

## 2022 RISA Competitions 1 & 2 Feedback Attachment

This document contains *all* feedback provided for Competition 1 & 2 letters of intent. Even if these comments are not directly related to your LOI, consider them as useful feedback about what makes a successful proposal.

These comments are based on a review of LOIs by federal officials involved in developing the competition priorities. These comments are based on the perspectives of those officials and may not coincide with the perspectives of the external panel of experts convened to review the full proposals.

Please email the RISA Program Managers ([oar.cpo.risa@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.cpo.risa@noaa.gov)) if you need clarification on any of this feedback. Additionally, you may schedule an appointment with us:

[Schedule RISA Office Hours](#)

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1. Scope Questions
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### 1. Scope Questions

- **Integrated Science:** It is important to articulate not only research areas and themes, but clear integrated and interdisciplinary research questions *for* climate adaptation. RISAs need to bring together natural, physical, and social sciences around complex climatic concerns related to human-environment interactions. This work includes understanding the social and cultural impacts of climate change, governance structures, laws, and fiscal policies that shape climate adaptation and implementation processes, and how this impacts equitable adaptation strategies.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** In *addition* to the social science processes, RISA teams need a distinct and thoughtful approach to engagement that builds relationships, rather than extracts information. For the proposal, it is best to identify an initial set of targeted communities/decision makers even if that set expands over the 5 years. It is important to articulate how stakeholder knowledge and relationships will shape the RISA agenda as the team evolves over the five years.
- **Outcomes as RISA Team Goal:** Remember that, fundamentally, the RISA Program is about outcomes. The knowledge, products, tools, and relationships developed in the

program should build the capacity of decision makers to act on climate variability and change within their lives and professions. This requires careful consideration about how outputs will or will not be used, by whom, and to what end.

- **Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion:** Carefully consider the integration of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) in your statement of work based on the program information provided in Section I.B. of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Specifically, p. 8 provides broad examples of the many ways application of JEDI principles will be considered by reviewers. Attention to these principles should go beyond the use of key terms and be considered in a team's plans for program management as well as research and engagement.
- **Multiple Climate Hazards:** RISA teams should consider multiple climate hazards, drivers, and impacts in their research and engagement activities. This includes consideration of concurrent or co-occurring impacts, as well as both physical and social contributions to societal vulnerability. Proposals with work focusing on a single climate driver/hazard/impact are not generally competitive.
- **Partnerships, Data, and Products:** All partnerships will be evaluated in the context of how they are relevant to addressing issues identified by local decision makers and not by how well they make people aware of data and tools. Proposals are not required to promote or enhance the usability of NOAA data and tools, nor required to partner with NOAA offices specifically. Rather, applicants should think broadly about potential partners and give special consideration to partners with whom there is currently less direct engagement with climate science. Applicants should consider the guidance provided on collaborative relationships in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (p.8-9) and "Developing Partnerships" in the Program Information Sheet (p.5).
- **Alternative NOAA Funding Sources:** Several other NOAA programs fund related climate-related research and engagement. A list of known offices with potential similarity is provided below. The RISA program is *not* funding work relevant to these programs unless they are a part of a portfolio that is multi-hazard, integrated, and responsive to regional decision makers. If work is proposed that complements the goals of any of these programs, care should be given in the proposal to distinguish the rationale for funding those activities under RISA:
  - Coastal Resilience
    - [Coastal Resilience Grants](#)
    - [Sea Grant](#)
  - Climate Modeling and Prediction
    - CPO/[Earth System Science and Modeling Division](#)
    - WPO/[Subseasonal to Seasonal Program](#)
  - Drought Prediction, Impacts, and Planning
    - NIDIS/[Coping with Drought](#)
  - Education
    - OEd/[Environmental Literacy Program](#)
- **Showing Innovation & Evolution:** It is particularly helpful for RISA team proposals in Competition 1 to demonstrate an evolution in thinking, approaches, and activities that

build on past RISA experience and, as relevant, others in climate adaptation science and practice.

- **Rationalizing Continued Approaches:** Where RISA team proposals in Competition 1 plan to continue an approach that has proven successful in past RISA work or to build on prior activities, partnerships, and team structures, it is helpful to describe evidence of success and to propose a well-reasoned argument for its continuation.

## 2. Geography Questions

- **Geography Guidance:** When considering geographic scope, carefully read 1. Determining Geographic Scope on page 3-4 of the RISA [Information Sheet](#). Proposals need to have reasonable geographic reach across a state and will not be competitive if they cover only one State or territory. Geographic scope can be expanded by including core team members from other institutions in the region (some RISAs identify two lead-PIs), identifying community partners, scoping projects, and planning engagement activities across the geography.
  - **Central Midwest:** Competitive proposals will show a strong presence in at least two of the four states featured, including region-wide activities. For example, consider institutional affiliations in the core team and how central those investigators are to team leadership.
  - **U.S. Caribbean:** Competitive proposals will show a strong presence in both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, including region-wide activities. For example, consider institutional affiliations in the core team and how central those investigators are to team leadership.
- **Adjacent Teams:** If an applicant wants to propose work that includes part of an adjacent state/region, you are encouraged to coordinate with the RISA team(s) already covering that state/region if possible. We have seen this expressed as letters of support as part of the final proposal submission.

## 3. RISA Team Structure Questions

- **Team Structure:** Ensure a clear description of the structure of your RISA team in terms of program management and team integration, stakeholder engagement approach and process, and advisory structures (see [Characteristics of RISA Teams](#)).
- **Social Science Expertise:** The integration of social sciences is important for project design, team structure and overall approach. In our experience having active social science or science-policy expertise on the leadership team has been valuable. Proposals without sufficient social science integration are not generally competitive.
- **Experts in Region:** RISA projects are based on bottom-up expressions of local need. To build trusted relationships, the RISA team must be composed of place-based experts from institutions within the region. This enables stakeholders and decision makers to regularly interact with RISA team staff.