




Governors' South Atlantic Alliance


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SOUTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE: BUILDING A REGIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR THE COASTAL OCEAN OF THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

PHASE 1

This grant proposal is submitted to the NOAA Coastal Service Center in response to the
Funding Opportunity Title: NOAA Regional Ocean Partnership Funding Program –
FY2011 Funding Competition – Focus Area 2
Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-CSC-2011-2002721

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Funding Request: \$ 278,000

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Name/Title: South Atlantic Alliance: Building a Regional Ocean Partnership Framework for the Coastal Ocean of the Southeastern United States – Phase 1

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Recipient Institution: S.C. Sea Grant Consortium, on behalf of the South Atlantic Alliance

Lead Investigators: M. Richard DeVoe, S.C. Sea Grant Consortium
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Project Summary: The goal of this proposal is to provide support for continuing the process by which the regional organizational structure of the South Atlantic Alliance in the southeastern coastal ocean region of the United States is strengthened and interactions among Alliance partners are fostered. This proposal is intended to support the continued development and organization of the South Atlantic Alliance (the “Alliance”) for the coastal ocean region of the southeastern United States, representing North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. This one-year effort will focus on meeting the following objectives:

Objective 1. Support the administrative and financial management needs of the Alliance.

Objective 2. Continue to identify and document public and private organizations and institutions, businesses, industries, universities, laboratories, and agencies of government, brief their representatives on the status of Alliance efforts, solicit their interest in participating with the Alliance on coastal and ocean issues of critical importance to the region, and provide outreach/educational programming where appropriate.

Objective 3. Plan and convene meetings, teleconferences, and conferences to discuss and reach consensus on the most appropriate management and operational elements for the Alliance.

Objective 4. Initiate a formal business planning process that will identify the necessary staffing, logistical, and operational needs for Alliance formalization and growth.

Objective 5. Maintain and update the South Atlantic Alliance Action Plan as programmatic priorities are addressed and finalize Implementation Plans to complete Alliance action items.

Objective 6. Enhance the Alliance’s public relations, communications, and outreach efforts through the Southeast region and the United States.

Partners: Partners will include all members of the Alliance’s Executive Group (the region’s Governors), Steering Group (Governors’ appointees), Executive Planning Team (representatives of state and federal government, academia, private sector, NGOs), Issue Area Technical Teams (partner staff experts), and targeted stakeholder groups.

Proposed Funding: Phase 1 = January 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013; Funding Request = \$278,000

**SOUTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE: BUILDING A REGIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIP
FRAMEWORK FOR THE COASTAL OCEAN OF THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES
PHASE 1**

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The success of the emerging network of regional ocean partnerships (ROP) in the United States will depend to a large degree on the establishment of partnerships, collaborations, and mechanisms that link, sustain, and institutionalize the network. In particular, three critical requirements must be met: (1) the active engagement of a broad range of resource managers, community leaders, and public and private users of the coastal ocean; (2) the development of functioning collaborative partnerships among a variety of regional organizations and institutions; and (3) strong support of the states and the federal government. This proposal will provide support for continuing the process by which the regional organizational structure in the southeastern coastal ocean region of the United States – **the South Atlantic Alliance** – is strengthened and interactions among partners are fostered.

The overall goal of this proposal is to further develop the Alliance as a functional and cost-effective administrative mechanism to ensure that coastal and ocean resource management efforts in the southeastern United States are well-coordinated, science-based, stakeholder-driven, operational, linked to national issues, and sustained for the foreseeable future. An initial 18-month administrative program of ROP support is envisioned for the Alliance in this proposal. This will provide the framework for what is anticipated to be a long-term development activity as the national ROP network develops and matures.

This proposal is intended to support the continued development and organization of the South Atlantic Alliance (the “Alliance”) for the coastal ocean region of the southeastern United States, representing North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. It is critical to the success of this regional ocean partnership that mechanisms for two-way exchange of information are established among a broad range of regional ocean organizations, and between the management and user communities to ensure continuous input and feedback. The work plan laid out in this proposal will focus on initiating the following key components of Alliance development and implementation:

1. Engage a broad base of partners and stakeholders
2. Manage a regional networking structure and the affairs of the Alliance
3. Implement the Alliance’s 5-year Action Plan
4. Establish technical capabilities in state and regional coastal and ocean management
5. Enhance linkages with regional and sub-regional organizations and institutions

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE – SOUTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

Alliance Formation. The Alliance was conceived in 2006 under the Department of Defense SERPPAS Initiative (Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability), with a focus on mapping coastal and upland areas and promoting natural resource and land management compatible with military installations. A formal agreement was executed in May 2009, and the formation of the Alliance was announced in October 2009. The Agreement specifies that the Alliance will prepare a “Governors’ South Atlantic Alliance Action Plan” which will be reviewed annually for progress and updated every five years for relevance of content. Copies of the Alliance’s Partnership Agreement and framework documents can be found at www.southatlanticalliance.com.

Alliance Organization. The Alliance organization will function based on rules that optimize the ability to develop and sustain an effective working relationship among the partners to identify and seize opportunities for mutual gain. The Alliance is composed of an Executive Group (the Governors), a

Steering Group (Governors' appointees), an Executive Planning Team (EPT), and Issue Area Technical Teams, which are described in Appendix A1.

Alliance Mission. The intent of the Alliance is to promote collaboration among the four states and, with the support of and interaction with federal agencies, academia, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, to sustain and enhance the region's coastal and marine resources. The Alliance proposes to regionally implement science-based actions and policies that balance the capacities of coastal and marine ecosystems to support both human and natural systems.

Alliance Action Plan. The Framework document specifies four initial Priority Issue Areas and broad goals approved by the Governors as being of concern to all four states: (1) Healthy Ecosystems; (2) Working Waterfronts; (3) Clean Coastal and Ocean Waters; and (4) Disaster-Resilient Communities. These four Priority Issue Areas form the basis for the Alliance Action Plan. The Steering Group may re-align priorities in response to evolving regional concerns, or depending on progress, priorities may be added or dropped. Initial priorities have been firmly set for the first Action Plan (http://www.southatlanticalliance.org/docs/Action_Plan.pdf), and the Alliance has recently completed work on its initial Implementation Plan (http://www.southatlanticalliance.org/docs/Implementation_Plan.pdf).

PARTNERSHIPS

The Alliance structure is designed to promote maximum communication, coordination, action, and results through collaborations and partnerships, and will continue to foster partnerships. The Alliance Supporting Partners consist of federal, local, academic, non-governmental organization (NGO), and private sector entities. Supporting Partners bring resources (e.g., people, time, money, equipment, and technology) and technical and policy expertise to Alliance activities to address issues of mutual interest. The partners also integrate Alliance priorities into complementary actions taken by them.

- Federal Agency Partnerships. The success of the Alliance is enhanced by strong support from federal agency partners. The federal government has designated US DOC-NOAA, US EPA, and USDOI-USGS as federal co-leads to provide direct support to the Alliance and coordinate participation of the various federal agencies. Federal partners bring established experience from diverse areas of expertise and the ability to integrate multiple federal resources that contribute to the long-term environmental and economic health of the region and also possess the capability to explore innovative mechanisms for ecosystem management, coastal and ocean observations, decision-support systems based on policy and science, and local, state, and federal collaboration.
- NGO Partnerships. NGOs and the private sector likewise bring extensive experience and capabilities to further goals of the Alliance. NGOs (e.g., The Nature Conservancy) have a long history working cooperatively with the public and private sectors in the region. Their unique ability to directly support and solicit action complements Alliance activities.
- Private Sector Partnerships. The private sector is key in supporting Alliance goals. Their knowledge of best business practices and integrated solutions can advance cooperative planning and public awareness of issues facing the region. Private sector partnerships are vehicles for introducing new technology, industrial practices, and public/private ventures.
- Local Partnerships. Local participation in Alliance activities is essential to effective South Atlantic coastal and marine sustainability. Local and municipal participation ensures complementary action to local efforts and ultimate regional success. State, local, and federal agency staff and individuals with expertise in Alliance issues from universities and research institutions, business, NGOs, stakeholder groups, and members of the public will continue to be invited to participate in the work of the Issue Area Technical Teams.

AUDIENCE

The audience for the results of policy development, planning, and coordination conducted by the South Atlantic Alliance are the many stakeholders and users of the coast and ocean areas of the region. The general public, business private sector, state and federal Agencies, non-governmental organizations, and elected officials all benefit from plans and policies, developed with broad input, that guide usage, prioritize issue areas of concern, and help to harmonize competing demands on the region's natural resources. They also benefit from agency force-multipliers such as leveraged funding and staffing through better situational awareness and coordination of effort. With its focused activities and outreach, the framework and organization of the Alliance provides a variety of forums for ongoing discussion and opportunities to voice concerns from the various stakeholders. The Alliance Action Plan seeks to enhance collaboration, networking, and partnerships to foster shared learning and research to protect valuable natural resources while balancing well-considered economic development.

APPROACH

Objective 1. *Support the administrative and financial management needs of the Alliance.* (DeVoe; Knight; Linder; Regional Coordinator)

Approach: The Alliance has signed a formal MOA with the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium (on behalf of all four Sea Grant programs in the region) to enable the Alliance leadership, through the Consortium, to (1) designate an administrative point of contact, (2) conduct the administrative business of the organization as prescribed by Alliance leadership, including the preparation of correspondence, organization of grant-related meetings, and administration of its grant/proposal preparation and review process, (3) receive and administer any grant/foundation/private funding on behalf of the Alliance, and (4) if desired by Alliance leadership, employ staff to assist in administrative functions on behalf of the Alliance; these administrative tasks will be performed as part of this proposal. Emphasis for the Regional Coordinator (TBH) will be on leveraging ongoing activities and improving the synergy between, and funding success of, Alliance initiatives and other coastal- and ocean-related efforts. The scope of this MOA, which also will be addressed through this proposal, include implementation of actions as identified in the Alliance Action Plan; development of requests for proposals to engage regional organizations in responding to state, regional, federal, non-profit, and private sector funding opportunities; coordination with new and existing regional programs within the southeastern U.S., and acquisition and transfer of funding to achieve Alliance program efficiency and effectiveness.

Activities and Performance Measures: Efficient handling of administrative and budgetary matters; grants and contracts prepared and submitted by the Consortium on behalf of the Alliance; grants and contracts secured by the Alliance.

Objective 2. *Continue to identify and document public and private organizations and institutions, brief their representatives on the status of Alliance efforts in the southeastern United States, solicit their interest in participating with the Alliance on coastal and ocean issues of critical importance to the region, and provide outreach and educational programming where appropriate.* (Regional Coordinator; S.C. Sea Grant Consortium and southeastern Sea Grant outreach staff; EPT; DeVoe)

Approach: The S.C. Sea Grant Consortium communications program, in collaboration with the southeastern Sea Grant programs and the Alliance Regional Coordinator, will prepare, produce, and disseminate informational products to be used in pursuing contacts with the regional coastal and ocean community. Informational (in fact sheet or brochure format) that will (1) describe regional ocean partnerships generically, (2) specifically describe the South Atlantic Alliance and the relationships that are already in place, and (3) provide contact information for Alliance-related information, products, and services (that currently exist) will be produced. The Regional Coordinator, through interactions with the EPT and in collaboration with Sea Grant outreach staff,

will expand the Alliance's outreach efforts to further refine Action Plan issues, questions, problems, and opportunities that could be addressed throughout the southeastern region through extension and communications products and research in subsequent Alliance project years. These actions will result in an assessment of needs for regional information applications and products to improve the region's capability to generate and apply data and information obtained from Alliance efforts.

Activities and Performance Measures: Products produced to foster Alliance visibility and recruitment of partners; listing of new Alliance partners and collaborators; listing of all public presentations and other formal outreach activities undertaken to foster awareness of and engagement with the Alliance; summary of outreach activities conducted and outcomes achieved.

Objective 3. *Plan and convene meetings, teleconferences, and conferences to discuss and reach consensus on the most appropriate management and operational elements for the Alliance.* (Boltin-Kelly; Regional Coordinator; State Representatives of the Executive Planning Team; DeVoe; Issue Area Technical Teams)

Approach: The Alliance shall hold at least one general partner-wide meeting of the Alliance Steering Group, full Executive Planning Team, Issue Area Technical Teams, and targeted stakeholders during the project, at a time and place determined by consensus of the Steering Group and the availability of the Governors of each state or their designees. The Executive Planning Team will meet face-to-face at least twice during the project to discuss issues pertinent to the Steering Group that require action and implementation. Issue Area Technical Teams will hold teleconferences, meetings, and conferences as needed to complete activities assigned to them in the Alliance Action Plan.

Activities and Performance Measures: Said meetings will be scheduled and held; detailed agendas and summaries of such meetings and teleconferences, with dates, lists of participants, meeting notes, and key outcomes and action steps.

Objective 4. *Initiate a formal business planning process that will identify the necessary staffing, logistical, and operational needs for Alliance formalization and growth.* (Regional Coordinator; Boltin-Kelly; DeVoe; State Representatives of the Executive Planning Team; Steering Group)

Approach: The Alliance will establish a Business Plan Committee that will draft a detailed document that specifies the necessary staffing, logistical, operational, and financial needs for the long-term viability of the South Atlantic Alliance. Committee membership will be representative of all sectors (academia, agency, business, industry, and outreach) and reflect the geographic area of interest. Upon the successful completion of the draft business plan, the Regional Coordinator will work with the PIs and the Executive Planning Team to plan and conduct additional workshop(s) to review and revise the draft Alliance business plan. The Alliance leadership will work to develop strategies to cultivate contributions from regional, state, and local levels, which will require concerted efforts to get local communities and the four states excited about what the Alliance can deliver.

Activities and Performance Measure: Final draft business plan by end of project period; summary of proposed ongoing and committed activities that will ensure continuity of the Alliance through the first five years.

Objective 5. *Maintain and update the South Atlantic Alliance Action Plan as programmatic priorities are addressed and continue to refine Implementation Plans to complete Alliance action items.* (Regional Coordinator; Executive Planning Team; Steering Group; Supporting Partners)

Approach: The Regional Coordinator, with assistance of the PIs, the Alliance, and supporting partners, will finalize Implementation Plans that specify the programmatic functions and activities. This process will include an analysis of the functions of the Alliance as compared to other regional public and private sector efforts to clarify roles of all regional partners, and to identify areas of collaboration, "divisions of labor," and opportunities for leveraging and partnerships to enhance Alliance efficiency.

Activities and Performance Measure: Final revised Implementation Plan; identification of key action items to be completed within a 12- to 18-month time horizon; summary of the results of the key action items addressed; summary of the status of all Alliance Action Plan activities at the end of the grant period.

Objective 6. *Enhance the Alliance’s public relations, communications, and outreach efforts through the southeastern region and the United States.* (PIs; S.C. Sea Grant Consortium; Regional Coordinator; EPT; southeastern Sea Grant programs)

Approach: Maintain and enhance the Alliance Web site, provide communications services, coordinate logistical support for and convene Alliance workshops and other technical and outreach forums.

Activities and Performance Measures: Alliance Web site functional and enhanced; Alliance workshops and outreach forums planned scheduled and documented; communications services documented.

BENEFITS

The Alliance will leverage resources from a range of federal agencies, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations in support of what we, through our respective state agencies, want to accomplish. The Alliance (1) allows for better regional alignment of decisions resulting in mutual mission accomplishment and continuity of efforts; (2) produces integrated solutions that benefit all systems’ requirements (i.e., ecosystems, economic systems, and national defense systems) at state, federal, and local levels; (3) strengthens existing relationships with supporting federal partners, non-governmental organizations, academia, and private industry, which will produce opportunities to develop and execute even more and diverse regional collaborative actions; (4) provides a forum allowing the federal partners to provide enhanced federal collaboration in direct response to coastal and ocean issues and resource needs identified by the Alliance, and the potential to use the South Atlantic as a “laboratory” for exploring innovative mechanisms for regional management, ecosystem management, and economic development; (5) effectively and efficiently executes a Governors’ Action Plan; (6) fosters integrated research, observation, and mapping of the South Atlantic region leading to common and coordinated data and information to enhance science-based decision-making; and (7) provides the efficiencies and economies resulting from one planning organization that can identify economies of scale and opportunities to leverage resources among the four states as well as with our federal and NGO partners.

EXPECTED RESULTS AND SUCCESS METRICS

During this 18-month period, the Alliance will be able to modestly support the costs of administration, financial management, program coordination, partnership development, and outreach and communications, and will begin operating as a nascent independent organization.

While the development and application of specific “success metrics” will be included as a topic in both the Alliance business plan and implementation plans, the following metrics will serve as the program’s initial focus:

1. Significant involvement of a diverse and representative segment of the region’s academic, government, business, and industry community in shaping Alliance structure, function and utility.
2. Positive impacts on the quality of quantitative multi-scale coastal and ocean environmental management in the southeastern U.S. region.
3. Enhanced use of Alliance information and products in resource management and decision-making.

Each of these metrics will be evaluated by feedback from partners and stakeholders and by materials developed under the auspices and administration of the Alliance.

MILESTONE SCHEDULE

The milestone chart can be found in Appendix A2.

PROJECT BUDGET

Budget Item	Year 1
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$108,827
Supplies	6,673
Travel	30,000
Publication Costs	7,500
Computer Costs	10,000
Contractual (Sea Grant Outreach)	70,000
Steering Group Meetings	15,000
EPT/Stakeholder Meetings	25,000
Office Space/Lease	5,000
Indirect Costs	0
TOTAL	\$278,000