

## FY27 Brennan Ocean Matching Fund Webinar Summary

FY2027 Federal Register Notice: [Link](#)

Webinar slides available here: [Link](#)

### Summary

#### 1. Program Background and Purpose

Now in its sixth year, the Brennan Ocean Mapping Fund is a matching fund opportunity designed to increase contracted ocean and coastal mapping activities that support a wide range of strategic priorities and interests. Authorized by [33 U.S.C. 3504a](#) (Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act 2022) and officially named the “Brennan Ocean Mapping Fund” in the 2022 reauthorization, the goal of this opportunity is to leverage non-Federal partner funds to increase the coordinated acquisition, processing, stewardship, and archival of new ocean and coastal mapping data in U.S. waters. This opportunity is named in honor of RDML Richard T. Brennan, a former president of the Hydrographic Society of America and the former director of the NOAA Office of Coast Survey. RDML Brennan passed away unexpectedly in May 2021, but his passion and vision for collaborative ocean and coastal mapping is extended through this opportunity. The Federal government seeks to have modern mapping data for all U.S. waters by 2040, but as of [January 2025, 46% remains unmapped](#).

#### 2. Funding Details

With this funding opportunity, NOAA will match selected non-Federal partners at a 70:30/NOAA:partner ratio for projects proposing to contract for ocean, coastal, and/or Great Lakes mapping data totaling up to \$1,000,000 per project, subject to Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations. This opportunity is for non-Federal institutions, such as state/local government agencies, Tribal entities, academic institutions, or non-government organizations. All proposals are welcome regardless of size, as there is no minimum requirement for a project proposal and the maximum project cost may increase at NOAA’s discretion and if funds are available. Multiple entities may pool funds for joint proposals, but a single point of contact is needed to sign a memorandum of agreement.

NOAA will execute the project on one of its [contracting vehicles](#), providing comprehensive contract and project management. This ensures that the project will have hydrographic surveying and shoreline mapping expertise, contract issuance and oversight, data processing and quality assurance, and data archival of high resolution products at NOAA’s National Centers for Environmental Information.

#### 3. Strategic Focus Areas

Proposals may be submitted for any waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction. It is highly recommended that proposed project goals align with those of established Federal [strategic plans](#), including the [National Strategy for Ocean Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone](#) (or NOMEZ), the [Alaska Coastal Mapping Strategy](#), and/or the [NOAA Office of Coast Survey’s Strategic Plan 2023-2027](#). Strategic areas of focus outlined in these plans include mapping all U.S. waters, expanding Alaska coastal data collection, and leveraging partnerships to increase coastal and ocean mapping. Proposals may also consider aligning projects with the priorities of this administration (e.g., critical minerals, *but only if applicable*). Examples of successful Brennan Ocean Mapping Fund projects and proposals can be found [here](#).

#### 4. Selection Criteria

- Project Justification (30 points): Is there intrinsic IOCM value in the proposed work or relevance to NOAA missions and priorities? This relates back to the Strategic Areas of Focus, alignment with national priorities, and potential tools to use.
- Statement of Need (10 points): Is there a clear need and public benefit of the proposed work?
- Specified Partner Match (20 points): Have the partners and amount, type, and timing of funding sources been clearly identified?
- Project Costs (15 points): Is the proposed budget realistic? This relates back to selecting the right project approach and associated cost estimate and proposed timeline.
- Project Feasibility and Flexibility (25 points): Is the proposed work likely to succeed? This will take into account survey location and conditions, project size and flexibility, time of year, and environmental compliance implications, among other factors.

#### 5. Submission Requirements

In no more than six pages that adhere to the formatting requirements listed in the [Federal Register Notice](#) (e.g., 12-point, Times New Roman font, single spacing, 1-inch margins), proposals must be submitted as PDFs and include the following three components:

- A project title; executive summary (3-5 sentences); and the names, affiliations, and roles of the project partners and any co-investigators, as well as the project lead that will serve as primary contact (not to exceed 1 page).
- A justification and statement of need; description and graphics of the proposed survey area, including relevance to the strategic areas of focus and degree of flexibility on timing of survey effort (4 pages maximum).
- A project Budget that outlines the source(s) and amount(s) of funding that the partner would provide as its match to NOAA. This section must also confirm that partner funds will be transferred to NOAA by September 30, 2026 (1 page maximum).

#### 6. Timeline

- September 19, 2025: Virtual office hours will be held between 10am and 5pm ET. You must reserve a 30-minute timeslot by 11:59pm ET on September 17, 2025. Email [iwgocm.staff@noaa.gov](mailto:iwgocm.staff@noaa.gov) to reserve a spot.
- **October 10, 2025 at 5pm ET**: Proposals and Statements of Interests with supporting GIS files must be submitted to [iwgocm.staff@noaa.gov](mailto:iwgocm.staff@noaa.gov).
- December 2025: NOAA will issue its decisions on submitted proposals.
- January 2026: NOAA will work with selected project partners to develop agreements to facilitate transfer of funds from the non-Federal partner to NOAA.
- September 30, 2026: Deadline for non-federal partners to transfer matching funds.
- January - September 2027: NOAA issues task orders to its survey contractors for NOAA/partner projects.

#### 7. Resources, Tools, and Products

- [U.S. Mapping Coordination site](#): If you have an area of interest, this tool can help you find others with shared interests. Tips: 1) Can be filtered for FY27 Proposed (not yet funded) projects, 2) filter out 3DEP and 3DHP priorities if not interested in topography and inland bathymetry.

- [US Bathymetric Gap Analysis and Coverage Report Tool](#): Use this tool to identify whether your area of interest can advance national mapping goals to fill bathymetry data gaps.
- [US Interagency Elevation Inventory](#): Includes existing data from NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) [NOS Hydrographic Surveys](#), NCEI [Multibeam Bathymetry](#), NCEI [Trackline Bathymetry](#), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Service [Hydrographic Surveys](#), and [U.S. Geological Survey Inland Bathymetry](#)
- Cost Estimator Worksheet (email [jwgocm.staff@noaa.gov](mailto:jwgocm.staff@noaa.gov) to request): Provides rough order of magnitude costs for hydrographic/bathymetric surveys and topobathy lidar/imagery.

## FAQs:

### General questions:

1. *Will there be a recording of the webinar? Will the slides be available?*  
The FY27 informational webinar was not recorded, but a summary of the slides and a compilation of questions will be made available shortly after via email to registered attendees and at <https://iocm.noaa.gov/planning/contracts-grants-agreements.html>.
2. *Will the awarded projects be announced publicly?*  
Yes, at minimum, the Memorandums of Agreement will be announced via the <https://iocm.noaa.gov/> site. Some recent awards are also detailed in NOAA Office of Coast Survey [blog posts](#).
3. *Is this opportunity being "advertised" broadly (e.g., posted on social media, etc)? Or is it relying exclusively on word-of-mouth and FRN traffic?*  
Blog posts, word of mouth, Federal Register, social media, mentions at symposiums and seminars. Please share the notice widely!
4. *Can we go to office hours even if we are planning to submit a Letter of Interest?*  
Yes!
5. *How long after surveys are complete will data be available on charts?*  
The data is available to the public roughly 6 months after NOAA receives the data. It varies by region, as well.

### Funding and Estimating Costs:

6. *How would an applicant assess the cost of a project? Are the costs estimated by area or would the costs be assessed on a project-by-project basis? Can NOAA provide guidance on general mapping cost estimates? Basically, how much does it cost to collect the various types of bathymetric data? Will there be a way to get unit cost estimates or an estimated total cost based on provided deliverable specifications? This would be useful for planning purposes and understanding how much funding is needed to map a given area of interest.*

Please contact [iwgocm.staff@noaa.gov](mailto:iwgocm.staff@noaa.gov) for a cost estimation worksheet with rough estimates of cost per square mile for surveys in a particular region. This figure will not be exact, as actual cost will be negotiated by region, scale of project, and conditions to support operations.

7. *What is the minimum dollar limit for a proposal? What is the maximum? Is NOAA providing a match of up to \$1M or are they providing up to \$300K for a \$1M project?*

There is no minimum required for a proposal. All proposals are welcome regardless of size. As stated in the Federal Register Notice, the maximum Federal commitment of matching funds is 70% toward a \$1M project. However, this does not preclude a partner from submitting a proposal with a contribution in excess of 30% toward a \$1M project or from proposing a total project cost that exceeds \$1M. At NOAA's discretion, total project costs exceeding \$1M may be considered.

8. *What are allowable match sources?*

Any funding that can legally be transferred to NOAA via Memorandum of Agreement. The match can be from multiple partners, but there can only be one point of contact.

9. *Why is this funding opportunity targeting non-federal entities?*

NOAA already has existing relationships with sister federal agencies to coordinate and collaborate on surveying and mapping efforts, so this effort seeks to widen the network of non-federal partners in ocean and coastal mapping.

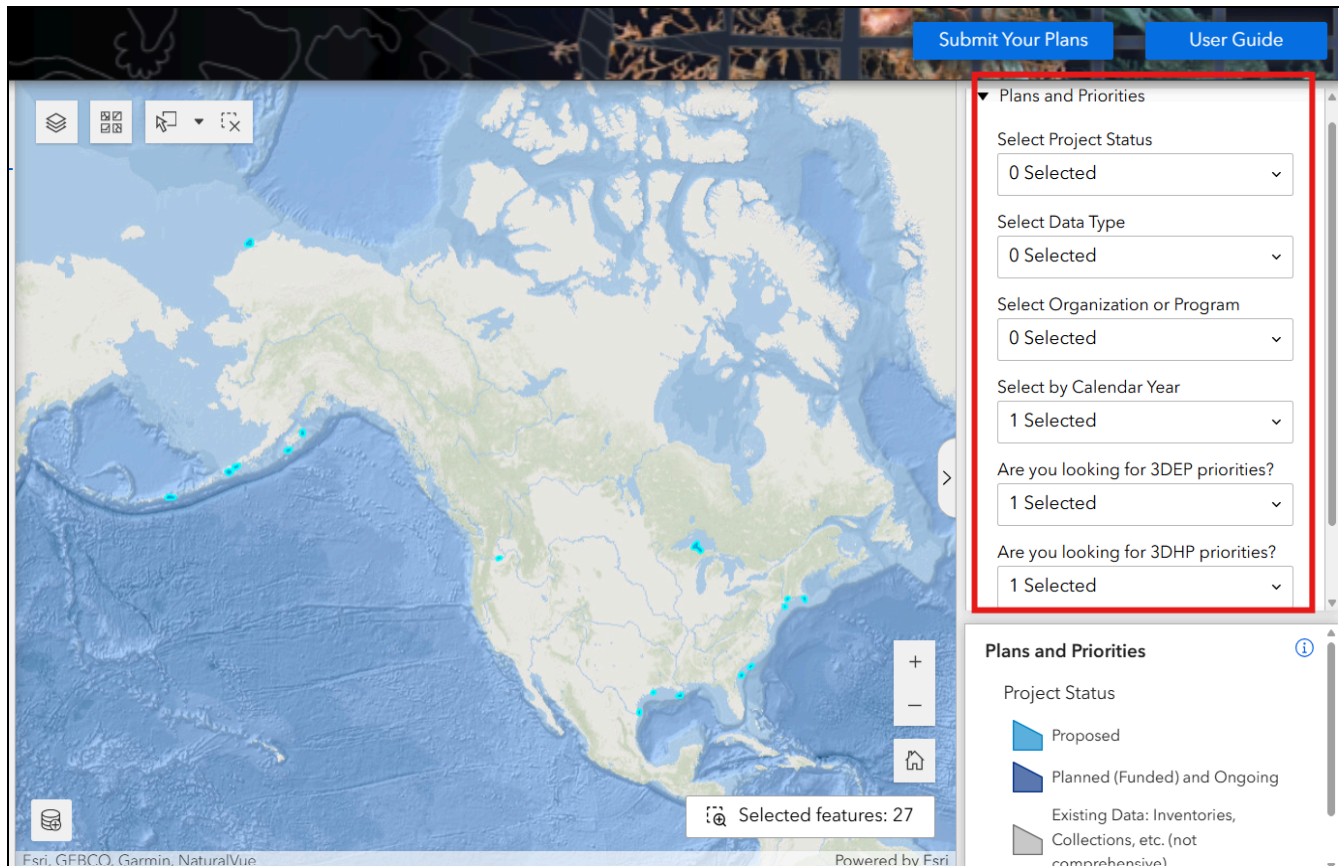
10. *Once funds are secured and NOAA matches at 70%, is there a ballpark or rule of thumb as to what percentage of the full dollar amount is retained by NOAA for overhead services and what percentage is budgeted to fund the contractor?*

Neither the Office of Coast Survey nor the NGS Remote Sensing Division (if contracted through the Shoreline Mapping Services contract vehicle) will use any portion of the partner match for overhead. In addition to matching partner funds, NOAA will also offer hydrographic surveying and shoreline mapping expertise and provide comprehensive project management to include contract issuance and oversight, data processing and quality assurance, and data archival of high resolution products at NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information.

11. *Are there opportunities to reduce the cost of a project if it were to expand out pre-existing planned operations? How would an applicant coordinate a project with NOAA to optimize collections based on geography?*

Yes, expanding on a planned hydrographic survey or shoreline mapping task order is an option. Please use the U.S. Mapping Coordination Site. To view the proposed 2027 NOAA survey plans follow these instructions:

1. This link to the [U.S. Mapping Coordination Site](#) includes NOAAs proposed (not yet funded) surveys for 2027.
2. To remove the non-selected surveys for easier viewing go over to the plans and priorities filter on the right side. Select the following
  - Under Calendar select: 2027
  - Under 3DEP priorities select: NO
  - Under 3DHP priorities select: NO



Now press the APPLY button. Now only the 2027 proposed surveys should be showing.

12. *Could partners provide survey coverage as the match?*

No, the match needs to be transferable funds to NOAA for use on contract task orders.

13. *On the 30% match, can a portion of the 30% be counted through money going into yearly monitoring programs or does it have to all be cash?*

It has to be transferable to NOAA to meet the 30% match. In-kind contributions do not count toward the match.

14. *Because of the need for platform mobilization, is there a minimum area or minimum match request? At my academic institution, we have a relatively limited budget for mapping coastal areas this year (about \$30k), and while we'd love to be able to double our funds/mapped area, it seems like it wouldn't be worth NOAA's time and resources.*

There is no minimum area or funding amount to submit a proposal. Please submit so that we have a better idea of mapping requirements out there among external stakeholders.

15. *Could you speak to which U.S. territories are eligible for this funding? And is the 30% match requirement the same for tribal and territory entities?*

All are eligible. Yes, the match is the same.

## Contracting:

16. *Is it required that NOAA perform the surveys or is it possible that a state acquisition platform (or other) that meets NOAA hydrographic standards could perform the survey? Would projects have to utilize NOAA vessels/contractor vessels or can we provide our own platforms & equipment?*

All selected projects would use NOAA's contract vehicle and task orders to its pre-qualified contractors. The Brennan Ocean Mapping Funds come from an appropriation specific to contract surveys. Therefore, the funds must be executed on task orders via Coast Survey's Hydrographic Services contract vehicle or the National Geodetic Survey's Shoreline Mapping Support Services contract vehicle and the surveys performed by one of the pre-qualified contractors.

17. *Hypothetically, if a private sector firm (who happened to also be a current NOAA hydro survey contractor) were to propose a task that NOAA accepted for potential execution, would that contractor be guaranteed to perform on the task order or would it potentially be awarded to any of the current IDIQ hydro survey contractors?*

Coast Survey will follow its usual process to assign task orders to the most highly qualified vendor. Therefore, Coast Survey cannot guarantee that a particular contractor will receive a particular task order.

18. *Will all mapping be performed by NOAA contractors or can participants with survey expertise participate in the mapping process? Could an academic institution or another private sector company with mapping capabilities be considered to join the contractors already existing under NOAA funding to augment their mapping capabilities and/or perform specialized mapping ( e.g., spectroscopy)?*

Recipients of funding under this program are limited to the contracting firms currently on the NOAA [Hydrographic Surveying Services Contract Vehicle](#) and [Shoreline Mapping Services Contract Vehicle](#). A private sector company with mapping capabilities may coordinate with one of these contracting firms to be incorporated as a subcontractor at the task order level. This coordination would occur between the contracting firm on NOAA's contract vehicle and the private sector company with mapping experience. The contracting firm currently on NOAA's contract may then request additional subcontractor(s) be included at the task order level. Final approval for the inclusion of additional subcontractors is made by the Contract Officer. Partner collaborations will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

19. *Is the list of the pre-selected survey contractors available? Do they include uncrewed assets?*

Yes, we can share a link with you. Some do include uncrewed platforms. The survey dictates the tools needed to approach the job!

- [Hydrographic Surveys Contract Vehicle](#)
- [Shoreline Mapping Services Contract Vehicle](#)

## Mapping Scope and Strategic Focus Areas:

20. *What is the shallow water survey limit? Can the intertidal be included in proposals?*

The intertidal can be included in proposals. The inshore depth limit for vessel-based sonar technologies is about 8 feet. Topobathymetric lidar may be another option to cover the intertidal area, from shoreline to approximately 20 feet or more, depending on water clarity.

21. *Does this opportunity include state waters?*

Yes!

22. *Are estuaries and tidal flats considered under this funding? How far inland would the area of interest be?*

We do work in riverine environments and with topobathymetric lidar generally up to 2 miles inland, with adjustments further inland based on project requirements. Hydrographic based assets are typically limited to 6 feet or deeper but there are non-vessel based opportunities that could be an option for anything shallower. We can also work in tidal flats depending on the mapping approach.

23. *Will this be limited to a single survey or can a proposal have a periodicity, say conduct the survey every two years?*

At this time, Coast Survey and the National Geodetic Survey will select proposals for individual projects; outyear plans will not be considered.

24. *Are small area projects acceptable or is there a minimal survey area established?*

Proposals with areas of interest of any size will be accepted.

25. *Will satellite-derived bathymetry (SDB) be considered?*

We are utilizing SDB, more used for reconnaissance and general exploration. It is not on the same tier as topobathymetry lidar or sonar, but it will be considered.

26. *Are sensors that aren't formally approved by NOAA allowed, specifically in the case of interferometric sonars?*

If there is a compelling reason that it is the best sensor for the area of interest, then there is a possibility. Typically, we go through the contract vehicles, and it is up to the contractor on how they meet our specification requirements.

27. *Can this funding be used to develop map products from recently acquired multibeam data?*

The proposal needs to be anchored in data acquisition. If there is no aspect of data acquisition in the proposals and it is just product development, the proposal would not be considered.

28. *Is there a preference for funding mapping projects in deep water vs. shallow waters, or is anywhere in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) potentially competitive?*

There is no preference. Both shallow and deep water proposals are welcomed and in line with our goal of mapping all of the U.S. EEZ. We encourage proposals for all U.S. waters.

29. *Is preference given to those areas that are considered "unmapped"? Do the areas proposed for mapping have to be adjacent/near areas NOAA has currently contracted to map?*

Not necessarily. The definition of "mapped" is quite generous and not inclusive of all user needs. There are many good reasons to map over areas that may be classified as "mapped." No, proposals do not have to be near other planned areas.

30. *Are there a certain number of projects you hope to select per region?*

There is no set number of projects per region.

31. *You mentioned multibeam, sidescan, and bathymetric lidar. Is there a preference or one platform that would be ranked higher?*

No, there is no preferred platform.

32. *Is single beam sonar (especially in those remote island regions with less ship opportunities) of interest?*

Yes, we do use single beam, usually in shallow water (<3m) but we would rather use a multibeam system because it provides more data. Yes, remote island regions are of interest, just keep in mind it could be high cost to bring a vessel out to remote places.

33. *Does this opportunity cover navigational channels for ports?*

Yes! It could. Anything in waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction is a possibility. As a reminder USACE is the federal authority tasked with surveying federal navigational channels, and in general NOAA does not re-survey over recent USACE surveys.

34. *Is it okay to couple multiple technology types in a single project proposal (e.g., lidar + sonar)?*

Yes, proposals are not limited to a single type of data collection.

35. *Are surveys that cover areas with underwater cultural heritage sites (UCH) (potentially non-public data) acceptable?*

Yes, you may submit proposals for UCH sites. We work with historic preservation officers for sensitivity in data sharing.

36. *Is there any interest in using this opportunity for shoreline data in Alaska Rivers given the recent OCS blog post stating that RSD has resolved this continued challenge?*

If it's an area identified on a NOAA nautical chart, it is of interest. If it is outside, we will have to evaluate it.