



Request for Proposals: Intercepting plastic waste from rivers

Webinar Questions & Answers

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Please note: Similar questions have been grouped together for brevity. Contact the Benioff Ocean Initiative (BOI) team directly at boi-contact@ucsb.edu for further clarification or additional questions.

Funding / Budget

1. What is the project and funding timeline?

Proposals are due July 12. Our target for completing review of proposals is September 2019, and our target for the first installment of funding is the end of 2019. Funding will be provided over the course of the 4-year project timeline.

BOI may follow up with teams who have submitted proposals with suggestions and revisions to their proposals; for example, a budget work plan may require modification prior to the award of funds.

2. Can funding be used to pay government/government employees?

Funds cannot be awarded directly to a government agency. The relationship with a government partner should primarily serve to provide institutional support (e.g., permitting) for the installation of the physical capture system and for the outreach/communication campaign. However, funds may be used for



tasks such as paying fees associated with research or installation permits required to conduct the physical capture portion of the intervention. We emphasize the importance of proposals needing to address the permitting aspect of this project. Pay close attention to instructions in the RFP document in the "Permitting" section (page 6).

3.
 - a. **Can my team leverage funding from other sources (e.g., match funding)?**
 - b. **Should we disclose in the application how much funding we have already raised towards the proposed project?**
 - c. **Under "Funding and Budget" (page 4), the RFP states, "Projects that can leverage funding from the Benioff Ocean Initiative to extend existing funding opportunities aligned with RFP goals or to secure new funding commitments will be favorably reviewed." Is it being suggested that it would be better to have this as a separate funding with other funding partners?**

We encourage teams to make it clear in their proposal if they have secured additional funding for this project or plan to apply for additional funding, along with the source(s) of the additional funding. Considering that any outside funds will likely influence the allocation of funds in your proposed budgeting plan for BOI, disclosing these funds will allow your team to allocate BOI funds most effectively in your proposed budget and budget justification. While we do welcome funding collaborations that will serve to maximize the impact on river plastic waste cleanup, it is not necessary to have outside funding secured in order for a proposal to be competitive.

4. **Could the \$3 million funding be split and distributed in smaller sub-awards to more than one proposed project?**

There is a potential scenario in which BOI identifies two (or more) top proposals for which the combined budgets total less than or equal to the available \$3 million. In this instance, if each project was resourced responsibly to meet the RFP requirements, we would reserve the right to consider funding both projects.

5. **Regarding the budget, what types of expenses can be included under the category "project management"?**

"Project management" may include fees and services rendered for project management/organization. For example, payments associated with permitting, transportation of the physical capture system, project managers, or management of volunteers may fall under this category.

6. **Please elaborate: "Pilot projects that budget for the maintenance of a pilot project for 3 years or greater after installation will be favorably reviewed." (RFP, page 6)**

As BOI funding for this pilot project will cease after 4 years, we want to emphasize the value of sustaining the project and the need for proposals to outline a plan for sustaining it after cessation of BOI funding (assuming there is still plastic waste in the river).



7. a. **Can my team use the funds to build a waste processing/recycling facility near the pilot site?**
b. **Processing of collected plastic waste--is it necessary or is it optional? At one point you specified that this would be additional scope.**

A top priority for this project is recycling or reusing plastics captured in the river pilot project and responsibly disposing of plastics and other waste that are not recyclable. We recognize that, in most instances, building new waste processing plants or recycling facilities is beyond the financial scope of this award. As such, we strongly encourage teams to propose how they will leverage *existing* recycling/waste management infrastructure or programs at a proposed site to productively handle captured plastic. We also encourage applicants to describe how they have or will leverage funding from this RFP to secure additional new funding to cover any significant costs associated with new recycling and waste management infrastructure and programs, as needed. We welcome the inclusion of costs associated with new recycling or waste management infrastructure in applicants' proposals, but note that all such additions 1) must be compelling and well-justified and 2) cannot detract in the budget from funding the successful implementation of the river plastics capture device and associated communications efforts as outlined in the RFP.

8. **Can funds be used to monitor for effectiveness of the intervention above and below on the river?**

Yes. BOI expects monitoring and data collection of plastic waste flow as well as capture system effectiveness to reduce plastic flow. These data will be utilized in the outreach/communications plan to inform the local community on current levels of pollution in the river, descriptions of the types of plastic waste recovered, etc.

9. **Will BOI require administrative costs to support their role in funding administration?**

BOI is based at the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) and operates in compliance with University policies for administrative fees associated with gift funds. The current UCSB administrative fee is 6%, which for this \$3 million USD grant totals \$90,000 USD. Applicants must incorporate this administrative fee as a one-time cost into their proposed budgets.

10. **Is there an allowable overhead rate to be used in developing the budget?**

Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate overhead in these funds.



Team composition

- 11. a. What is the composition of a competitive team?**
b. How many partners do you feel makes the strongest proposals?

We understand that teams are likely to look different for each proposal. However, we highly recommend that the composition of each team include at least all of the expert roles listed in the RFP (see "Team composition", pages 3-4 of the RFP), and any deviations must include written justification in the proposal. Beyond these expert roles, there is no explicit limit on the number of partners that may be involved in a proposal.

- 12. Is it OK for members of one team's proposal to also be on another team's proposal?**

Yes.

- 13. For the partners participating in a proposal, do you care how large or small their annual operating budgets are?**

BOI has no requirements on the size of annual operating budgets of a submitting team, but cautions that there is a limit to the funding offered for this project (\$3 million USD), which must be budgeted over the four years of BOI's support.

- 14. What's required for reporting if you are the awardee?**

Once per year, the successful team will be required to attend a summit organized by BOI, at which point yearly reporting (assessment of goals from previous year, setting of goals for following year) will occur. BOI will also serve in a more informal advising capacity between these yearly summits to stay apprised of project progress.

- 15. Does the leading organization have to be an NGO or non-profit?**

No (see "Team composition", pages 3-4 of the RFP); these examples are intended to broadly categorize the organizations which we expect to lead applications for this funding opportunity. The lead could also be a for-profit charity, conservation organization, or other similar organization. Please note that governments or governmental organizations cannot be the primary funding recipient.



Project location selection

16. What characterizes the ideal river location?

A river chosen for this project ideally will have a demonstrated existing problem with macroplastic waste or where plastic waste poses a particular threat to the health of local communities or the ocean. It will also be near a city or settlement that would be the target of a communications campaign to address regional problems with plastic waste. See “Regions of interest”, pages 6-7 of the RFP.

17. Must a final location be chosen prior to the July 12th due date? Can alternative locations be submitted, pending a final determination after selection?

Each submitted proposal must have one and only one river selected, as a proposal will necessarily be closely tailored to a river’s unique location, characteristics, and political climate. Multiple (potentially similar) separate proposals may be submitted if the team is considering multiple rivers (one proposal for each river), but all potential river sites must enable the pilot project to meet the criteria detailed in the RFP.

18. Are you open to undertaking this effort in more than one river or two locations in a single river?

This funding will provide support for a pilot project located at a single site in a single river. It is important that the pilot be geared toward maximizing impact in the location in which it is implemented, which will require place-specific design of both the capture system and the communication campaign.

19. Is there a preference for projects that can be considered development aid for poorer regions versus more established regions where co-financing could be available?

Not necessarily. We’re most interested in impact on plastic cleanup.

20. How will you evaluate proposals which target tributaries instead of rivers? Is there a preference?

BOI does not have a preference for proposals installing an intervention in a river or in a river tributary. River plastic pollution that makes its way into rivers frequently comes from entire watersheds, making tributaries potentially important for intervention. As long as the team demonstrates a need for intervention--appreciable plastic pollution in the site and ultimately prevention of plastic entering the ocean--in addition to the other requirements outlined in the RFP, a proposal for a site that is located in a tributary will be evaluated in the same manner as a proposal for a site in a river.

Capture system design & operations

21. Which weighs heavier in the RFP: the technological solution or local policy and behavioral change?

The technological solution and effective communication campaign are equally important. Local policy and behavioral change should be a result of an effective communication campaign, which will require a unique approach and strategy for any given community and culture.

22. How will you evaluate proposals which target and measure overall waste diverted instead of plastic waste specifically? Is there a preference?

The primary goal of this project is to reduce the flow of and collect data on plastic pollution in the river of choice. It is therefore important that proposals explain how they will collect data on plastics and demonstrate that their intervention system reduces the flow of plastic waste in that river. We acknowledge that most physical capture systems inevitably will collect other forms of waste (organic, non-plastic human inputs, etc.) of similar size classes to macroplastics. Additional data on these types of waste is a welcome addition, but data on plastic pollution is of primary interest.

- 23. a. Can the solution build upon a current solution in the proposed river or should it be a new solution altogether?**
- b. Is there a preference for submissions that include majority of product development (R&D) versus projects that make use of almost developed solutions?**

BOI will consider proposals that either build upon an existing solution or implement a new solution, as long as both goals of the project (see "Proposal Goals", pages 2-3 of the RFP) and all additional requirements of the RFP are met. However, the ability to install the system in a timely manner (within the first year) will be viewed favorably.

- 24. a. Is it OK to propose multiple capture device designs in cases where we are still doing R&D? Or would you prefer one device design?**
- b. Can my team propose more than one technology to test on one river in one location?**
- c. You specified "only one location and one river." Are multiple devices in "one stretch of river in one community" acceptable?**

A "river plastic capture system" may include multiple pieces of technology (e.g., booms, bins) employed together to capture river plastic waste at a given site. We define "one site" as the localized area of river adjacent to the community in which the outreach/communication plan will be implemented. As such, a proposed system might include multiple pieces of technology. (Please see BOI's [white paper](#) on river plastic pollution for examples.)

However, we do not intend for this funding to support continued testing or comparison of different, independent plastic waste capture technologies. You may submit separate proposals featuring each such



independent piece of technology, and BOI will assess each proposal as a combination of a single capture system plus a single communication plan. We expect that each capture device design will be closely tailored to the unique river location.

Proposal review

25. What about my organization's proprietary information that may be included in the proposal? Will it be kept confidential?

We encourage applicants to speak about any proprietary or confidential information related to hardware, software, and communication strategies in broad terms. Only the application reviewers will see the submitted proposal documents, and BOI assures applicants that we will not publicly share any information contained in these documents.

26. Who is responsible for reviewing proposals?

Research scientists at BOI will lead proposal review, with assistance from a few external expert reviewers.

27. To what extent will BOI be involved in the project?

BOI will lead selection of the winning team and will administer the funding. BOI staff will be in close communication with the project team lead and provide overall project guidance and consultation; however, BOI staff will not be directing project implementation.

Miscellaneous

28. Within the educational component, can the proposal include litter abatement strategies within the watershed, such as installation of additional trash cans in known litter hot-spots?

While the funding cannot be used directly for land-based litter abatement strategies such as installation of trash bins, BOI's intention in funding a two-part intervention strategy (physical capture and targeted outreach/communication) is to indirectly influence and support these types of actions. We hope to empower the local community, government, and industry to take action on plastic use, management, and legislation from household to regional scales. In some cases and sites, this might involve the indirect promotion of community and government support for additional trash bins in known litter hot-spots,



among other solutions. However, proposals that can demonstrate a plan to partner with local organizations and/or secure additional funding for litter abatement will be viewed favorably.

29. Please explain what is required for submission regarding permitting plans.

We understand that obtaining permits can be a difficult and time-intensive process. However, in selecting a pilot project we need to have some assurance that permitting will not be a barrier to implementation, and as such we ask that each team describe a plan for obtaining the required permits to implement the physical capture system (and data collection and outreach/communication activities, as needed). We ask that this description also include the support of the team's local government partner demonstrating that the proposed plan is the best path forward for successful permitting. If an applicant is able to successfully obtain some or all of the permits prior to submission, we ask that they upload copies of these permits.

30. Can BOI disclose a list of the webinar participants or organizations that have signaled intent to submit proposals?

No; BOI does not have permission from participants or applicants to disclose this information.

31. For applicants based outside of the US - Do they need to (re)incorporate in the US, get US visas or obtain business licenses once they are selected?

No.