



National Science Foundation
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Frequently Asked Questions for NSF 12-594: Coastal SEES

1. Are the North American Great Lakes included?
2. Are Arctic coastal systems included?
3. My idea may be appropriate for both Coastal SEES and another NSF program: can I submit to both?
4. How do I decide if my proposal should be submitted to Coastal SEES as opposed to another SEES (or SEES-like) program, such as CNH (Dynamics of Coupled Natural and Human Systems), ArcSEES (Arctic SEES), Hazards-SEES, or RCN (Research Coordination Networks)-SEES?
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10. I work for a government agency. Can I submit a proposal to Coastal-SEES through my agency?
11. I am a federal government employee. How can I participate in Coastal-SEES as an investigator?

1. Are the North American Great Lakes included?

Yes, the North American Great Lakes are eligible under this solicitation.

2. Are Arctic coastal systems included?

Yes, a Coastal-SEES proposal may be based partially or wholly in the Arctic, but there may be cases where a proposal is a better fit with ArcSEES (see below).

3. My idea may be appropriate for both Coastal SEES and another NSF program: can I submit to both?

No, NSF does not allow the same proposal to be submitted to more than one competition.

4. How do I decide if my proposal should be submitted to Coastal SEES as opposed to another SEES (or SEES-like) program, such as CNH (Dynamics of Coupled Natural and Human Systems), ArcSEES (Arctic SEES), Hazards-SEES, or RCN (Research Coordination Networks)-SEES?

Each of the potential alternative programs mentioned above is discussed separately below. If Coastal-SEES determines that a proposal is clearly better suited to another solicitation, Coastal-SEES may ask the PI to withdraw the proposal and resubmit to the other program.

The Programs at NSF encourage prospective PIs to discuss their ideas with relevant Program Managers before preparing a proposal if the PIs are unsure of the intent of a solicitation or the goodness of fit between the solicitation and their ideas.

- **Arctic SEES (ArcSEES)**. Coastal-SEES and ArcSEES indeed have many similar goals, but there are differences in emphasis, eligibility, and proposal deadlines. Coastal-SEES will accept proposals that are based wholly or partly in the Arctic as long as they meet requirements of the Coastal-SEES solicitation and are not clearly better suited to ArcSEES. Prospective PIs should note that ArcSEES partners with a number of other (non-NSF) US federal agencies and a French consortium, which might make that program more appropriate for some types of collaborations. Compared with Coastal SEES, ArcSEES also encourages closer involvement with management solutions, specifically encourages capacity-building in native populations, and has, as one of its program themes, natural resource development. See: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=503604.
- **CNH**. The CNH Program is an early investment of NSF SEES and welcomes SEES-related proposals. It aims to support basic research and related activities that enhance fundamental understanding of the complex interactions within and among natural and human systems. At this level, CNH and Coastal-SEES are similar. One difference between the two is that Coastal-SEES addresses only coastal issues, whereas CNH will consider any human-natural system interaction. Beyond this (and details such as program structure, target dates, and award sizes), the differences are more subtle and not mutually exclusive. CNH places special emphasis on the dynamics of interactions between systems and is interested in how studies can contribute to the theory of such interactions. Coastal-SEES shares these interests and insists on integrative approaches, but emphasizes research results that bear directly on the topic of *sustainability* in coastal zones. See: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=13681.
- **Hazards-SEES**. Coastal-SEES takes a broader, long-term view of coastal processes and the complex and dynamic interactions among natural and human-driven processes. Hazards may be embedded and integrated within this view, but should not be the focus. The overarching goal of Hazards SEES is to catalyze well-integrated interdisciplinary research efforts in hazards-related science and engineering in order to improve the understanding of natural hazards and technological hazards linked to natural phenomena, mitigate their effects, and better prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.
- **RCN-SEES**. Track 1 (Incubator) Coastal SEES proposals and RCN-SEES proposals are both designed to form new collaborations on the topic of sustainability. The most important distinction is that RCN-SEES grants do not support research, rather they support coordination of research, whereas the emphasis of a Track 1 Coastal-SEES proposal should be the conduct of new research and its outcomes. They also differ in duration and maximum award size: RCN proposals are expected to be long term (4 to 5 years) with a maximum of \$750K, while Track 1 Coastal-SEES proposals should be in the range of \$200-600K over 2 years. Structurally, RCN collaborations require a steering committee, while Coastal-SEES does not. See: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=11691.

5. What is meant by inter/trans-disciplinary research in the context of this solicitation?

Sustainability involves reciprocal interactions between humans and the broader biological and geophysical world. Therefore, proposals to Coastal-SEES must include meaningful and well-integrated contributions from multiple disciplines. How this is done, for example, the particular aspect(s) or breadth of the processes and interactions being investigated and the disciplinary composition of the investigative team, is left to the PIs. A working definition of interdisciplinary research can be found at:

http://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/additional_resources/interdisciplinary_research/definition.jsp

6. How do I demonstrate that we have an integrated inter/trans-disciplinary research team?

The specific objectives of your proposal will dictate the disciplinary make-up of the team needed for the proposed research. To understand the dynamics of the coupled human-natural systems involved in coastal areas, it is likely that the team would be composed of researchers who would naturally seek support from different Directorates or Divisions at NSF. Each disciplinary area should be integrated into the research project and make a meaningful contribution to the research. An integrated research team is one in which the results of each individual or group are utilized by other members of the research team, and researchers from each disciplinary area contribute directly to the final product of the research.

PIs are reminded that the Merit-Review Panel will be made up of individuals from many disciplines and will be specifically looking for integration of elements within each project.

The Management and Integration Plan should demonstrate how the team and team efforts will be integrated. Examples of this might be: regularly scheduled team meetings/video conferences; inclusion of individuals from multiple disciplinary areas in each research task; scheduled plans for graduate student interaction; student coursework that provides a common background in sustainability science.

7. What are the opportunities and rules governing international collaborations?

A PI may include international collaboration(s) as part of a research proposal if there is a clear benefit to the U.S. science and engineering community from expertise, facilities, or resources of the foreign collaborator. Coastal-SEES assumes the international collaborator will have similar expectations, and the proposal should therefore explain how the relationship will be mutually beneficial. A PI considering such a collaboration should consult early with a Coastal-SEES Program Officer and the OISE (Office of International Science and Engineering) Program Officer for that country (<http://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/country-list.jsp>). The PI should be aware that NSF provides support only for the US portion of the collaborative effort, and only rarely does this involve payment to a foreign organization. Any substantial collaboration with individuals not included in the budget should be described and documented with a letter from each collaborator, which should be provided in the supplementary documentation section of the FastLane Proposal Preparation Module.

Coastal-SEES researchers interested in international collaborations may also wish to consider other funding opportunities coordinated by OISE (<http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=OISE>) for catalyzing new collaborations, networking, and student engagement.

8. Can a PI participate in more than 1 Coastal-SEES proposal?

Not if there is support for that individual beyond the first proposal. An individual can appear as an unpaid collaborator in additional proposals, but is *allowed to be on the Cover Page of only 1 proposal*, and is *allowed to be a paid participant on only 1 (the same) proposal*.

9. Is a Track 1 Coastal-SEES proposal expected to lead to a Track 2 Coastal-SEES proposal?

The emphasis of a Track 1 Coastal-SEES proposal should be new research and its outcomes, and not preparation of a Track 2 Coastal-SEES proposal. An award for a Track 1 might lead to development of a larger proposal by the same or a modified team of investigators, but there is no requirement that a Track 1 award should do so. Each proposal is independent.

10. I work for a government agency. Can I submit a proposal to Coastal-SEES through my agency?

No, a government agency is not allowed to submit a proposal to Coastal-SEES.

11. I am a federal government employee. How can I participate in Coastal-SEES as an investigator?

You may be a no-cost collaborator on a proposal submitted by an eligible institution. If you have an adjunct or similar appointment at a university, you might be able to appear on the cover sheet as a Co-PI depending on the policies of the university, but you cannot receive salary, travel or other compensation and expenses. Rules against voluntary cost-sharing prohibit your appearing on the budget sheet, but as a named investigator (collaborator) your CV can be included in the proposal. Your collaboration should be described and documented with a letter provided in the supplementary documentation section of the FastLane Proposal Preparation Module. If you are advising a student or a post-doc, that person can be supported on the university budget. NSF's Grant Proposal Guide should be consulted for details: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf13001.