



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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Coastlines and People Solicitation Frequently Asked Questions (CoPe FAQs)

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1. What is meant by Earth Systems processes in the context of CoPe?

Earth system processes include interactions of natural and human-induced processes, social and behavioral processes, and the built environment.

2. Are research teams required to include expertise from natural, engineering, social, and behavioral sciences?

NSF expects proposers to assemble the appropriate team for their proposed hub theme. The research theme should address both the coastlines and the people components of the CoPe program, with inclusion of appropriate personnel. There is no requirement that specific disciplines must be included within the research team, but the proposal should make clear that appropriate expertise is involved. It is expected that all projects will significantly and meaningfully integrate multiple disciplines to address the complex problems to be tackled by the hub.

3. Can a research team from a single institution propose a CoPe hub?

Partnerships are a key component of what will constitute a competitive hub. Proposals that involve only a single institution would likely not be competitive within this solicitation. Not all partnerships require financial exchanges. The proposal's project description, project management plan and letters of collaboration will be used to evaluate the appropriateness and likely success of the partnerships proposed.

4. Is CoPe interested in receiving proposals that focus on the Great Lakes region?

Yes, the Great Lakes are an important part of the U.S. Coastal system.

5. What type of hazards are considered under CoPe?

CoPe will consider all hazards that are relevant to both coastlines and people. The chosen hazard(s) may be natural, human and/or technologically induced, but should be relevant for exploring research questions that are integrative across natural, engineering, social and behavioral sciences. The time scale of hazards considered can range from seconds to millennia.

6. Should my group apply for a focused or large-scale hub?

This depends on the scope and breadth of the proposed hub. We expect the large-scale hubs to have goals and activities that justify the larger size of the awards, especially in terms of the scope of the project goals. Likewise, the focused hubs are likely to be dedicated to tractable projects in which the goals are attainable with the proposed budget. Note that because of the limitation of one proposal per PI or co-PI for this solicitation, the choice of proposing a focused or large-scale hub is exclusive.

7. If we responded to the CoPe DCL (NSF 19-059), does that limit us from applying to this competition?

No. Prior submission to NSF 19-059 does not affect your eligibility to submit a proposal to this solicitation.

8. What constitutes broadening participation in CoPe?

Broadening participation is about engaging groups, such as minorities, that have not been well represented in STEM research and education. The Higher Education Act defines the term minority as American Indian, Alaskan Native, Black (not of Hispanic origin), Hispanic (including persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Central or South American origin), Pacific Islander, or other ethnic group underrepresented in science and engineering. Additionally, women (in some disciplines), persons with disabilities, veterans, and first-generation college students are underrepresented in STEM. The proposal should clearly articulate how underrepresented groups will be included at various stages of work, from inception through execution of the project goals and activities.

9. What constitutes stakeholder engagement?

CoPe hubs should include and/or engage stakeholders to help drive basic research priorities and activities such that the research outcomes have timely and relevant impact. The participating stakeholders should be appropriate to the proposed project and could range from vulnerable local communities to federal government entities. CoPe encourages the participation and/or engagement of stakeholders throughout the entire project, from inception through execution of the project goals and activities. The proposal should explain the role of stakeholder participants and justify the planned engagement(s).

10. Can some activities couple broadening participation with stakeholder engagement?

Yes. In these cases, the proposal should clearly articulate how the activities will accomplish both broadening participation and stakeholder engagement goals.

11. What is the role of an external evaluator?

An external evaluator's primary role is to provide systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project and/or program. The evaluator can help determine the level of achievement of project/program objectives.

The external evaluator is considered a critical part of any CoPe hub and should be named in the proposal. In order to ensure that the objectives of the proposed CoPe hub are designed in ways that can be meaningfully evaluated later, it is important to work with an evaluator during proposal development.

12. How does CoPe differ from NSF's Smart and Connected Community (S&CC) program?

There are several important differences between CoPe and S&CC.

The S&CC program has the goal of accelerating the creation of the scientific and engineering foundations that will enable smart and connected communities to bring about new levels of economic opportunity and growth, safety and security, health and wellness, and overall quality of life. This goal is to be achieved through integrated research that tightly weaves technical and social dimensions. S&CC has a particular focus on communities and piloting research outcomes within them through deep community engagement. S&CC communities encompass urban, rural, coastal, and other regions, and may be of variable size.

By contrast, CoPE focuses specifically on coastal regions, supporting diverse, innovative, multi-institution awards that are focused on critically-important coastlines and people research that is integrated with broadening participation goals. The focus is on generally long-term impacts of coastal environmental variability and coastal hazards, and on resilience and sustainability. CoPE has less focus on "smart and connected" technologies – and how they may shape communities and vice versa. As noted in the CoPe solicitation, CoPe projects should define and engage relevant stakeholders, but in general, this does not require the level of community engagement, which specifically includes piloting research solutions within a community, appropriate to S&CC. While the CoPe program does not require piloting research solutions within a community, it does support this type of activity.