

Responses to CWG questions re: RISA
Caitlin Simpson
June 22, 2009

1. What are the criteria used to select RISA's during the annual review and selection process?

Response: The RISA regions are currently undergoing competitions. These competitions consist of a call for proposals and the establishment of an ad hoc, external, peer-review panel process for ranking proposals that are submitted. RISA follows the formal CPO criteria for proposal review; these are 1) scientific merit (50%) and 2) relevance (to the program) (50%). However, we do provide a RISA information sheet (see attached) to the applicants and the review panelists to provide a framework for what we are looking for in a RISA. For the FY 2010 call for proposals, we are asking applicants to demonstrate the capacity to leverage resources, work with climate impacts information providers, discuss possibilities for transitioning products over the 5-year RISA cycle, and propose mechanisms to evaluate their progress over the 5-year period. These are in addition to their proposed regional climate impacts science and stakeholder work. In addition, we provide commonly asked review panel discussion questions to the applicants and panelists. These help frame the discussions of relevance and merit and include the following:

- Is there a plan for engaging stakeholders and addressing their needs?
- Will the science be influenced by stakeholder engagement? Is there a plan for this?
Does the team have experience in engaging stakeholders in a collaborative fashion?
- Will the research address important resource management and public policy issues?
- How effectively will the proposed effort address climate impacts science for the region? Does the team have the expertise needed? Have they advanced this area in the past?
- For instance, does the team have the necessary social (e.g., economic, political, anthropological, etc.) and physical (e.g., atmospheric, oceanographic, etc.) sciences expertise?
- In particular, is the team proposing to address the socio-economic dimensions of climate and drought impacts in the region? Do they have the expertise to address these issues?
- Does the proposal contain a plan for integration of the science? Does the team have experience in integrated research necessary for addressing regional climate impacts?
- Is there a plan for managing the integration of the team?
- Will the team link with broader climate services efforts in the region, such as National Weather Service climate services, Regional Climate Center, state climatologists and other agency efforts (e.g., USDA, Department of Interior, etc.)?
- Does the team have a plan for assessing their performance (e.g., standards measures, internal reviews) and expressing/addressing successes and challenges?

2. RISA's focus on sector by sector? (e.g. forestry/marine resources etc) vs. community by community?

Response: A more mature RISA is expected to work within an approach that integrates across sectors after having made some significant inroads and built a strong stakeholder base in specific sectors. As they start out and/or due to limited resources in the past for some of the teams, individual RISAs often have begun with a focus on 1-2 sectors deemed to be particularly important and climate-sensitive for the region. At the same time, they work on a range of sector issues when working with communities (e.g., indigenous/Native communities), cities or counties, Governor's offices (e.g., climate change task forces). For some interactions with local, state, federal, regional entities, the topics are more sector-specific because of the needs of those stakeholders. In these cases, there is often leveraging of funds from those more sector-focused entities (e.g., water management agencies, interagency fire entities).

3. What is the budget for the RISA program?

Response: For FY 2008, the budget was about \$6 million. Close to \$2 million of that funding comes from the NIDIS/Coping with Drought initiative; therefore, it must be tied to drought work and nearer-term NIDIS deliverables. Because of a one-time increase in funding for FY 2009, the budget was about \$7 million for RISA (again including Coping with Drought funds). However, the increase may not continue in FY 2010.

4. Can there be an opportunity to achieve a sort of "economy of scale" in terms of outreach materials and sharing lessons learned by having gone web portal for the RISA's?

Response: Useful idea for the future. It begs the question of whether it would be best done through the broader NOAA climate services web portal under development or done separately.

5. Is the goal of the RISA to grow into a supplier for all of the needed national research & development?

The goal of the RISA program is to grow into a wider and still distributed network of teams undertaking regional climate impacts science, tool development, and stakeholder work in an integrated way across sectors and communities within that region. The RISA program relies heavily on the data, predictions, and impacts analysis work of the RCCs, NWS, NCDC, and other federal agency efforts. It should be seen as a regional research and development (e.g., developing prototype tools and stakeholder outreach/services efforts) component feeding a national climate service. There is currently demand from every region of the U.S. to have a RISA in that region to provide cutting edge R&D for regional climate impacts and adaptation issues.

6. What are RISA interactions with the private sector?

The RISAs work primarily with the public sector and NGOs, but they do have some private sector stakeholders and/or partners. Some of the RISAs have members of their team who are consultants and thus in the private sector. Others have private sector stakeholders who collaborate with them on particular issues, but the results are public information. For instance, CISA (the RISA in the Carolinas) has been working with Duke Power on ENSO-related stream flow variability, the FERC relicensing process, and drought management. CISA's development of a drought-monitoring tool started with some seed funding from Duke Power, and CISA continues to have regular interaction with them.

A sampling of other private sector partners of some of the RISA teams include the following:

- Georgia Organics, Inc. Georgia Agricultural Commodity Commission for Peanuts
- Georgia Agricultural Commodity Commission for Soybean
- Federation of Southern Cooperatives
- Tampa Bay Water
- Florida Strawberry Association
- Florida Strawberry Association
- Napa Valley Vintners
- Electric Power Research Institute
- CH2M Hill (San Diego)
- BAE Systems (San Diego)
- ENTRIX (Ventura, CA)
- CDM (Denver)
- SEI (Davis, CA)
- BNIM (Kansas City)
- Google (San Francisco)
- Alaska Biological Research
- Alaska Railroad
- Alaska Travel Industry Association
- Conoco Phillips
- ENTRIX
- NANA Corporation
- Natural Habitat Adventures, Alaska Tours
- Neptune Inc
- Nunavut Sealink and Supply Inc
- Nuna Technologies
- Parker Associates, Inc.
- Princess Cruises
- Seven Generations Consulting
- Travel Consortium
- Vender Environmental Health
- Wilburforce Foundation