.

Assessment - Identification of research needs - marine species of subsistence importance

The individual proposal funding cap for this category is $100,000.

NPRB expects proposals submitted in this 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 solicit and incorporate the perspectives of Alaska Native communities, Alaska Native Tribes and Tribal organizations, Alaska Native co-management organizations, and/or Alaska Native corporations.

APPROACHES

Proposals submitted under any research category are welcome to incorporate one or more of the APPROACHES described below to qualify for additional recognition. A description of how each selected approach improves the methods, study design, products of the research, and utility of the deliverables will be required during proposal submission.

Community Involvement: The project must be designed, co-designed or initiated by the relevant local Alaska Native Tribe(s) or community(s). Evaluation of this approach will include: the extent to which the Tribe(s) or community(s) are directly engaged in the project (from conception and design to data collection, analysis and dissemination), applicability to pressing community needs, and the extent to which the project will improve shared understanding between scientists and community members. Support letters from the relevant community institutions are also required at the time of submission.

Cooperative Research with Industry: Evaluation of this approach will include: the extent to which the industry partner is directly engaged in the project (from conception and design to data collection, analysis and dissemination), applicability to pressing management needs of the industry, the extent to which the project will improve shared understanding between science and industry, the use of industry-collected data, and the extent to which the project may promote future collaboration. Proposals must include a cooperative plan and support letters describing how the research and participants will benefit from the perspectives and skill sets of each partner.

Technology Development: Evaluation of this approach will include: the extent to which proposals validate the performance of recently-developed technology. Proposals that seek to develop new technology will not be considered under any category in this RFP.

Data Rescue: Evaluation of this approach will include: the extent to which proposals transfer outdated electronic records to current archiving methods or transcribe hard copy records to accessible electronic formats. Proposals must include: a description of the current nature and state of the data (location, format, content, completeness, risk of loss), assurances that the data are not already a component of an accessible portal, an explanation of the utility of the dataset to relevant science and management issues, and a robust metadata and data management plan.

RESOURCES

NPRB will provide resources relevant to this RFP at https://www.nprb.org/nprb/integrated-ecosystem-research-program/#2021_rfp_ierp_synthesis_assessment. These resources may include the following:

- a brochure describing the important results of the Arctic IERP;
- a data portal to facilitate discovery of Arctic IERP data and metadata;
- outlines of the final reports of projects resulting from the Arctic IERP (2016-2021) that will include abstracts for each chapter;
- peer-reviewed publications resulting from the Arctic IERP;
- a contact list of Arctic IERP investigators by discipline; and
- a list of interested parties (name, affiliation, email address, area(s) of expertise/interest) to facilitate the development of new collaborations and a link to a form that will allow users to add their own information.

NPRB plans to host an informational webinar following the release of this RFP. The date & time of the webinar and connection information will be advertised on the website and a recording will be posted after the event.

II.Proposal Preparation https://grants.nprb.org/ierp/2022

All proposals are uploaded through the online submission system, which is optimized for Google Chrome. Other browsers such as Internet Explorer, Edge, and Safari may not provide full functionality. The site is not designed to function on mobile devices such as iPads, Android tablets, smartphones, etc.

The proposal submission system structure and instructions on each screen differ among the five research categories. Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review the system specific to each category in which they plan to submit a proposal before beginning work on a proposal.

An individual (or team of collaborators) may submit multiple proposals under any or all of the five research categories. Independent proposals are required under each category. Each proposal will be reviewed by different peer reviewers. If you submit multiple proposals, each will be evaluated independently.

Proposals may be accessed and edited up until the time of submission. Templates are required for the Timeline, Budget, and Signatures sections. Applicants may download a PDF version of their proposal using the Menu>Download Proposal as PDF function found in the upper right corner of any page.

The research proposal package includes the following sections (these may differ somewhat by research category):

1. Research Category
2. Title & Period
3. Abstract (maximum 300 words)
4. Contacts
5. Descriptors
6. Background (maximum 1,000 words)
7. Objectives (maximum 60 words each)
8. Design & Approach (maximum 4,000 words)
9. List of Data Sources
10. Figures, Tables & Equations
11. List of Stakeholder/Tribal Participants
12. List of Anticipated Products
13. Management or Ecosystem Implication (maximum 300 words)
14. Engagement Strategy (maximum 500 words)
15. Project Management
16. Timeline & Milestones (template)
17. Budget (template)
18. Supplemental Documents
19. Review Criteria
20. References
21. Upload Summary

22. Signatures (template)
23. Review & Submit

Proposals with multiple organizations should be uploaded by the lead organization. Contacts, budget, and signature pages are required for each organization requesting funds.

Detailed instructions by section:

1. **Research Category.** Select one research category under which the proposal will compete. An individual (or team of collaborators) may submit multiple proposals under any or all of the research categories. Independent proposals are required under each category. Please note that subsequent sections and instructions differ somewhat among research categories. Select one of the following five options:

   Synthesis – General

   Synthesis – Modeling

   Assessment – Science to synthesize existing knowledge/articulate important research questions

   Assessment – Identification of research needs - commercial fisheries

   Assessment – Identification of research needs - marine species of subsistence importance

2. **Title & Period.** Include a long title of up to 120 characters, and a short title of up to 60 characters. Provide a start and end date (i.e., month and year) for your project. Projects should plan to begin in June 2022. Products intended to inform NPRB's plans to develop a new Integrated Ecosystem Research Program should be delivered by Jan. 2024. Most Assessment projects should end by Jan. 2024, and all must end by Sep. 2024. Synthesis projects must end by Sep. 2025. NPRB must expend a portion of the funds advertised in this RFP by Sep. 2024.

   Applicants should indicate if they wish to be considered for funding by partner organizations. By checking the box to authorize NPRB to share your proposal with potential partner organizations, you are authorizing NPRB to share your proposal with representatives of any potential partner funding organization, with the expectation that they will keep it confidential. If you have concerns about NPRB sharing your proposal with a specific organization but wish to be considered by others, contact Danielle Dickson, Senior Program Manager/Chief Officer for Collaboration and Synthesis (Danielle.Dickson@nprb.org) to request special case handling of your proposal.

3. **Abstract** (300 words). Explain the goal and value of the proposed project and how your research is relevant to the mission of NPRB using language understandable by the general public.

4. **Contacts.**

Investigators:

- **Authorized Organizational Representative.** This person provides legally-binding authorization for the organization. An AOR has institutional authority to legally bind the institution in grants administration matters. The individual fulfilling this role may have any number of titles in the grantee organization. Full contact information is required.

- **Lead Principal Investigator.** There is only one Lead Principal Investigator per proposal. The Lead PI will have oversight of scientific content, project management and completion. Full contact information and curriculum vitae (CV maximum 2 pages) is required.

- **Principal Investigator.** There must be (only) one PI for each organization requesting funds. Full contact information CVs (maximum 2 pages) are required.

- **Co-Investigator** (if applicable). Co-Investigators receive funds for their involvement with the project. Full contact information is required.

- **Unfunded Collaborator** (if applicable). Any participant that does not receive funds falls under this category. Full contact information is required.

- **Contractor** (if applicable). Person(s) committed to work on a specific task but not responsible for the completion of the project as a whole. Full contact information is required.

Grants Manager. Person responsible for the financial administration of the grant (e.g., Office of Sponsored Programs). Full contact information is required.

Suggested Reviewers. Identify person(s) not associated with individuals or institutions submitting this proposal, but with sufficient expertise and credentials to review the proposal in an objective manner. Full contact information is required for a <u>minimum of 10 people</u>. There is no limit on the number of suggested reviewers you may enter and entering suggested reviewers will assist the NPRB Program Manager in securing strong peer reviews for your proposal. The following individuals are not eligible to serve as reviewers for your proposal:

- The individual is a member of an organization that has provided a letter of support.

- The individual has significant financial interest in the proposal.

- The individual is employed at the same organization as a PI or Co-PI on the proposal.

- The individual is part of a collaboration with a PI or Co-PI on a project, book, article, report/paper within the last 24 months.

- The individual is also submitting a proposal in response to this RFP.

- The full conflict of interest policy is located at http://www.nprb.org/nprb/about-us/#policies.

Unacceptable Reviewer (if applicable).

5. **Descriptors.** Identify the relevant large marine ecosystem(s), approach (if applicable), species identification (if applicable), and proposal keywords. Justification for the selection of any approach must be provided.

6. **Background** (max. 1,000 words). Proposals will be evaluated on their understanding of the problem being addressed, the present state of knowledge in the field, and the measurable benefits that will result from the proposed research. Objectives, hypotheses, and research design should be included in later sections. It is highly recommended that large amounts of text be prepared in Word or a similar application to be cut and pasted into this section.

7. **Objectives** (max. 60 words each). Objectives should be concise, lie within the scope of the project, and provide a discrete intended outcome. Multiple objectives may be included using the "Add Objective" button at the bottom of the page. The order of the objectives may be changed using the drag and drop feature.

8. **Design & Approach** (max. 4,000 words). Research design and methods should be detailed in this section. <u>NOTE that the instructions differ among the five research categories.</u> (See the instructions specific to each category in the proposal submission system.) Present a clear list of hypotheses as appropriate. New field data collection will not be supported. Identify the datasets that will be used to meet each objective and demonstrate (e.g., via preliminary analyses) that the data planned for use in the analyses will support addressing the research questions posed in the proposal. Describe the statistical and analytical approach, including assumptions. Figures, Tables, and Equations should be uploaded in subsequent sections.

9. **List of Data Sources** (max. 60 words each). List each data source you plan to use to meet your project's objectives. Use the "Add" button at the bottom of the page to list each data source independently. Indicate if the data are publicly available and identify the location and if not publicly available, confirm that the data holder is associated with the proposal or provide a data sharing agreement. Awardees must agree to transfer all data and metadata to NPRB at the completion of the project according to the following metadata and data transfer policy: i) for projects involving data collection or generation, NPRB requires a copy of the data and associated metadata; ii) for any third-party datasets used in the NPRB-funded project, only the transfer of the metadata associated with the third-party data is required; iii) if third-party data are modified for use in the NPRB funded project, the metadata associated with the third-party data is required in addition to the modified dataset and the associated metadata; iv) transfer requirements for modeling projects will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The final 10% of funds will not be reimbursed until the data and metadata are provided to NPRB for archive in publicly-accessible repositories (e.g. DataONE). The order of the data sources may be changed using the drag and drop feature.

10. **Figures** (max. 4), **Tables** (max. 2) & **Equations** (unlimited). All files in this section are optional and should be uploaded in PDF format. Figure legends and table headers should be included in each file as part of the image. Multiple equations may be included in a single PDF upload. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the resolution and size of each file conforms to one standard page.

11. **List of Stakeholder/Tribal Participants** (max. 60 words each). List each stakeholder group, Tribe or Tribal organization that will participate in or contribute directly to the products of the project. Use the "Add" button at the bottom of the page to list each independently. The order of the list may be changed using the drag and drop feature. This section is only required of proposals in the Assessment categories that seek to identify research needs with respect to commercial fisheries and marine species of subsistence importance.

12. **List of Anticipated Products** (max. 60 words each). Concisely list each product anticipated to result from the proposed research project. Use the "Add" button at the bottom of the page to list each independently. The order of the list may be changed using the drag and drop feature.

13. **Management or Ecosystem Implication** (max. 300 words). Describe how the research addresses pressing fishery management or ecosystem information needs (i.e., the NPRB mission). This section is reviewed critically by the NPRB Science and Advisory Panels and the Board.

14. **Engagement Strategy** (max. 500 words). NPRB takes an active role in developing outreach products and coordinated engagement strategies for Integrated Ecosystem Research Programs to ensure that communication about any aspect of an IERP acknowledges the breadth and scope of the entire program and all funding partners. Strong interaction and engagement among stakeholders and/or target audiences is expected of all projects, regardless of the type of study, and IERP participants will cooperate with NPRB to contribute to such activities. Proposals are not required to include outreach activities in their budgets. However, in this section of the proposal, applicants should share their ideas about how the project could contribute to creatively engage audiences and incorporate a variety of knowledge sources. Applicants should describe how the anticipated results of the project will be useful to stakeholders and/or Alaska Native tribes or tribal organizations. Emphasis should be placed on the incorporation of clearly-described, project-appropriate methods of communication and participation and/or engagement. Applicants are encouraged to visit the NPRB Communications and Outreach Resources webpage for ideas on how to creatively engage audiences and incorporate a variety of knowledge sources.

Innovative approaches to the inclusion of local and/or traditional knowledge, communities, and/or stakeholders in project planning is encouraged. Applicants should identify which groups were involved and at which stage in the project. Proposals for research engaging or impacting Alaskan communities are strongly encouraged to include a letter of support from the appropriate local or tribal governing bodies at the time of submission.

15. **Project Management.** Describe how the expertise of the PI and other team members relates to the successful completion of the project. Explain the coordination and collaboration plan for multiple institutions, and any plans for coordination with other ongoing or proposed projects. Define the anticipated dissemination of results. All permits are the responsibility of the Applicant.

16. **Timeline & Milestones** (template). An Excel template will be auto-populated with project dates and objectives. Enter the responsible person(s) for each task. Finalize the Title and Period and Objectives before downloading the template. Any changes to these components after the timeline upload will not auto-update until the existing file is deleted. Include attendance of at least one project representative at AMSS following substantial project completion.

17. **Budget.** All budgets should be prepared in U.S. currency to the nearest dollar. Cost sharing is not required but leveraging of other support is encouraged.
    a. **Overview.** Identify each Institution requesting funds and the total amount of each budget. Any in-kind or other support should also be entered here. Confirm that the amounts entered correspond exactly with the Budget Detail.
    b. **Budget Summary** (template). Complete and upload the provided Excel template for each institution requesting funds.
    c. **NICRA.** A copy of the current federally negotiated indirect cost-rate agreement (NICRA) is required for all organizations requesting indirect cost recovery greater than 10% of total direct costs. Organizations without a current federally negotiated NICRA may request a 10% indirect cost recovery. A memo to this effect specifically identifying the institution should be uploaded in lieu of a NICRA. The total dollar amount of the indirect costs proposed must not exceed the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by a cognizant federal agency prior to the proposed effective date of the award, or 100% of the total proposed direct cost amount in the application, whichever is less. Profit is not an allowable cost. For-profit organizations are strongly encouraged to consult the Program Manager well in advance of submission to ensure that any rate agreement meets NPRB's compliance requirements. Proposals rejected due to administrative errors will not have an opportunity to resubmit after the proposal deadline.

18. **Supplemental Documents** (Letters of Support, MOUs, Quotes). All letters of support are due at the time of proposal submission. Manuscripts are not considered acceptable supporting documents. Documents that do not fall into the categories listed above will be removed.

19. **Review Criteria.** This section is designed to identify the relevant fields of expertise applicable to review the proposal, not the expertise of the applicant. If no fields on the page apply, leave it blank and move to the next page. Note that the fields are the same for all NPRB programs and are not specific to this IERP synthesis/assessment RFP. Some fields may not be applicable. A minimum of 5 identifiers is required.

20. **References.** List all sources of information cited in a consistent format appropriate for a major journal such as ICES Journal of Marine Science.

21. **Upload Summary.** This page will list all uploaded documents.

22. **Signatures.** The system will generate a signature page for each organization requesting funds. The Authorized Organizational Representative should sign this page. The signature on this page certifies that the proposal, in its entirety, has been submitted according to the submitting organization's standard proposal approval process.

    The lead organization is responsible for the entry and upload of all information in any collaborative proposal.

23. **Review & Submit.** The system will not complete the submission process until all error messages have been resolved. Use of the PDF download tool for review prior to submission is highly recommended. Proposals may not be modified after submission.

III. Process & Review

Proposal Confidentiality. Full proposals are confidential within the constraints of peer review until U.S. Secretary of Commerce approval. Proposals submitted by applicants who indicate their willingness to be considered for co-funding opportunities may also be reviewed by representatives of potential partner organizations.

Consultation with Interested Parties. The board and staff may consult with NOAA and other federal and state agencies, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and other entities, as appropriate, who may be affected by or have knowledge of a specific proposal or its subject matter.

Responsiveness. Proposals that do not meet RFP requirements or responsiveness standards will be disqualified prior to peer review. Notification of disqualification will be provided by Staff.

Peer review. Regional, national, and international experts are invited to provide independent, anonymous reviews in compliance with the NPRB Conflict of Interest Policy.

Science Panel Review. Two Science Panel members provide individual and summary evaluations to the full panel that incorporate the findings of external peer reviews. Each proposal is assigned into one of the following Tiers:

> **Tier E. Exceptional.** Proposals deemed as exceptional science with an additional element of time sensitivity, technical robustness, or specific responsiveness to the RFP.

> **Tier 1. Excellent/Very Good.** Proposals deemed as excellent or very good science.

> **Tier 2. Very Good/Good.** This tier is considered the baseline expectation for a funded proposal. Tier 2 proposals represent solid science with expectations of success but with some room for refinement or clarification.

> **Tier 3. Fair/Poor.** Tier 3 proposals are not candidates for funding.

Science Panel review criteria will include the following:
- Soundness of conceptual design/analytical approach (50%)
- Balance of data from Arctic IERP and other sources and/or stakeholder/Tribal involvement (20%)
- Timelines and Milestones (10%)
- Project Management (10%)
- Project Costs (10%)

Advisory Panel Review. The Advisory Panel will review Tier E, 1 and 2 proposals for special stakeholder, public interest, or community and other societal relevance. Proposals will be endorsed by the Advisory Panel to highlight those that present a strong engagement strategy, demonstrate excellence in

addressing stakeholder needs relevant to the NPRB mission (i.e., fisheries management or ecosystem information needs), and/or were developed in partnership with relevant stakeholders, Alaska Native Tribes, or Tribal Organizations.

Board Review. The board will consider peer reviews, Science Panel, and Advisory Panel input for proposals ranked Tier E, 1 or 2. Scientific merit will be the primary criterion; however, other factors may be considered, including but not limited to:

- pressing fisheries management needs
- ecosystem information needs
- inclusion of Indigenous partners during proposal development
- other projects currently funded on a similar topic
- overlap with other ongoing programs
- competitiveness relative to other proposals of equal merit within a topical area
- category target funding amounts published in the RFP
- previous performance of applicants.

Peer reviews, Science Panel summaries and board funding recommendations will be provided to the applicant.

Secretary of Commerce Review. All recommendations of the board are subject to final approval by the Secretary of Commerce, who must ensure that the project recommendations are consistent with the terms of the NPRB grant award, federal law, and the enabling legislation.

IV. Award Administration

This RFP is a solicitation of offers and should not be construed as an expectation of award. The NPRB is not obligated to award any specific project, number of projects or available funds. No oral statement by any person can supersede or modify the terms of this RFP.

In accordance with federal statutes and regulations, no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under this program on grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, or disability.

1. All federal, state, tribal, private, and foreign organizations/governments are eligible to respond to this request for proposals. There are no limits on the number of proposals per organization. There is no restriction on who can serve as the PI of a proposal. There are no limits on the number of proposals on which an individual may serve as the PI.
2. Recipient organizations must have a DUNS number (http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform) and an active registration in www.sam.gov before any award can be issued. Recipient organizations required to have a single or program-specific audit will be required to submit a copy of their most recent single or program-specific audit for review before any award is made.
3. Awards are structured as reimbursable funds with quarterly invoicing.
4. All organizations requesting funds will receive separate subawards for their identified budget. However, the lead PI of the project is responsible for directing the work and ensuring that reports and deliverables are timely. Only one report is required for each collaborative project.

5. Awards may be eligible for a one-time no cost extension of up to 12 months at the discretion of NPRB staff, if requested with justification more than 30 days prior to the end of the award period.

6. "Fly America Act" (49 USC § 40118) regulations apply to all travel.

7. Recipient organizations will be required to comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including, but not limited to: Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (01/05), and NOAA Administrative Standard Award Conditions (10/2010 and 12/2014). Recipients will also comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations including, but not limited to: Title 49 of the United States Code 40118 (commonly referred to as the "Fly America Act"), OMB Circular A-110, OMB Circular A-133, and the applicable federal cost principles found in OMB Circular A-21, OMB Circular A-87, OMB Circular A-122, or FAR 48 CFR Part 31. Grant awards may also be subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), which is codified at 2.C.F.R Part 200. In effect as of December 26, 2014, this final guidance is a streamlining of the federal government's guidance on administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements for federal awards. It supersedes requirements contained in OMB Circulars, A-21, A-87, A-102, A-110, and A-133.

8. Responding proposals are firm offers and shall remain open for the NPRB to accept any time before December 31, 2022, in accordance with a standard NPRB agreement for the performance of the work proposed. A proposal is accepted only when NPRB sends the applicant written approval and has a fully-executed agreement. A proposal accepted for funding does not obligate NPRB to provide additional future funding.

9. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all federal, state, and local governmental permits and approvals for projects or activities to be funded under this announcement (e.g., Section 404 or Section 10 permits issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, experimental fishing or other permits under federal fishery management plans, scientific permits under the Endangered Species Act and/or the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Coast Guard vessel safety). All experiments must be conducted in compliance with the law, and only pursuant to mandatory permitting duly granted by the appropriate federal and state agencies. Requirements for special permits, such as those required for taking marine mammals, should be clearly described and indicate whether the permit is in possession or not. Failure to comply may result in the cessation or termination of the project and may lead to other action that could preclude the issuance of future awards to the applicant. As a condition of funding, all award recipients must make available, upon request, access to any books, documents, papers, and records that are directly pertinent to a specific program for the purpose of making audits, examinations, excerpts, and transcriptions. New field data collection will not be supported via this RFP.

10. Researchers applying to do research involving human subjects are expected to demonstrate compliance with regional protocols for researcher/community interactions or the specific human subjects screening done by most academic institutions and agencies. The purpose is to ensure that privacy is protected, data are collected in a suitable manner, data are maintained in a secure environment, and results of any study are made available to participants if they indicate their interest.

11. Funded participants are responsible for the conduct of research, submission of required reports, and preparation of the results for publication. Significant deviation from the proposed activities and deliverables requires prior NPRB approval. Participants will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports. Failure to submit timely reports or to meet project objectives due to problems in program management may result in withheld payments.

12. Funded participants will be required to provide a final report package within 60 days of the end of the project that consists of a written report in the current format, a copy of the data associated with the project and associated metadata, and project synopsis. Failure to complete, or to adequately address missing components, may result in withheld payments of final project costs.

13. All institutions awarded funding must agree to NPRB's standard "Applicable Law, Jurisdiction and Venue" clause unless prohibited by law. The clause reads: This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Alaska except to the extent preempted by United States federal law. Jurisdiction for the resolution of any dispute between the parties shall be the state or federal trial courts of Alaska. Venue for the trial of any case shall be Anchorage, Alaska.

14. All institutions awarded funding must agree to NPRB's standard "Hold Harmless and Indemnification" clause unless prohibited by law. The clause reads: Each party to this Agreement agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the other party from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses, expenses, fees (including attorneys' fees), and damages arising from or pertaining to the performance of this Agreement, but only in proportion to and to the extent such claims, liabilities, losses, expenses, fees (including attorneys' fees), and damages are caused by or result from the negligent or intentional acts or omission of the indemnifying party, its officers, agents or employees.

15. NPRB's Compliance Policy http://www.nprb.org/nprb/about-us/#policies will be part of all awards. The policy was finalized in March 2009 based on federal law that governs award agreements and on comments received in response to an interim compliance policy from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Federal Law Assistance Division, the National Science Foundation, and grants managers from five major research institutions.