

California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment

Core Climate Research Program - Request for Proposals (RFP)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

June 20, 2023

NOTE: *The Fifth Assessment team endeavored to answer all questions in this document that were raised during the RFP question submission period or during the associated RFP webinar with the exception of project-specific questions that might give an unfair advantage to applicants participating in this competitive funding process. Other questions raised about this RFP that were not listed below were considered to have been addressed in detail within the RFP solicitation manual or attachments.*

WEBINAR-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Will the Fifth Assessment Core Climate Research Program RFP webinar be recorded and posted?

- Yes, alongside the RFP materials - <https://uc-ciee.org/projects/californias-fifth-climate-change-assessment/>

When will answers to the questions received between June 5 and 19 be posted?

- June 20, 2023 at 12:00 PM PDT

Can I submit questions after the questions deadline? If so, where will those answers be reflected?

- Yes, addenda to the original FAQ may be posted on the CIEE [website](#) on **June 27** and **July 11** as needed.
 - All **technical** questions must be received by **July 9**. Technical questions received after the deadline may be answered at the State's discretion.
 - **Non-technical** questions (e.g., questions concerning proposal format requirements or attachment instructions) must be received by **July 13**. Non-technical questions received after the deadline may be answered at CIEE's discretion.

GENERAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

When are proposals due?

- July 17, 2023, 5:00 PM PDT

How much funding is available?

- Up to approximately \$5.5 million.

Who is eligible?

- This solicitation is open to all public and private entities, including but not limited to academic institutions, private research institutions, local/state/federal government entities, California Native American tribes, non-profits, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, and individuals*. * If a single individual applies, she/he/they do so as an organizational entity (e.g., "Jane Doe doing business as JD Labs").

Can applicants be located outside of California?

- Yes, but the research should be California-specific.

Does the lead organization need to be California-based? And/or a percentage of any consortium?

- No, but the research should be California-specific.

Can international applicants apply and/or be a part of US-based research teams?

- Non-U.S. applicants are not eligible to apply as the lead applicant (principal investigator) for proposed research project(s). They may be part of a U.S.-based research team as a lower-tier subcontractor or consultant. The lead applicant assumes the obligations imposed by all federal and state laws, regulations, requirements, and conditions that apply to engaging in research/business with a non-U.S. entity.

What costs are eligible?

- Direct Costs (Salaries, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Materials & Supplies, Equipment, Consultant, Subrecipient, and Other Direct Costs that are directly attributed to the project.)
- Indirect costs (Indirect cost elements may include items such as operation and maintenance of facilities, including building depreciation, library expenses, rental space, utilities, payroll, accounting, and other services.)

Is profit an eligible cost?

- Profit is NOT an eligible cost for the lead applicant and at any lower-tier level (subcontractors, consultants, etc.).

How do I submit a proposal?

- Applicants shall submit required proposal documents as attached files in the electronic file format(s) specified in the RFP to the email address indicated on page one of the solicitation (ccca@berkeley.edu).
 - The email subject line for submitting a proposal shall be in the following format:
 - Subject: RFP CCCA5-1 Proposal; <input Proposing Entity's name>
 - Example:
 - Subject: RFP CCCA5-1 Proposal; XYZ Research, Inc.

Must proposals from a UC/CSU campus be submitted through an institutional Sponsored Projects Office or Contracts & Grants office?

- Proposals from a UC/CSU campus should be submitted by an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) from your institution. An AOR is the individual who is authorized to sign on behalf of the proposing organization and is authorized to act for the applicant and to assume

the obligations imposed by laws, regulations, requirements, and conditions that apply to applications and contracts.

What are the required proposal components?

- Cover page, Scope of Work (Abstract, Required Questions, Methodology, Work Plan), Work Schedule, Budget and Budget Justification, Statement of Qualifications for Key Personnel

When should all projects be completed?

- No later than third quarter (September 30), 2025 (this includes the review process).

When will I know if I am selected for an award?

- We anticipate these announcements to be made in early September 2023, but this will depend on the number of proposals received.

Can I submit more than one proposal? / Can I receive more than one award?

- Yes, individual researchers can submit or be a part of multiple proposals, but can only act as a lead researcher (or principal investigator) for one awarded project.

How many awards will be made?

- We expect to fund approximately 20-30 proposals.

Is there a minimum or maximum award amount? Why not set minimum and maximum award amount limits?

- No. There are not minimum or maximum amount limits. This was done to create the opportunity to fund a range projects, such as smaller projects that leverage other funds or larger critical projects.

If 20-30 topics are funded, what is the expectation for depth versus breadth of research?

- We want to cover a broad range of research topics through this program, but with each individual project achieve sufficient depth to be able to inform sound and smart policy decisions.

Is it acceptable to contact Fifth Assessment staff to make sure proposed projects are in line with the program priorities?

- No, the RFP details the program priorities and lists State and other resources to aid in application drafting. Utilizing the help of Fifth Assessment staff on an application would disqualify the application.

Can you explain what is an ideal timeline for the proposed projects?

- There is no single “ideal” timeline for projects under this RFP. The deadlines contained in the RFP and attachments are strict, but the specifics of individual project timelines can vary. Projects should expect to go through a review process of approximately five months, ending no later than September 30, 2025.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS

What will the scoring look like?

- The State will evaluate proposals to determine if the Applicants are qualified, and the degree to which proposals are responsive to the RFP. Only the proposals submitted by Applicants that meet all eligibility requirements (see RFP Section E) will be evaluated for responsiveness to the State's needs. The final selection and awards will be made based on the highest scoring proposals as calculated by the cumulative points earned from the Technical Evaluations.

Is there a requirement for cost-share? Does cost share affect scoring?

- Cost-share is not required and will not be taken into consideration for the technical evaluation and scoring phase.

How will you determine if a deviation in the application is material or immaterial?

- Material deviations typically involve substantial changes to, adds extraneous terms to, conflicts with or offers an alternative to the requirements of the solicitation. If an item is unclear or needs further clarification, we may request that Applicants provide additional clarification and/or documentation.

Why are these subcontracts? What is the prime contract?

- The prime contract is between CNRA and CIEE. Each selected research project will be a subcontract between CIEE and the awardee.

How will invoicing work (e.g., what is the frequency and what is required)?

- Invoices will be submitted no less frequently than on a quarterly basis, but not more frequently than monthly. Supporting backup documentation (e.g., detailed general ledger) will be submitted at the same time as the invoice at a level of detail that allows for verification of actual rates applied and allowable costs billed in relation to the approved budget. More detailed instructions including how to submit invoices will be provided in the subcontract terms.

For UC/CSU applicants, why is the indirect cost limited to 25%?

- The prime contract is between CNRA and CIEE with an approved indirect cost rate of 25%. Per the contract terms, the rate in effect for the first year of a multi-year project will be the rate used for the entire project. This will be flowed down in the terms to any UC or CSU campuses that may be selected for funding.

Is there an indirect rate cap for non-UC/CSU applicants?

- No.

What does the quarterly reporting entail?

- A summary of hours/effort expended on each task, a discussion of any issues encountered that affect the status or progress of the project, and where applicable, proposed steps to remediate such issues. A progress report template will be provided in the subcontract package.

What does “inclusive” mean?

- The intentional act of creating environments in which all individuals/groups feel and are empowered and welcomed as a valued member. Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power; values each individual’s or group’s heritage, contributions, and aspirations; and guarantees full belonging to all interested parties and participants.

What does “language access” mean?

- Language access entails providing non- or limited-English speakers the same services as English-speaking individuals typically through interpretation and translation.

Will there be an effort to distribute awards across CRTs, or will you strictly take the top scoring applications as ranked by the reviewers?

- Final awards may include further consideration of the variety of topics awarded to ensure alignment with as many research priorities as possible, as well as California’s climate agenda and commitment to a California for All, and to represent different geographies and issues across the state. CNRA has full discretion to amend, adjust, or disregard a score or technical recommendation based on factors like statewide need, priority areas of interest, or other policy direction from this Administration in support of its programs.

CLIMATE PROJECTIONS DATA & SCENARIOS QUESTIONS

Am I required to use the Fifth Assessment projections and associated modeling?

- Only if such data are relevant and appropriate to the proposed research.

When and where will the Fifth Assessment projections and modeling scenarios be available?

- Climate projection data—dynamical (WRF) and LOCA2 hybrid downscaling of CMIP6 Global Climate Models—are already available or will be made publicly available in the third quarter (July-September) of 2023 through the Cal-Adapt [Analytics Engine](#) as research teams complete their modeling efforts and data products are formatted and ingested into the Analytics Engine platform in a manner that supports cloud compute and includes appropriate metadata. Additionally, hydrologic modeling scenarios and sea level rise scenarios will be available later in 2023, and wildfire modeling scenarios will be available in mid-2024.

Deliverables for CEC-Funded Climate and Hydrological Projections (EPC-20-006)	Approximate Delivery Date (as of June 2023)
CMIP 6 Model Evaluation for Dynamic Downscaling	Completed
Dynamical Downscaling of 4 CMIP6 GCMs	
Bias Correction selected daily variables	
WRF historical and WRF CMIP6 Projections	

Deliverables for CEC-Funded Climate and Hydrological Projections <i>(EPC-20-006)</i>	Approximate Delivery Date <i>(as of June 2023)</i>
Hydrologic Model Validation	
LOCA Hybrid downscaling 15 CMIP6 GCM	
4 additional WRF downscaled GCMs (to 3km)	Summer 2023
General-Use Projections selected	Q1 2024
Hydrologic Simulation of GCMs	Fall 2023
15 Dynamically Downscaled Target Cases (awaiting additional WRF runs that include parameters of importance to a high-renewables electricity grid)	Q1 2024
Hourly Sea Level Rise Projections (at select tide gauge stations)	Fall 2023
CEC-Funded Long-Term Wildfire Projections <i>(EPC-18-026)</i>	Approximate Delivery Date <i>(as of June 2023)</i>
Long-term** wildfire risk projections portraying fire presence (3 km grid), fire size, number of fires, fire severity, and smoke emissions ** limited projections extending through end-century and more projections through mid-century	Available on a rolling basis, beginning summer 2024

Is the research timeline flexible for researchers requiring datasets that are not yet but will eventually be available in Cal-Adapt?

- Author teams will be required to complete individual research projects funded through the Core Climate Research Program by the third quarter of 2025. Specific work plans and schedules can be determined on a case-by-case basis to incorporate relevant datasets as they are available.

When might it make sense to use non-Fifth Assessment climate data? (The RFP says, “The collection, use, and analysis of other data that aligns with the Fifth Assessment projections, models, and scenarios may be included in the proposed research scope.”)

- Non-Fifth Assessment climate data may be used where additional, supplemental existing data or collection of new data are needed to address informational gaps not fulfilled by the provided Fifth Assessment projections and modeling data. Justification will be needed in these cases.

Will the Fifth Assessment place greater emphasis on historical trends or future climate scenarios?

- The Fifth Assessment is intended to assess climate change impacts throughout the state and climate-related risks and resilience options for California’s diverse populations, economic sectors, and natural resources. Both recent historical trends and projected climate scenarios are expected to be used to achieve this objective. Because the climate system is rapidly diverging from historical norms, historical trends alone are not considered sufficient to illuminate future risks for which California must prepare.

Is downscaling required under this RFP?

- It is necessary to downscale CMIP6 GCM results to capture the meteorological and topological complexity that is not portrayed by coarse resolution CMIP6 GCM outputs but is crucial for understanding California’s weather patterns and climate-related risks. *However*, applicants are not required or encouraged to produce their own downscaled projections. The California Energy Commission is supporting development of high-resolution downscaled climate projections that leverage CMIP6 to inform the Fifth Assessment. These “downscaled” modeling products have substantially higher resolution than CMIP6 GCM results. For more information regarding CEC-funded projections, please see materials from the September 7, 2022 Climate Data & Analytics Working Group meeting ([here](#)).

GENERAL FIFTH ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

How will the research funded under this RFP relate to the Fifth Assessment regional synthesis reports, topical synthesis reports, and statewide summary reports?

- This research will contribute to the foundation of information used to inform the Fifth Assessment Regional and Topical Synthesis Reports and Statewide Summary. Regional Reports will call attention to locally specific applications of the research funded under this RFP, where relevant. Topical reports will incorporate various research related to a statewide topic of concern. The Statewide Summary document will summarize key findings from all research conducted as a part of the Fifth Assessment.

What roles are CIEE, CNRA, OPR, SGC, and CEC playing in the Core Climate Research program?

- CNRA is funding and overseeing the program. CIEE is CNRA’s contractor and is administering and managing the program. OPR, as the overall coordinator of the Fifth Assessment, will ensure the program is in alignment with the overall Fifth Assessment. SGC is providing outreach and engagement support. CEC, as the lead on the California-specific downscaled climate projections and data, will help facilitate the use of this data.

What will the review process look like?

- Reports will be subject to an expert review of draft materials. In most cases, this will be modeled after standard journal peer review processes, whereby a panel of expert reviewers (determined by the Fifth Assessment team) will conduct a blind review (facilitated by CIEE) and provide substantive comments and suggestions to each report author team. Report authors will be required to address reviewer comments in the final draft materials presented to CNRA. Specific

timelines, reviewer criteria, and guidance will be provided by OPR. The period of review is expected to start May 1, 2025, or earlier and take approximately five months. Final research reports are due no later than September 30, 2025. The research report review process may vary for authors providing tribal expertise, Indigenous knowledge(s), lived experience, and community science and expertise.

How is this funding coordinated with the UC Office of the President \$100M Climate Funding?

- These are separate funding programs, however the Fifth Assessment team coordinates, where relevant, with the UC Office of the President.

How were the 26 Climate Research Topics determined?

- In 2022, the Fifth Assessment project team collected input from more than 200 individuals representing state and local governments, businesses, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, tribal communities, and the general public. Responses included over 600 proposed climate research topics for consideration in the Fifth Assessment. With subject matter expert support, this list was refined to 26 Research Topics that will be used to guide the scope of future deliverables. These topics consider broad issues that address knowledge gaps on climate change impacts and adaptation pathways.

Is this the first time this program is being rolled out? If not, are there examples of successful proposals from the previous round?

- An earlier iteration of this program was included in the Fourth Assessment under the name “Core Technical Reports” (a link to these reports can be found [here](#)). The Core Climate Research Program was modeled off of the Core Technical Reports with a few updates.

How/when will reviewers be recruited?

- The Fifth Assessment Team will issue a call to State agency staff to act as reviewers for applications in the coming weeks. Other outside reviewers may also be asked to participate at the discretion of CNRA.

Is there be a possibility for no-cost extensions after the third quarter of 2025?

- The research conducted as a part of the Core Climate Research Program will be used to inform the Fifth Assessment Regional and Topical Synthesis Reports and undergo design and formatting processes in preparation for the release of the complete suite of research products no later than June of 2026. Where there is a compelling reason for an extension, the State will consider amending research timelines on a case-by-case basis, however, this is not encouraged. Significant delays in research deliverables may preclude inclusion in the final suite of Fifth Assessment products.

Can authors publish the funded research separately in scientific journals as well as submitting a report? How can authors avoid self-plagiarism?

- Authors may submit research conducted under this RFP to scientific journals. However, authors should not use deliverables first produced under this RFP in a manner that is inconsistent with the purpose and/or goals of the Fifth Assessment. On a case-by-case basis, the Fifth Assessment team may approve the peer review process for journal publication as a substitute for the Fifth Assessment review process. To-date, issues of self-plagiarism have not arisen in California’s

Climate Change Assessments, however the Fifth Assessment team will work with authors to address any concerns regarding this issue on a case-by-case basis.

How can I sign up for more information regarding the Fifth Assessment?

- <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/SPAC6FK/CCCA>

RESEARCH ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

What research is eligible?

- Eligible Research must focus on one or more of the Fifth Assessment Climate Research Topics (CRTs) (see Section C) and/or shall address a demonstrated, existing knowledge gap.

Where can I find the climate research topics?

- In the RFP or <https://opr.ca.gov/climate/docs/20230126-FifthAssessment-Topics.pdf>

Do I have to address an entire CRT in one proposal?

- No.

Are you going to fund all of the CRTs?

- It will depend on the scope of the proposals received, but there is no requirement to do so.

Will you fund more than one proposal on the same CRT?

- It is possible. Some CRTs are very broad and contain multiple sub-topics and can be explored in a variety of manners.

Can my proposal address more than one CRT?

- Yes, your application will just need to indicate which ones.

Can I propose a topic not listed?

- Yes, if you'd like to do so, please select CRT-27. If CRT-27 is selected, you will need to provide information demonstrating how the proposed topic fills a gap in research needed to better understand climate change impacts, trends, and events in California and/or potential actions to adaptively respond to these changes and to build resilience throughout the State.

Is this funding opportunity available to science-art/community collaborations?

- These collaborations are eligible. This solicitation is open to all public and private entities, including but not limited to academic institutions, private research institutions, local/state/federal government entities, California Native American tribes, non-profits, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, and individuals. Eligible Research must focus on one or more of the Fifth Assessment Climate Research Topics (see Section C) and/or shall address a demonstrated, existing knowledge gap.

Is pedagogical research a valid topic? For instance, for projects that integrate Indigenous Knowledge with modern fire practice and technology, and researching the most effective way to do this.

- Yes. Eligible Research must focus on one or more of the Fifth Assessment Climate Research Topics (see Section C) and/or shall address a demonstrated, existing knowledge gap. Research proposals should reflect one or more of the CRTs and/or demonstrate how that proposed research will fill an informational gap needed to better understand climate change impacts, trends, and events in California and/or potential actions to adaptively respond to these changes and to build resilience throughout the state.

Can the proposal involve research that requires field work and new data gathering?

- Yes. Research proposals should reflect one or more of the CRTs and/or demonstrate how that proposed research will fill an informational gap needed to better understand climate change impacts, trends, and events in California and/or potential actions to adaptively respond to these changes and to build resilience throughout the state.

Are literature reviews an eligible research type under this RFP?

- Yes. Research proposals should reflect one or more of the CRTs and/or demonstrate how that proposed research will fill an informational gap needed to better understand climate change impacts, trends, and events in California and/or potential actions to adaptively respond to these changes and to build resilience throughout the state.

Is Implementation science an eligible research type under this RFP?

- Yes. Research proposals should reflect one or more of the CRTs and/or demonstrate how that proposed research will fill an informational gap needed to better understand climate change impacts, trends, and events in California and/or potential actions to adaptively respond to these changes and to build resilience throughout the state.

Are common garden experiments an eligible research type under this RFP?

- Yes. Research proposals should reflect one or more of the CRTs and/or demonstrate how that proposed research will fill an informational gap needed to better understand climate change impacts, trends, and events in California and/or potential actions to adaptively respond to these changes and to build resilience throughout the state.

This is a statewide program. Will you give a higher value to projects that cover multiple regions or even the entire state?

- There are not specific scoring criteria related to geography. The Fifth Assessment team also recognizes that certain regional infrastructure, natural systems, or other features are of statewide significance.

Can proposals include the use of confidential information (e.g., trade secrets, proprietary information)?

- Proposals and final reports may not include confidential information. However, the use of confidential information may be included in the research methodology. For information on tribal and indigenous knowledge identified as sensitive or confidential, see below.

The Fifth Assessment team received a number of questions regarding the details of specific CRTs and/or specific proposed research and offers the following response...

- The purpose of this solicitation is to fund critical climate change research that fill demonstrable gaps in the knowledge related to understanding and adapting to climate impacts. Proposals should indicate which CRT(s) are applicable to the proposed research. Applicants may interpret CRTs based on their expertise and knowledge. Proposals that pass the administrative evaluation will then be scored based on the criteria contained on pages 18-20 in the RFP.

TRIBAL & INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE(S) QUESTIONS

In some cases, research includes data that are culturally sensitive to indigenous partner organizations and may not be acceptable for publication. What is the official stance on this issue?

- We take the protection of tribal and indigenous knowledge (TK/IK) very seriously and understand the sensitivities and nuances around this. **The best way to protect TK/IK is to not include it in final submissions.** However, we know sometimes this is not possible. We are working with our Tribal Research Program and Tribal Advisory Group to establish protocols around protecting TK/IK within the Fifth Assessment. We hope these protocols will be complete by summer of 2024, but the timing is still being finalized. In the meantime, we are in full support of projects submitting high-level generalizations or summaries that can contribute to closing knowledge gaps through the Fifth Assessment while still protecting sensitive and confidential traditional knowledges. Each research project will be unique and TK/IK is place- and community-based, so what this looks like will vary project to project. We suggest your proposals are clear on these parameters. All TK/IK that is identified as confidential or sensitive by the applicant will remain with the applicant until the Tribal Research Program provides guidelines to applicants and researchers on how to ensure protection of this sensitive information. *(If this guidance is not provided in time for the final deliverables, the applicant is encouraged to redact any sensitive information.)*