

Regional-ORD Applied Research Program (ROAR) Proposal Guidelines
June 2022

I. INTRODUCTION

The Regional-ORD Applied Research (ROAR) Program is an internal EPA research program that advances collaborative ORD and EPA regional research partnerships to address high priority near-term regional, state, tribal and strategic Agency research needs. The ROAR program is run through an internal competition and is managed by EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD). Selected ROAR projects are supported by project team staff time and funds can be used in accordance with EPA regulations, policies, and orders through two general types of vehicles: Interagency agreements with federal agencies (includes ORD ORISE fellows) and acquisitions (simplified acquisitions, contracts, or government purchase cards for contractor support and limited purchases of expendable supplies). Grants and Cooperative agreements may not be used.

The goals of the ROAR program are to:

- Provide near-term research (1-2 years) on high-priority regional, state, tribal and community applied science needs and related strategic priorities
- Foster collaboration between EPA's regional offices and ORD to build a foundation for future scientific interaction
- Support research collaborations to address the region's state, tribal, local government, or community needs
- Support research to address strategic topic areas and innovative research approaches
- Provide opportunities for ORD scientists to apply their expertise to regional, state, tribal, local government and community issues and explore new research challenges in collaboration with EPA regional staff

The Regional Science Liaisons (RSLs) coordinate the ROAR proposal process in the Regions by assisting regional staff in the identification of potential ORD scientists to work with on proposal development and by fostering interactions and communication between the Regions and ORD's Research Centers.

The ROAR Program consists of three Tracks, each with a specific focus area identified below:

1. **Regional Track:** Proposals submitted under this track support **applied, near-term regional research needs** and will be reviewed and selected by the EPA Regions.
2. **OSAPE Track:** Each Region will have the opportunity to nominate up to two (2) of their Regional Track proposals for funding consideration under the OSAPE Track. Nominated proposals must address one or more of the OSAPE Track topics identified in the annual ROAR solicitation memo. For this FY23 solicitation, the OSAPE Track topics include: **innovative research that addresses environmental justice and/or climate change issues and their impacts to states, tribes, or communities**. Proposals nominated for this track will be reviewed by an ORD/Regional internal relevancy review team, and the OSAPE Director will make project selections. The OSAPE Track review criteria are provided in [Attachment 3](#). If a nominated proposal does not receive OSAPE Track funding, the Region will have an opportunity to fund that proposal through the Regional Track.
3. **SHC Track:** Proposals must address one or more of the SHC Track topics. For this FY23 solicitation, the SHC Track topics are **advancing remediation and restoration of contaminated sites, materials management & beneficial reuse of waste, and integrated systems approach to building healthy and resilient communities**. These topics are consistent with the [Draft SHC Strategic Research Action Plan for FY23-26](#). Proposals submitted to this track will be reviewed by an SHC review team, and the SHC National Program Director will make project selections. Each region may submit up to four (4) proposals to this track. Multi-regional SHC Track proposals that involve two or more separate geographic locations in two or more Regions are encouraged and may request funding up to \$200K. Proposals that involve a single Region may request funding up to \$150K. The SHC Track review criteria are provided in [Attachment 3](#). If an SHC Track proposal does not receive SHC Track Funding, the Region will have an opportunity to fund that proposal through the Regional Track.

ROAR proposals may be submitted for review through either the Regional Track/OSAPE Track, or through the SHC Track. Proposal teams should engage with their RSL early in the proposal development process with a focus on developing the proposal concepts and connecting with ORD partners. RSLs will also help teams identify which track is the best route for submission.

ROAR projects with state, tribal, and/or community collaboration and engagement and/or projects using innovative research approaches are highly encouraged. The use of innovative approaches and external engagement can expand and diversify EPA's work, engage the public, and foster creative solutions to important environmental problems. This also provides a valuable opportunity to continue strengthening the relationship between ORD, regions, states, communities, and tribes by working directly on solutions to their priority environmental science issues and needs.

II. INTERNAL ROAR PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE

A. Annual Internal Solicitation

The ROAR process is initiated by a call memorandum from the ORD Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science to the Deputy Regional Administrators. The memorandum serves as an internal solicitation solely for EPA staff for the development and submission of ROAR proposals.

The RSLs conduct an internal solicitation process within their own Region by forwarding the memorandum to all relevant programs within the Region and outlining Region-specific submission deadlines and review processes.

ROAR Program Webinar

After the ROAR Solicitation is announced, ORD will hold informational webinars for EPA staff to provide an overview of the goals of the ROAR program, proposal requirements, Track-specific topics and review criteria, and details on next steps for proposal teams. Information about the webinar(s) is available on the [ROAR intranet page](#). A webinar recording will also be available for interested staff who are unable to attend.

ROAR program timeline and milestones, including actions and deadlines for submission to ORD, are provided in [Attachment 1](#).

B. External Collaboration

EPA employees engaged in official duties may propose collaborations with external (i.e., non-federal) entities provided that the employees comply with federal ethics laws and regulations, and the proposed research activity has the necessary statutory authority. As noted in the box on the right, proposals should only list *types* of proposed collaborators and should not specifically name entities or points of contact for potential non-federal collaborators. External collaborations are developed after project selections, however, here are some key points to keep in mind on collaboration:

- 1) Employees must abide by the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 C.F.R. Part 2635, which include specific provisions regarding conflict of interest, loss of impartiality and misuse of position. They cannot, for example, propose to cooperate with their spouse or their

External ROAR Collaborators

*During the ROAR internal proposal development phase, EPA ROAR proposal teams are encouraged to work with the RSL on how to characterize the needs of state, tribal, or local governments in project conceptualization to ensure that final products will be fine-tuned for delivery in a format that is easily translatable to the environmental issue(s) of stakeholder communities. Any discussion with state, tribal or local governments during EPA's ROAR project conceptualization shall be limited to understanding the research issue and context (e.g., the problem, history, existing methods, data, utility of results, and understanding what's relevant and what's duplicative research). **Proposals must be written solely by EPA staff.***

*In their proposals, EPA ROAR proposal teams can list types of entities (i.e., state, tribal, local, NGO, university) appropriate for potential collaboration, however it is critical to note that **non-federal entities should not be specifically named in an EPA ROAR proposal**. These external collaborations are developed during the ROAR project implementation phase, after ROAR project selections have been announced and the Region should incorporate an equitable, open and transparent approach to solicit collaborators.*

spouse's employer. Employees are reminded to seek advice from their own Deputy Ethics Official or the Office of General Counsel's Ethics Office.

- 2) EPA employees are permitted to collaborate with non-federal entities on scientific research projects that are undertaken pursuant to the following environmental statutes only: Section 103 of the Clean Air Act (CAA), 42 U.S.C 7403; Section 104 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA) 33 U.S.C 1254; Section 8001 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), 42 U.S.C 6981; and Section 203 of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA), 33 U.S.C 1443. The scope of the research activities must fall under one of these statutes. Only these laws provide the necessary authority to collaborate with non-federal entities for research purposes.
- 3) Regions must consider regional priorities and use objective criteria for selecting the locations where research will be done to help address local environmental issues.

C. Proposal Development Roles

After the annual solicitation memo is released, Regional and ORD staff should begin working together to develop proposals that best address the Region's highest research priorities. EPA ROAR proposal teams/regional leads should contact their RSL early in the proposal development process to ensure all Regional and national process requirements are met and to begin identifying ORD staff who will assist with proposal development.

Proposal Teams must develop and submit a ROAR Concept document in advance of the deadline for final proposals. More information about this requirement is provided [below](#).

ROAR proposal development is a highly collaborative internal process that involves early engagement between proposal teams and ORD scientists and staff. Throughout proposal development, Regional and ORD scientists and staff should work together to ensure timely ORD input on proposal scientific feasibility, resource and timeline sufficiency, and ORD availability to support the proposal. Early engagement between ORD and the proposal team also allows for timely input on other potential EPA collaborators and alignment with research under ORD's National Research Programs. The sections below describe roles of key regional and ORD staff and scientists during the proposal development process.

RSL Role

RSLs engage with Regional staff and ORD early in the proposal development process to ensure that projects address Regional priorities and are within the scope of the solicitation and ORD's mission. RSLs work with their Region's ROAR proposal leads and ORD Program Support Coordinators (PSCs) to help form proposal teams and identify ORD Project Leads and appropriate Assistant Center Directors (ACDs). The RSL is an invaluable resource in proposal development and can provide additional insights regarding:

- ROAR programmatic information and the proposal development process, including the appropriate track for proposals;

Multi-Region Proposals

In addition to intra-Regional collaboration, RSLs look for opportunities to address cross-regional priorities using other existing Agency networks. For example, the RSL can engage other RSLs in evaluating opportunities for cross-regional and other potential internal-EPA collaboration.

All multi-regional ROAR proposals must identify a single lead Region which will be responsible for coordinating the submission, evaluation, and selection decisions (or nomination) for the proposal and be submitted to ORD as one proposal.

When considering multi-Region ROAR proposals, each Region should:

- Ensure the proposal indicates the specific regional technical contacts, and the amount of funding requested for each Region.
- Ensure the proposal describes how the proposal team will scale the project approach if one or more Regions do not select the proposal.
- Multi-region proposals should only be submitted to one track. If they are not selected for funding, then they may be considered for the Regional Track. They cannot receive funding through multiple tracks.

- Relevance of the proposed research and/or the feasibility of achieving results within the timeframe or available resources;
- Recommendations for collaboration with other Regional offices and EPA program offices;
- Opportunities to enhance anticipated outcomes through potential collaboration with states, tribes, communities, etc; and
- Information on related ORD research.

A list of RSLs is available [here](#) and provided in [Attachment 2](#).

Program Support Coordinator (PSC) Role

The PSCs are ORD staff who can provide additional assistance with forming proposal teams and identifying ORD co-leads and appropriate ACDs to contribute to the proposal development. PSCs also play a critical role in facilitating information sharing and awareness among ORD's Centers and National Program Directors throughout the proposal development process. A complete list of PSCs is provided in [Attachment 2](#).

Assistant Center Director (ACD) Role

ACDs play a very important role in proposal development, as they are responsible for providing direct input to the proposal team using the "ACD Input on Proposal Feasibility and Alignment Table" included in the ROAR Proposal Template document. More information about the ACD review step is provided [below](#). ACDs are also responsible for coordinating with ORD National Program Directors (NPDs) to ensure awareness about proposals that are under development and confirm alignment with areas in ORD's Strategic Research Action Plan. A complete list of ACDs is provided in [Attachment 2](#).

ORD and Regional Proposal Lead Roles

The Regional Proposal Lead and ORD Proposal Lead work together to develop a ROAR proposal following instructions provided in this guidelines document and in the ROAR Proposal Template with input from the proposal team. The proposal team should follow any additional instructions provided by the RSL (e.g., Region-specific requirements or deadlines). The proposal must outline the anticipated roles/responsibilities of the Region(s) and ORD during the project's implementation phase, including implementation of any post-selection planning, review, technical oversight, or technical assistance at each stage in the lifecycle of the project.

The ORD Lead is responsible for ensuring that the anticipated funding mechanism(s) for the proposal is appropriate and can consult with their Extramural Management Specialist (EMS) as needed.

D. ROAR Concept Template and ROAR Concept Web Form

In order to ensure ORD awareness and input for ROAR proposals, each proposal team must submit ROAR Concept information to the [ROAR Concept Web Form](#) no later than the date specified in the solicitation. A template for the ROAR Concept is provided on the [ROAR intranet page](#). Proposal Teams should consult with the appropriate RSL before submitting ROAR Concept Information to the web form. Proposal Teams are encouraged to submit this information **as early as possible**.

All information collected through the web form will be considered draft and will be shared with the RSLs and with ORD PSCs, ACDs, NPDs, and Regional Science Program (RSP) staff. This information will be used to facilitate ORD input during the proposal development process. It is understood that proposals may change as the team develops their actual ROAR Proposal.

E. ACD and RSL Review

Prior to submitting a draft proposal for signature, each proposal teams must share a draft of their proposal with the appropriate ACD(s) and RSL. This can be done in a single email. The ACDs will use this opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal via the "ACD Input on Proposal Feasibility and Alignment Table." RSLs will use this opportunity to verify that the proposal is complete and suitable for finalizing and getting management approval for

submission. The timeline for providing a draft to your ACD(s) and RSL and receiving comments back is provided in [Attachment 1](#).

F. ROAR Proposal Submission

All final proposal submissions must follow the required format of the ROAR Proposal Template document and be submitted to the RSL by the due date established for their Region (no later than 10/21/22). All ROAR proposals:

- Must clearly identify the proposal track (e.g., Regional/OSAPE or SHC).
- Must clearly identify the ORD project lead and the ORD project team scientist who will serve as the Project Officer (PO) or Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) during the project implementation phase and be responsible for working with the ORD EMS to implement all appropriate extramural mechanisms. The ORD Project Lead may also be the Project PO/COR. ***All extramural mechanisms funded through ROAR must have an ORD PO or COR assigned in the proposal.***
- Must identify other ORD project researchers and their anticipated roles in each phase of the project lifecycle as well as the anticipated role of regional staff in each project phase.
- Should identify potential internal EPA collaborators who may be interested in the proposal topic (e.g., Office of Water HABs team lead).
- Must include signatures or other documentation (such as approval via email or memo) from the **First-line Supervisors of both the Regional and ORD Proposal Leads**. Their approval indicates support for scope of the proposed research and staff resource commitment to the project team if the proposal is selected for award. Other Regional and ORD collaborators who are not Proposal Leads must obtain approval from their supervisor for their participation in the project, however these approvals do not need to be submitted to OSAPE along with the Proposal.
- Should identify the anticipated/planned product(s) of the research, including one final product/deliverable that will signal the completion of the project. The table below provides examples of product types and subtypes.

Examples of ROAR Product Types and Subtypes	
ROAR Product Type	ROAR Product Subtypes
Assessment	Assessment Document, Integrated Science Assessment, IRIS Assessment, Risk Assessment Guidelines
Book	Book, Book Chapter
Journal Article	Non-Peer Reviewed, Peer Reviewed
Presentations and Technical Summaries	Abstract, Extended Abstract, Technical Newsletter Article, Presentation, Poster
Proceedings	EPA Proceedings, Paper in EPA Proceedings, Paper in Non-EPA Proceedings
Reports and Guidance	Extramural Document, Handbook, Internal Report, Manual, Methods, Report, Summary, Unpublished Report
Scientific Data, Software, and Models	Conceptual Model/Formulae, Database, Dataset, Downloadable Application, Mobile Application, Raw Code/Code Package, Web-based Application
Other	

Regional and ORD Proposal Leads should plan for First-line Supervisor review and approval before submittal of their finalized proposals and build that into their proposal development timeline. Consult with your RSL to ensure that the Region does not have region-specific requirements or dates for submittal. More information about the proposal

submission timeline is available in the annual ROAR solicitation memo and other materials available on the [ROAR intranet page](#).

III. INTERNAL REVIEW AND SELECTION PHASE

A. ROAR Internal Review Processes

After all proposals have been submitted, Regions and SHC will begin their review processes. Proposals will not be considered if they do not provide the information requested in the template and follow the guidelines document.

Regional Review and OSAPE Track Processes

Each Region will rely on an established process within their Region to provide technical reviews, revision, and recommendations to Regional senior management for Regional Track ROAR proposals. Each RSL will coordinate the review process in their Region. Regions will nominate up to two (2) proposals for the OSAPE Track that are well-suited for the OSAPE Track, based on the OSAPE Track topics identified in the annual solicitation. Regional management will approve nominations for the OSAPE Track and RSLs will submit their OSAPE Track nominations to OSAPE, along with a ranked priority list of their full list of proposals (including Regional, OSAPE, and SHC Track Proposals).

After receiving OSAPE Track nominations from the Regions, OSAPE will coordinate an internal relevancy review process, in which proposals will be evaluated by an internal review panel. The panel will use criteria provided in [Attachment 3](#) to score proposals. The ROAR Program Lead will compile panel scores and feedback and share them with the OSAPE Director. The OSAPE Director will use this feedback, along with other programmatic considerations such as strategic breadth of the ROAR portfolio and strength of alignment with annual topics to make OSAPE Track project selections.

SHC Track Process

In parallel with the Regional Review and OSAPE Track Processes, SHC will coordinate a review process, in which proposals will be evaluated by an internal EPA peer review panel. The panel will use criteria provided in [Attachment 3](#) to score each proposal. The SHC Track Lead will compile panel scores and feedback and share them with the SHC National Program Director (NPD). The SHC NPD will use this feedback, along with other programmatic considerations such as strength of alignment to the SHC research program, to make SHC Track project selections. SHC will provide a list of their selected projects to the OSAPE Director.

After SHC NPD and OSAPE Director make SHC and OSAPE track selections, they will brief ORD management on the selected projects. Final OSAPE and SHC Track Selections will be shared with the RSLs, along with feedback from the review panels, for selected and not-selected proposals. This preliminary sharing of selections is intended solely to facilitate Regional Track Selections by senior regional management. ORD will announce the selected ROAR projects once selections from all ROAR Tracks are final.

Regional Track Selection Process

After RSLs receive OSAPE and SHC Track Selections, RSLs will work within their Region to make Regional Track selections. Regions may consider funding proposals that were not funded under the OSAPE or SHC Tracks. Regional management will approve and select proposals for the Regional Track. Each RSL will submit their Region's final decisions on all Regional Track selections to the OSAPE Director.

B. ROAR Senior Leadership Group Awareness and Support

OSAPE and SHC will brief the ROAR Senior Leadership Group on the combined list of all ROAR selections for awareness and support to finalize the ROAR project selections. The Senior Leadership Group will consist of representatives from three Regions, as well as ORD senior management.

C. ROAR Project Selections Announcement

ORD will announce the ROAR project selections in a memo to DRAs, ORD management, LSASD Directors, RSLs, STLs PSCs, and ORD and regional project leads and contacts.

III. ROAR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Immediately following the ROAR project selections announcement, OSAPE will provide ROAR project teams with instructions on next steps for ROAR project planning and implementation. OSAPE will also schedule kick-off calls for ROAR project teams to officially begin the project implementation phase and answer questions. All instructional materials will be made available for reference on the [ROAR intranet page](#).

ROAR project teams must develop a project management plan for their project before beginning work. More details will be provided at the time of the ROAR project selection announcement.

Schedule for FY23 Regional-ORD Applied Research (ROAR) Program	
Programmatic Action	Date
Solicitation Phase	
Solicitation announced	6/27/2022
Proposal Development Phase	
Proposal teams submit a draft proposal concept/overview to the ROAR concept web form no later than this date.	8/5/2022
Proposal teams share draft proposal with appropriate ACD and RSL for review and comment.	9/16/2022
ACD and RSL share comments on proposal with proposal team.	9/30/2022
Regional and ORD proposal leads submit finalized proposals to first line supervisors for signature/approval of submission.	10/7/2022
Proposal teams submit all finalized and approved ROAR proposals to RSLs no later than this date.	10/21/2022
RSLs send proposals to OSAPE and enter into RSP Tracker and Regional and SHC review processes begin.	10/28/2022
Proposal Review and Selection Phases	
Regions complete review and ranking process; RSLs submit OSAPE Track nominations to OSAPE, along with priority ranking of proposals submitted to all Tracks	12/9/2022
OSAPE convenes Internal Relevancy Review Team to score OSAPE Track nominations	12/16/2022
RSP Briefs OSAPE management on recommendations; OSAPE makes OSAPE Track selections	2/1/2023
OSAPE and SHC Brief ORD management on OSAPE and SHC Track selections	2/15/2023
OSAPE Notifies RSLs of OSAPE and SHC Track Selections	3/3/2023
RSLs meet with DRAs to select final Regional Track selections; RSLs submit Regional Track selections to OSAPE no later than this date	3/17/2023
OSAPE holds briefing for ORD and Regional Senior Leadership Group on all ROAR project selections	3/29/2023
ORD announces project selections and notify RSLs and ORD and Regional Leads to begin project planning. OSAPE begins scheduling kick-off calls	4/7/2023

Key Points of Contact for ROAR Proposal Development

Regional Science Liaisons (RSLs)

Region	Regional Science Liaison	Contact Information
1	Chau Vu	617-918-1446
2	Mindy Pensak	732-321-6705
3	Regina Poeske	215-814-2725
4	Dawn Taylor	404-562-8575
5	Carole Braverman	312-353-7359
6	Michael Morton	214-665-8329
7	Elidora Chamberlain	913-551-7945
8	William Bunch	303-312-6412
9	Matt Small	415-972-3366
10	Rob Elleman	206-553-1531
https://intranet.ord.epa.gov/regional-science/regional-science-staff		

Program Support Coordinators (PSCs)

ORD Center	Program Support Coordinator (PSC)	Contact Information
Center for Computational Toxicology and Exposure (CCTE)	Chelsea Weitekamp	919-541-9459
Center for Environmental Measurement and Modeling (CEMM)	Lee Riddick	919-541-1144
Center for Environmental Solutions and Emergency Response (CESER)	Evelyn Hartzell	513-569-7728
Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment (CPHEA)	Santhini Ramasamy	202-564-8328

Assistant Center Directors (ACDs)

ORD Center	National Research Program	Assistant Center Director (ACD)	Contact Information
Center for Computational Toxicology and Exposure (CCTE)	CSS Research Areas 2 and 5	John Kenneke	706-355-8247
	CSS Research Areas 6, 7, and 8	Doug Young	513-569-7624
	CSS Research Areas 1 and 4	Nisha Sipes	919-541-3615
	SHC and SSWR	Marc Russell	850-816-9236
Center for Environmental Measurement and Modeling (CEMM)	ACE	Tiffany Yelverton	919-541-9456
	CSS	Candice Lavelle	850-501-1275
	SHC	Jennifer Cashdollar	513-569-7142
	SSWR	Ann Grimm	516-569-7397

Center for Environmental Solutions and Emergency Response (CESER)	ACE and SHC Research Areas 6, 7, and 8	Carlos Nunez	919-541-1156
	CSS, HERA, and HSRP	Darcie Smith	919-541-2076
	SHC	Tom Holdsworth	513-569-7675
	SSWR	Hale Thurston	513-569-7627
Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment (CPHEA)	ACE	Tom Long	919-541-1880
	CSS	Scott Jenkins	919-541-1167
	HERA	Beth Owens	513-569-7241
	SHC	Susan Julius	202-564-7021
	SSWR	Brenda Rashleigh	401-782-3014
Air, Climate and Energy (ACE) Chemical Safety and Sustainability (CSS) Health and Environmental Risk Assessment (HERA) Homeland Security Research Program (HSRP) Sustainable and Healthy Communities (SHC) Safe and Sustainable Water Resources (SSWR)			

Extramural Management Specialists

Center or Office	Name	Contact Information
CCTE	Andy Flynn	919-541-2674
	Laconda Hart	919-541-2631
CEMM	Mary-Sue McNeil	580-436-8711
	Pamela Gillikin	919-541-7954
CESER	Andy Flynn	919-541-2674
CPHEA	Mary-Sue McNeil	580-436-8711
Research Area Coordinators / NPDs	Andy Flynn	919-541-2674
	Laconda Hart	919-541-2631

ROAR Program Points of Contact

	Name	Contact Information
Regional Science Program (RSP) Coordinator	Nicholas Geroux	202-564-4093
ROAR Program Lead	Deirdre Turner	202-564-5765
SHC Track Lead	Charles Maurice	919-541-3135

OSAPE Track Scoring Criteria

Criteria	Score Percentage
Alignment with OSAPE strategic funding key topic area(s) in annual solicitation and scientific feasibility	25%
Potential benefit to states, tribes, and/or communities	25%
Incorporation of innovative research approaches	25%
Potential for cross-regional or translational application of research results	20%
Demonstrated alignment with one or more National Research Programs	5%

SHC Track Scoring Criteria

Criteria	Score Percentage
Scientific merit	30%
Unambiguous alignment with at least one of the three SHC Research Topics ¹	20%
Potential benefit to states, tribes, and/or communities	25%
Potential transferability to other locales and Regions	15%
Feasibility of completion considering requested funding and team expertise	10%

¹ As described in the [FY23-26 SHC Draft Program Synopsis](#) (Pulse Secure connection required).