

**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION AS A REGIONAL INFORMATION COORDINATION ENTITY**

**1. Type of Application:**

New

Renewal

Revision

**2. Applicant Information:**

Legal Name:

Address:

Street 1:

Street 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

**3. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:**

Prefix:

First Name:

Last Name:

Title:

Organizational Affiliation:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

Email:

**Directions:**

For the purposes of these certification guidelines, when the verb “describe” is used it indicates that the RICE shall give an account in text that responds to the requirement. This text shall contain sufficient information to demonstrate how the RICE satisfies the certification requirement. The RICE may include a link(s) to additional information. When the verb “document” is used, it indicates that the RICE shall furnish a document(s) that responds to the requirement. A text statement accompanying the document(s) will normally be necessary to provide context for the document(s) and to demonstrate how the RICE satisfies the certification requirement. The RICE may include a link to a document in the accompanying text statement.

Documentation that addresses the certification requirements may include references to existing RICE documents. All documents and materials may be submitted directly to the U.S. IOOS Program Office or made accessible for public viewing on the RICE’s website.

**§997.21 Organizational Structure**

(b) The application shall:

- 1) Describe the RICE’s organizational structure (e.g., 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, establishment via MOU or MOA).

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 2) Document the RICE’s ability to satisfy applicable legal criteria for accepting and disbursing funds, and entering into agreements. Sufficient documentation may be provided in the form of: 1) evidence of a current grant, cooperative agreement, or

contract in good standing with the Federal government; or 2) evidence of fiscal agreements, standard operating procedures for financial activities, and proof of an audit process.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 3) Document the RICE’s measures for addressing issues of accountability and liability. For this criterion, accountability and liability refer to the RICE’s governance and management activities. Sufficient documentation may be provided in the form of 1) a conflict of interest policy for the Governing Board or governing body, which clearly states that a member of the governing board will declare any conflict of interest he or she may have and will recuse him or herself from associated funding decisions that may result in the Board member or a direct family member benefiting financially, and 2) a policy statement in the RICE’s by-laws that addresses liability issues.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 4) Describe the process the RICE uses to set priorities for distributing funds (e.g., requirement for Governing Board or governing body approval when responding to funding opportunities or adjusting to funding level changes in existing agreements); and

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 5) Document the by-laws, signed articles of agreement, or any binding agreements that demonstrate how the RICE establishes and maintains a Governing Board or governing body. The documentation shall demonstrate:
  - i. How the composition of the Governing Board or governing body is selected and how it is representative of regional ocean observing interests. NOAA defines “representative” in this specific context to include geographic, sector, expertise, and stakeholder considerations.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- ii. How and with what frequency the RICE solicits and receives advice on RICE participant diversity, stakeholder coordination, and engagement strategies, to ensure the provision of data and information that satisfy the needs of user groups.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- iii. How the RICE collects and assesses user feedback to gauge the effectiveness of the regional system and subsystems in satisfying user needs, and how the RICE responds to this user feedback in setting its priorities. Sufficient documentation may be provided in the form of a description of the method the RICE uses in its annual planning process to assess priorities among the identified user needs in the region and to respond to those user needs, and

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- iv. Steps the RICE takes to ensure decisions on priorities and overall regional system design are transparent and available. At a minimum, RICE priorities and regional system design decisions shall be made accessible for public viewing on the RICE's website.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

**§997.22 Membership Policy**

The application shall describe:

- (a) The process by which individuals or organizations may formally participate in the governance activities of the RICE;
- (b) The rights and responsibilities of this participation;

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- (c) The process by which the RICE strives for organizational diversity through intra-regional geographic representation, and diversity of activities and interests from both public and private sectors; and
- (d) How the RICE allows for participation from adjacent regions or nations.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

**§997.23 Strategic Operational Plan**

(b) Background and Context

The Strategic Operational Plan shall contain a Background and Context section that describes:

- 1) The role of the RICE in furthering the development of the regional component of the System;

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 2) The process by which the RICE updates the Strategic Operational Plan at least once every five years and how the RICE seeks inputs from the broader user community; and

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 3) The RICE’s primary partners and any contributing observing systems. For the purposes of § 997.23, NOAA defines a primary partner as any organization or individual that contributes significant staff time, funding or other resources to project activities. This is not an exhaustive list of all RICE partners but the primary partners the RICE is working with on a given project.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(c) Goals and Objectives

The Strategic Operational Plan shall contain a Goals and Objective section that describe:

- 1) How the RICE addresses marine operations; coastal hazards; ecosystems, fisheries and water quality; and climate variability and change; and

Description (approx. 200 words)



Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 2) The major objectives that guide the RICE’s priorities for data collection and management, development of products and services, research and development, and education and outreach.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(d) Operational Plan for the Observing System

The Strategic Operational Plan shall include or reference an Operational Plan for the Observing System that:

- 1) Describes the desired outcomes of the observing system;

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 2) Describes the elements of the operational integrated observing system that will deliver those outcomes;

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 3) Documents to NOAA’s satisfaction that the individual(s) responsible for RICE operations has the necessary qualifications and possesses relevant professional education and work experience to deliver observations successfully. At a minimum the Strategic Operational Plan shall:
- i. Identify the individual(s) responsible for overall RICE management;
  - ii. Identify, as applicable, the individual(s) responsible for observations system management across the region;
  - iii. Provide the curriculum vitae for each identified individual; and

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- iv. Identify the procedures used to evaluate the capability of the individual(s) identified in subsection §997.23(d)(3) to conduct the assigned duties responsibly; and

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 4) Describes how the RICE manages ongoing regional system operations and maintenance. At a minimum the Strategic Operational Plan shall:
- i. Describe the RICE’s standard operating procedures for calibrating, validating, operating, and maintaining equipment owned and/or operated by the RICE regularly and in accordance with manufacturer guidance or industry best practice. Equipment is defined in §997.1; and

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- ii. Describe the RICE’s standard operating procedures for maintaining equipment inventories, shipping logs and instrument history logs for equipment owned and/or operated by the RICE.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(e) Development of a Strategy to Sustain and Enhance the System

The Strategic Operational Plan shall describe its strategy for balancing changes in regional priorities with the need to maintain established data sets, the primary value of which may be in their long-term records. At a minimum the description shall:

- 1) Identify the guiding principles that inform the strategy;
- 2) Reference and show connections to a long-term (five-to-ten-year) regional Build-out Plan for the full implementation of the regional observing system based on the RICE’s priorities and identified user needs; and
- 3) Relate the annual planning process the RICE uses to review its priorities in light of funding levels and its plans for system enhancement as outlined in the regional Build-out Plan.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

(f) Data Management and Communications (DMAC) Plan

The Strategic Operational Plan shall include or reference a DMAC plan that:

- 1) Documents to NOAA's satisfaction that the individual(s) responsible for management of data operations for the RICE has the necessary technical skills, and possesses relevant professional education and work experience to support DMAC capabilities and functionality for the System. At a minimum the DMAC Plan shall:
  - i. Identify the individual(s) responsible for the coordination and management of observation data across the region;
  - ii. Provide the curriculum vitae for the identified individual(s); and

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- iii. Identify the procedures used to evaluate the capability of the individual(s) identified in subsection §997.23(f)(1) to conduct the assigned duties responsibly.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 2) Describes how data are ingested, managed and distributed, including a description of the flow of data through the RICE data assembly center from the source to the public dissemination/access mechanism. The description shall include any transformations or modifications of data along the data flow pathway including, but not limited to, format translations or aggregations of component data streams into an integrated product.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 3) Describes the data quality control procedures that have been applied to data, not obtained through a federal data source, that are distributed by the RICE. All data shall be quality controlled and QARTOD procedures shall be employed for data with QARTOD manuals. For each data stream, describe the quality control procedure applied to the data, by the RICE or other named entity, between the data's collection and publication by the RICE. The description will also include a reference to the procedure used.

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 4) Adheres to the NOAA Data Sharing Procedural Directive.<sup>1</sup> The System is an operational system; therefore the RICE should strive to provide as much data as possible, in real-time or near real-time, to support the operation of the System. When data are collected in part or in whole with funds distributed to a RICE through the U.S. IOOS Program Office, the RICE should strive to make the data

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<sup>1</sup> NOAA Data Sharing Policy for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Procedural Directive, Version 2.0  
[https://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/EDMC\\_PD-DSPNG\\_final\\_v2.pdf](https://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/EDMC_PD-DSPNG_final_v2.pdf)

available as soon as logistically feasible for each data stream. When data are not collected with funds distributed to a RICE through the U.S. IOOS Program Office, the data may be made available in accordance with any agreement made with the data provider.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 5) Describes how the RICE will implement data management protocols promulgated by the IOOC and the U.S. IOOS Program Office in a reasonable and timely manner as defined for each protocol; and

Description (approx. 200 words)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 6) Documents the RICE's data archiving process or describes how the RICE intends to archive data at a national archive center (e.g., NODC, NGDC, NCDC) in a manner that follows guidelines outlined by that center. Documentation shall be in the form of a Submission Agreement, Submission Information Form (SIF) or other, similar data producer-archive agreement.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)



(g) Budget Plan

The Strategic Operational Plan shall include or reference a Budget Plan that:

- 1) Identifies who supports the RICE financially;
- 2) Identifies how RICE priorities guide funding decisions; and
- 3) Assesses funding constraints and the associated risks to the observing System that the RICE must address for the future.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

**§997.24 Gaps Identification**

(b) The application shall

- 1) Document that the RICE’s asset inventory contains up-to-date information. This could be demonstrated by a database or portal accessible for public viewing and capable of producing a regional summary of observing capacity;

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 2) Provide a regional Build-out Plan that identifies the regional priorities for products and services, based on its understanding of regional needs, and a description of the integrated system (observations, modeling, data management, product development, outreach, and R&D). The RICE shall review and update the Build-out Plan at least once every five years; and

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- 3) Document the priority regional gaps in observation coverage needs, as determined by an analysis of the RICE asset inventory and Build-out Plan. The RICE shall review and update the analysis of priority regional gaps in observation coverage needs at least once every five years.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

**§997.25 Financial Oversight**

- (b) The application shall document compliance with the terms and conditions set forth in 2 CFR Part 215 – Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations, Subpart C – Post Award Requirements. Subpart C prescribes standards for financial management systems, among others. (Compliance with this criterion can be demonstrated by referencing any existing grant, cooperative agreement, or contract the RICE has with NOAA.)

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

- (c) The RICE shall document annually the RICE’s operating and maintenance costs for all observing platforms and sensors, etc., owned and/or operated by the RICE. This information shall be made available to NOAA upon request.

Documentation – Please provide a brief contextual statement, with relevant URL, and any details on how the information can be accessed (document section and/or page number)

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Signature

Date

\*By signing this application, I certify that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept certification. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 290 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources,

gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other suggestions for reducing this burden to Dave Easter, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1225, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

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