

2025 Guide to Writing a Big Ideas for Oceans Proposal

PROPOSALS ARE DUE TUESDAY, JANUARY 21st, 2025 @ 8PM PST

The program welcomes applications from all disciplines and parts of the University.

You may complete and submit your application via here:

<https://web.stanford.edu/dept/woods/cgi-bin/seed/woods-seed.php>

The Stanford Oceans Department and the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment at the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability are pleased to announce a new funding round for Big Ideas for Oceans - through the generous support of MAC3 and the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment. Big Ideas for Oceans is now accepting proposals for the 2025 grant cycle.

This program provides seed grants totaling from \$10,000 to \$150,000, for up to two years, for interdisciplinary research projects that seek to promote new understanding of ocean processes and marine life, and to inform solutions for ocean health and sustainability. Research projects are evaluated for their intellectual merit, potential for new breakthroughs, potential contribution to solving critical problems, and the project's potential to secure additional funding. In 2025 the program expects to provide \$600,000 in total awards.

Big Ideas for Oceans will support multidisciplinary seed grant projects, including those that may be viewed as high risk/high impact, focused on the oceans and coastal areas, including but not limited to research that addresses large marine animals, marine protected areas (MPAs), coral reefs, or mesopelagic environments, and with a geographical preference for the tropical Pacific and Antarctica. Proposals on other timely and compelling questions and areas are also welcome and will be given full consideration.

The vision and main goal are to create new knowledge in support of ocean health and ocean-based solutions for climate change or other grand challenges, most likely through interdisciplinary approaches. Priority will be given to projects involving junior faculty, post-docs, and graduate students, and, to diverse project teams, including gender and underrepresented groups from diverse backgrounds, and those from Pacific Islands states.

GUIDELINES FOR STANFORD FACULTY APPLICANTS

- The Lead Principal Investigator and any co-Principal Investigators must be PI eligible, defined as having Academic Council (AC) or University Medical Line (MCL) status at Stanford University per the records of the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.
- Faculty members may only be Lead PI on one Big Ideas for Oceans (BIO) application per cycle.
- Likewise, a faculty member may not apply to Lead both a BIO grant and another grant from opportunities supported by Woods Institute funding, including Environmental Venture Projects (EVP), Realizing Environmental Innovation Program (REIP) and Human and Planetary Health Early Career Awards (HPHECA), in the same application cycle.
- Faculty members are also restricted from being the Lead PI on more than one active grant; faculty may not receive a new award that will overlap with an open award from previous cycle from the EVP, REIP, BIO and HPHECA funding channels.
- However, faculty may be the Lead PI on consecutive grants from EVP, REIP, BIO or HPHECA. If a Lead PI's current award from one of these Woods-supported funding channels will close in fall 2025, with no further extensions beyond 2025, the Lead PI is eligible for award under the current call for proposals.
- A Lead PI offered a consecutive Woods-supported award in 2025 will need to have any active grant award from EVP, REIP, BIO or HPHECA close in 2025 and must submit the required financial and narrative reports of any active award before the new award will begin.
- *BIO grants must otherwise comply with the requirements and restrictions for University Research awards of the Office of Sponsored Research.*

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about your project or research idea, or would like additional information, please contact Fio Micheli, Chair, Oceans Department at micheli@stanford.edu, Chris Field, Stanford Woods Institute Director at cfield@stanford.edu or Brian Sharbono, Stanford Woods Institute Director of Programs at sharbono@stanford.edu.

If you and your Research Administrator have questions about the budget and budget justification requirements, please contact Yiannis Katsamakidis, Woods Finance Analyst at yiannis.katsamakidis@stanford.edu and Brian Sharbono sharbono@stanford.edu.

If you have technical questions regarding submitting your proposal through the online application system, please contact Stanford Woods IT Manager Keith Iverson at kailou@stanford.edu for assistance and include Brian Sharbono sharbono@stanford.edu in the communication.

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals are due Tuesday, January 21st, 2025, 8:00 pm PST. Proposals will be reviewed and discussed by the Chair of the Oceans Department, the Director of the Stanford Woods Institute, and invited reviewers, possibly including experts from outside of the university. Project teams may be asked to respond to questions raised, which may involve revising their proposal.

Finalists for awards may be asked to complete an Ethics and Society Review Statement and respond to any feedback and questions raised regarding mitigating societal risks by the Stanford Ethics and Society Review panel. This is a distinct process from that of IRB, and more information may be found here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Z3ZKvfcpn_BcE7S_AmcnJ8YmloJrPC299UTbbdipcTQ/edit?usp=sharing

Upon satisfactory completion of the ESR process (~4 weeks), we will issue formal notices of award to finalists by approximately May 1 and move to award setup for start date October 1.

PROPOSAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

NOTE: THE LEAD PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR MUST INVOLVE THEIR QUALIFIED FINANCE ADMINISTRATOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION CORRESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL AND IS ADVISED TO DO SO EARLY ON.

A Research Administrator is a person who normally handles budget information. The Research Administrator is not considered a member of the research team.

Steps to anticipate for completing and submitting the application:

- 1.) **The Lead Principal Investigator** may begin an application for an EVP grant here: <https://web.stanford.edu/dept/woods/cgi-bin/seed/woods-seed.php>

The Lead Principal Investigator (Lead PI) must enter the Sunet IDs of the Lead PI and any Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) in the fields provided. All PIs entered will be validated for Academic Council or University Medical Line status against the faculty list provided by the Office of Faculty Affairs.

- 2.) **The Lead Principal Investigator** must also enter the SunetID of the Research Administrator for the proposal in the field provided for the application.
- 3.) **The Lead Principal Investigator** must upload the proposal narrative, or problem statement, as separate pdf where provided for in the application system.

The proposal narrative is to be completed per the instructions below.

- 4.) **The Research Administrator** for the project must upload the budget for the proposal as separate pdf within the application.

The budget is to be completed per the instructions below.

- 5.) **The Research Administrator** for the project must upload the budget justification, with complete explanations for each line item, as separate pdf within the application.

The budget justification is to be completed per the instructions below.

- 6.) After the Research Administrator has uploaded the budget and budget justification pdfs, the Lead PI will be able to view all pdf documents, and only the Lead PI may proceed to submit the proposal. A confirmation email will be sent to the Lead PI upon submission of the proposal to the Woods Institute application system.

NOTE: The Lead PI may resubmit the application as many times as desired until the deadline. The system only saves the most recent submission.

- 7.) **Stanford University requires that all faculty and Finance Administrators submitting a proposal to the Woods Institute and application system additionally initiate and submit a PDRF to the Office of Sponsored Research.**

Submission of project proposal to the Office of Sponsored Research: A PDRF (previously a backed-in proposal) is now required as part of the application process. It must be approved according to the submitting department's approval process by the proposal deadline. Please note, this requirement is not subject to the [5-day policy for proposal submissions](#). Please add (Yiannis Katsamakis yiannis.katsamakis@stanford.edu and Rita Sader rsader@stanford.edu) to the PDRF as an FYI. You can include your DFO as an approver if required by your school. The Department PTA setup contact should be the Research Admin submitting the PDRF. Please note: the new requirement will populate the Current and Pending Report with this grant opportunity.

1. Proposal Narrative, Parts I – IV Lead Principal Investigator uploads as separate pdf within the application system

Proposals should include the following sections: (1) Title page; (2) Project Description (up to 3 pages in total, not including references); (3) Project Team (up to one page); (4) Intellectual merit/potential for breakthroughs/broader impacts (up to one page);

1. **Title Page (1 page max):** Please list project title, team members, project period (default start date is October 1, 2024) and date of submission.
2. **Project Description (3 pages max):** The project description section should include the following components.
 - a) **Summary:** Include one brief paragraph in **layperson's language** describing the key objectives of the research proposal.
 - b) **Research Description:** The proposal should describe in clear terms the question/problem to be addressed and its importance, the project objectives of this proposal, desired results, research methods. Please describe your research in the larger framework of a major ocean challenge.
3. **Project Team (1 page max):** Describe the composition of your team, explaining the role and contribution of each team member, and a clear statement of how team members will operate as an integrated unit. Please describe if and how the project includes early career scientists or ocean professionals, and underrepresented groups from diverse backgrounds.

4. **Intellectual Merit/Potential for Breakthrough/Broader impacts (1 page max):** please describe the intellectual merit and potential breakthrough contribution of the research, and its broader impacts, including, e.g., education and public engagement and, if applicable, the pathway(s) through which, ultimately, findings from your research are likely to lead to solutions.
- Recognizing that research does not always lead to new discoveries or solutions over the span of a single grant, briefly articulate a vision for how you believe this project will attract outside funding and how your research agenda may evolve with outside funding to further contribute to fundamental discovery and supporting ocean health and sustainability. List specific sources of funding which you believe progress under this grant will enable you to be competitive in pursuing.

Addendum (not included in above page limits)

- a. Current and pending support information for each investigator
- b. Biosketch for each investigator (maximum 1 page for each)
- c. List of scholarly references cited to support your proposal

2. Budget Upload as separate pdf within the application system

Note: The project's Research Administrator must be involved in the development of the proposal budget and justification to ensure compliance, including with Stanford budget rates, rules on use, etc. A Research Administrator is a person who normally handles sponsored project budget information. The Research Administrator is not considered a member of the research team. Only the Research Administrator indicated in the application is able to upload the Budget and Budget Justification pdfs and must do so before the PI will be able to submit the proposal.

Please use the budget and justification templates available at the Office of Research Administration:

<https://ora.stanford.edu/resources/proposal-preparation-resources/budgets-and-budget-justifications>.

Provide the following information:

- Salary
- Benefits
- Tuition
- Travel Domestic
- Travel International
- Participant Support
- Participant Travel
- Equipment Lease
- Equipment
- Professional/Consultant Services
- Materials and Supplies
- SLAC Charges

- Student Stipend
- Interdepartmental Costs Other
- Animal Care
- Other Inclusions

Important Instructions and Limitations

- The research committee will consider BIO grant projects with budgets up to \$150,000 over two years (approximately \$75,000 per year). Award period: October. 1, 2025 – September 30, 2027.
- **Faculty salary is not required. Faculty salary may not be more than 20% of the total budget, inclusive of any salary to faculty collaborating via a subaward. Requests will be closely scrutinized. The justification should state and well explain if it is for summer supplement salary.**
- Support may be requested for personnel (undergraduate, graduate, or postdoctoral scholars, research assistants or associates), supplies, equipment and travel. (Equipment is considered as such if it has a useful life of more than one year and is over \$5000 in expenditure.)
- Roles are required to be clearly and substantively defined and the expenditure intended for each to be made explicit in the budget justification sections.
- Please consider how you might have undergraduate and graduate students become involved in the research effort. They are an invaluable resource in the university's education and research mission.
- There may be occasions when hiring consultant/professional services may be necessary to support the grant when these services cannot be deployed through Stanford resources, including facilities and personnel (translation, sample collection, laboratory analysis, for example). Such consultant/professional services may be funded if there is a strong case for their involvement.
- A request for funds to support outside research collaboration (**this is not consultant/professional services**) requires a subaward and needs to be very well justified, including why the support is essential for the collaboration and how the expertise is not available at Stanford.
- Please refer to the web page below for more information to discern between a subaward and consultant/professional services: <https://doresearch.stanford.edu/policies/research-policy-handbook/subawards/definitions-and-classifications>
- **If your proposal includes a request for a subaward and this is approved, Form 33 will be required 30-days after the award letter is received. If this deadline is not met, the grant will not be awarded and funding will not be transferred.**
- **For any proposed subawards, in lieu of Form 33, a clear scope of work must be included in the budget justification, and a signed letter of support from the partner must be submitted along with the proposal.** The letter of support must contain:
 - Statement of commitment to the proposed BIO project
 - Description of how the proposed work aligns with their organizational goals and mission, and the proposed BIO project
 - Description of the unique expertise or experience that the partner brings to the project
 - Description of the tasks they will undertake as part of the BIO award

- A statement of the organization's readiness to manage subaward funds responsibly, in compliance with Stanford regulations and reporting policies
 - A description of how the partner and the Stanford Principal Investigator have worked together in the past - and, if this is a new partnership - a statement of commitment to how they will ensure a successful and productive partnership, ensuring that project deliverables are kept on-track.
- **Approval of a proposed subaward is at the discretion of the Stanford Woods Institute and the Oceans Department. Please note the following key parameters as guidance on use of funds through a subaward to support the objectives of the awarded project. Please note the uses of funds that are prohibited.**
 - Funds may not be used to support salaries at US universities or peer institutions in other countries.
 - Funds should not be used to support staff salaries in higher-income country NGOs.
 - The Stanford Woods Institute will consider uses of funds that support faculty salaries in lower-income country institutions, subject to the limitation that all faculty salaries on the award including subaward not exceed 20% of the budget.
 - The Stanford Woods Institute will consider uses of funds that support the involvement of students or post-docs in lower-income country institutions.
 - The Stanford Woods Institute will consider uses of funds that support the involvement of staff at lower-income country NGOs.
 - The Stanford Woods Institute encourages co-development of projects. However, PIs should avoid outsourcing the leadership of the project being awarded the Woods Institute grant.
 - Evidence of real engagement from Stanford PIs and other participants is required.
 - Projects with professional services and subaward contracts that exceed 50% of the total proposed award budget are discouraged and will only be considered in the most unusual of circumstances.
- Conferences or workshops will not be funded.
 - Enter all budget numbers in US dollars rounding up to the nearest whole dollar values.
 - Inflation factor: 4% per year for salary, 4% for tuition.
 - Effective dates for salary increases: 10/1 for faculty, 9/1 for staff
 - ***Do not include ISC in your budget.*** *EVP research grant applicants do not need to account for indirect charges (IDC) or infrastructure charges (ISC) in their project budgets. ISC is charged to and paid by the Stanford Woods Institute on behalf of each awarded project at the time of funding.*
 - **Provide a clear and complete justification for each budget line, in the pdf below.** Justification should not include narrative related to calculations, but rather the use and benefit to the project.

3. Budget Justification Research Administrator uploads as separate pdf within the application system.

Note: The project's Research Administrator must be involved in the development of the proposal budget and justification to ensure compliance, including with Stanford budget rates, rules on use, etc. A Research Administrator is a person who normally handles budget information. The Research Administrator is not considered a member of the research team. **Only the Research Administrator indicated in the application is able to upload the Budget and Budget Justification pdfs and must do so before the PI will be able to submit the proposal.**

Please provide a clear, detailed, narrative budget justification for each budget line item in the proposal and describe (with specifics) how the budget line supports the scope of work. Include a clear and substantive definition of team roles, where not included in the project description. Please use the budget and justification templates available at the Office of Research Administration and provide robust explanations: <https://ora.stanford.edu/resources/proposal-preparation-resources/budgets-and-budget-justifications>.

Budgets will be scrutinized in this final step of the BIO review process, so please make sure that your budget is accurate and reflects realistic needs.