Oceankind Request for Proposals

Technology Solutions for Seagrass

Oceankind seeks to award several, multi-year technology development project grants that will significantly advance technological solutions for any aspect of seagrass monitoring, conservation, or restoration. Projects should be 2-3 years in duration. Projects are expected to achieve a Technological Readiness Level (TRL) of at least 4 by the end of the project, and increase TRL by at least 2 levels. Oceankind plans to disburse up to $2M total over several grants and will accept applications until the budget is spent.

Context

Compared to other marine ecosystems, seagrasses have received little attention and funding despite being an important and highly threatened marine habitat that supports a wide range of ecosystem services and social benefits. Seagrasses span a wide range of ocean regions, climates, and jurisdictions. As such, seagrasses face a diverse array of anthropogenic and environmental pressures. Seagrass science, conservation, and restoration efforts face many practical challenges including, but not limited to, a lack of basic mapping and monitoring data, seasonal and spatial variability in biological parameters, and the need for subtidal work including in murky and deep waters. Overall there is a lack of foundational and reliable scientific data necessary to inform conservation efforts and optimize restoration practices at scale. Technologies that address these pain points and are affordable, easy to use, and scalable are critical to solving seagrass challenges.

This request for proposals seeks to advance nascent seagrass technologies that will notably increase performance of seagrass measurements or restoration methods (e.g., data quality, time, cost, scale, operability, success rate, among others). Outcomes that achieve a substantial (i.e., 10x), versus incremental (i.e., 2x), improvement in the figure of merit will be preferred, even if they present higher technical risk.

Scope of Work

1. The technology should demonstrate a substantial improvement on a given performance metric (e.g., reducing costs by 90%, increasing spatial observations ten-fold, etc.)
2. The technology, in principle, should be adoptable by the wider seagrass community in the future.
3. The TRL is expected to increase by at least 2 levels and achieve a TRL between 4 and 8 by the end of the project.
4. Projects must include a field trial component.
5. Grantees must provide updates at quarterly check-ins with the Oceankind team.
6. Projects must start in Q1 of 2023.

    Optional: Patents are supported, but not required

Optional: A formal plan for commercialization may be included, but is not required

Examples of projects that are out of scope include but are not limited to:
- *Projects that use existing technologies or technology-based data, without direct actions to improve that technology*
- *Projects focused on data use, such as developing or optimizing data processing pipelines and/or computer-based data products*
- *Projects seeking funding to conduct routine field work, such as seagrass restoration, mapping, or other data collection without novel technology development.*

Teams and eligibility

- Teams can be from any country, academic organization, non-governmental organization (NGO), and private company, or combination thereof. Participation of government agencies is welcomed, but those efforts are expected to be an in-kind contribution.
- Teams must include at minimum, a technology lead and a seagrass expert.
- New entrants and novel partnerships are encouraged but not required.

Budget

- The maximum grant size is $750k spread over, at most, 3 years. Applications with smaller budgets are encouraged.
- Overhead costs for all participants are capped at 15% and must be included in the budget total. Project budget should be clearly focused on development and advancement of technical solutions.
- A draft budget with estimated costs is required and will need to be submitted with the proposal. A copy of the budget template can be found here: Oceankind Seagrass RFP Budget Template

Application process and timeline

Proposals must be submitted through a proposal template available here: Seagrass RFP Proposal Submission Form. Proposals will be reviewed by Oceankind staff, expert partners, and at least two seagrass experts (expert reviewers waive their eligibility to submit a proposal or be part of a proposal).

The first round of evaluations will begin on 17 October 2022. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their proposal by the first evaluation date, however, proposals will continue to be accepted thereafter until all funding has been allocated. Once all the funding has been allocated, the Proposal Submission Form will be closed. Applicants will be notified with an award decision within 6 weeks after submission.

A FAQ can be found here: Seagrass RFP FAQ

Still have questions? Please reach out to labs@oceankind.org

About the funders

Oceankind's mission is to improve the health of global ocean systems while supporting the livelihoods of people who rely on them. Our Labs Initiative is dedicated to accelerating the development of promising conservation technologies. We work to shepherd these advances from the earliest stages to real use cases in the ocean.