

# A COASTAL MANAGEMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND MARKET ANALYSIS FOR FINANCING RESILIENCE

## Final Interview Guide

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April 14, 2021



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## 1.0 Introduction

This document comprises Eastern Research Group, Inc.'s (ERG's) guide for conducting interviews to evaluate: state, regional, and local coastal managers' needs, successes, and challenges related to funding and financing coastal resilience activities; potential partners for NOAA's Office for Coastal Management (OCM) and coastal managers in improving understanding of and access to technical resources and financial support for coastal resilience; existing and emerging financial programs and mechanisms; and, needs and gaps that OCM may be able to address. As specified in ERG's work plan, the ERG team (ERG and subcontractor the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions [C2ES]) will hold phone-based interviews with state, regional, and local coastal managers and representatives from financial services, non-profit, academic, technical, and other organizations to collect the information.

This interview guide, being submitted under Task 4 of our project, provides information on:

- The objectives of the interviews as they relate to the overall study objectives
- The geographic and technical scope of the interviews
- The individuals we plan to interview, and the organizations they represent
- The questions that will be used in the interview process
- The plans for conducting the interviews
- The plans for monitoring the progress of field interviews

## 2.0 Interview Objectives

The interviews are intended to collect relevant information from NOAA customers including state, regional, and local coastal managers and other funding partners and stakeholders about their experiences with coastal resilience funding and financing mechanisms, challenges and opportunities related to funding and financing coastal resilience, and technical support needs and opportunities. The interviews will be synthesized and integrated into the needs assessment, market analysis, and financial tools/mechanisms summary tasks under this task order, and will inform the recommendations to be developed on OCM's potential niche in addressing the identified needs and gaps.

Specifically, the ERG team will collect information on the following topics:

- Coastal managers' approach to planning for and accessing funding/financing for coastal resilience initiatives, including climate adaptation, hazard mitigation, stormwater management, infrastructure planning, and other efforts that help to build community resilience
- Success stories and commonly used funding/financing sources
- Challenges to identifying, applying for, and securing funding
- The existing market for coastal resilience funding/financing, including emerging and innovative mechanisms
- Applicable resources on coastal resilience funding/financing

- Gaps in knowledge, technical support, financial mechanisms, and other resources
- Opportunities for NOAA to facilitate information sharing, partnership building, and otherwise address identified gaps and needs

The information provided by interviewees will be synthesized into a needs assessment, which will address needs and information gaps partitioned by region, financial scale, time scale, and scope/sector. The information provided by interviewees will also be used to help inform the summary of existing entities providing resources for resilience funding, as well as the summary of existing and emerging funding sources and financial tools and mechanisms for coastal resilience.

## Interviewee selection

NOAA provided a list of potential interviewees and summaries of previous conversations relevant to this effort to ERG. The ERG team reviewed the list provided by NOAA, and categorized interviewees according to sector (federal, state, local, non-profit, financial, consulting, and academic) and region (western, northeast/mid-Atlantic, Gulf/southeast/Caribbean, Great Lakes, Alaska, Hawaii/Pacific Islands, national, and international). ERG identified regions and sectors with limited or no recommended interviewees, with a particular focus on state and local coastal manager representation across all regions. Based on the identified gaps, and additional knowledge of interviewees who could provide valuable contributions to the research, ERG and C2ES provided additional recommendations. This draft list of proposed interviewees was reviewed and further refined based on NOAA recommendations and additional input from NOAA, ERG, and C2ES staff.

From the list of 91 potential interviewees, the following criteria were used to select 51 individuals designated as “high priority” interviewees:

- Regional representation (e.g., desire to Interview at least four state or local coastal managers from each of the seven regions)
- Affiliation (municipality, state, or other)
- Expertise and experience (i.e., known successes or challenges funding resilience projects, and/or known expertise in the fields of coastal resilience and/or resilience finance)
- Relationship with NOAA or ERG team that would facilitate scheduling and conducting an interview.

## Interview scheduling and communication with interviewees

Following Office of Management and Budget approval of the required Information Collection Request package for this effort, the ERG team will contact all “high priority” interviewees, unless NOAA identifies any interviewees to be contacted directly by NOAA. Based on the rate and number of positive or negative responses received, and the time associated with scheduling and conducting interviews, the ERG team will coordinate with NOAA to determine:

- The need to contact additional interviewees not designated as high priority.
- Who among the additional interviewees should be contacted.
- Target for total number of interviews to be conducted.

ERG's approach to securing the interviewees' participation is as follows:

- Send an initial outreach email
- Conduct a follow up phone call and either speak to interviewee or leave a message one week after the initial email
- Conduct a second follow up phone call and either speak to interviewee or leave a message two weeks after the initial email
- If the interviewee has not been reached or has declined, substitute interviewee with a NOAA-approved back-up interviewee

The initial outreach email (see sample text below) will include the following:

- Overview of the project and the purpose of the interviewee's participation
- Description of how the information will be used
- Explanation of why the interviewee's input is being sought
- Projection of how long the interview will take
- Target dates or timeframe for completing the interview
- Indication that the interviewee will receive a follow-up phone call

#### Sample Outreach Email

Dear XX,

My name is XX. I am with Eastern Research Group (ERG) and am contacting you regarding your interest in participating in an interview to inform National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) research on funding coastal resilience. The goal of this research is to understand the opportunities, challenges, resources, and mechanisms for funding state and local coastal resilience

The email will be modified as needed to identify an existing professional connection between the NOAA or ERG team and the interviewee, or any unique expertise the individual can provide to the research effort. If a selected interviewee requests that a specific individual or individuals be interviewed in their place, ERG will notify NOAA to confirm that the request is acceptable. ERG will also notify NOAA if the interviewee suggests additional individual(s) for subsequent interviews, to determine whether there are resources available for additional interviews and whether the suggested interviewee(s) would provide value to the effort and address an existing gap. If the interviewee requests that others participate in the interview in addition to themselves, ERG will note all interviewees in the summary (see "Interview summaries," below).

ERG will coordinate with the interviewees to identify a date and time for the interview, once confirmed. If needed, ERG can provide a toll-free conference line for the interview. The ERG team will also provide the list of questions to interviewees in advance of the scheduled interview and will request approval from the interviewee to record the interview (via electronic recorder, in addition to notes), to ensure

the accuracy of the interview summary developed. If the interviewee does not consent to be recorded, ERG will notify NOAA and will rely solely on typed notes to document the interview.

## Interview summaries

Following each interview, the ERG team will develop a summary. ERG will provide the summary to NOAA and to the interviewee to confirm that it accurately reflects the information conveyed. ERG anticipates completing all summaries no later than September 30, 2021 (assuming ICR approval in July 2021). The interview findings will also be incorporated into a needs assessment, which will inform the recommendations on resources or other support that NOAA can provide to address identified gaps and needs.

## 3.0 Interview Format and Questions

All interviews will be conducted based on a pre-approved list of interview questions and will last no more than one hour. Each interview will be conducted via phone by a senior member of the project technical staff with experience in coastal resilience and resilience finance. A note taker will also attend each interview to record the interviewee's responses. If the interviewee consents, the interview will be recorded via an electronic recorder to ensure the accuracy of the subsequent interview summary.

While the questions below will guide all interviews, ERG recognizes that not all interviewees may be able to provide answers to all questions and that not all questions may be relevant, particularly given the significant disparity across state and municipalities with evaluating and funding coastal resilience. ERG also recognizes that interviewees may provide valuable and relevant information outside of responses to specific questions. As needed, ERG will skip questions to which the interviewee cannot provide relevant responses and will allow the interviewee to provide information outside the context of the questions that supports the goals of the research.

## Interview Guide and Questions for Local Coastal Managers/Other Local Staff

Thank you for participating in this discussion. The ERG team has been contracted by NOAA's Office of Coastal Management to help evaluate coastal managers' successes and challenges related to funding and financing coastal resilience activities and initiatives, existing and emerging funding and financial programs and mechanisms; and, resource needs and gaps that OCM may be able to address. As part of this project, we have been asked to interview local and state coastal managers, as well as coastal resilience and finance experts. Your insights will be invaluable in informing our research on opportunities and challenges for coastal resilience and finance, and what support and resources NOAA can provide to facilitate coastal resilience finance.

The questions we ask are intended as a guide to our discussion. However, we welcome any input from you to help us better understand these topics and recognize that you may not be able to provide specific responses to all of the questions.

### Overview of Coastal Resilience Planning and Access to Funding and Financing Information (Q1)

- Describe your role/position, and the extent to which you are involved with resilience and resilience funding and finance efforts.
- Describe your organization's recent and ongoing coastal resilience planning and implementation activities.
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very low and 5 being very high, how high of a priority is coastal resilience to your organization?
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very large and 5 being very small, how big is the gap between coastal resilience needs and currently available funding?

### Funding Sources and Financing Mechanisms Used for Coastal Resilience (Q2)

- What funding or financing tools or mechanisms, if any, have you used for resilience (coastal or otherwise) planning and implementation (e.g., loans, grants, bonds, taxes or fees, etc.)?
  - What planning-related projects/initiatives did you fund?
  - What implementation-related projects/initiatives did you fund?
- How did you learn about these financing tools/mechanisms?
  - Do you have access to and participate in a network (local, state, regional, or national) to share best practices for coastal or other related resilience efforts?
  - Do you have access to and participate in a network (local, state, regional, or national) to share best practices for coastal resilience or other related funding?
- Have you developed or designed resilience projects with funding or financing mechanisms in mind (i.e., have funding challenges or opportunities changed your approach to planning and project selection and design)?
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very hard and 5 being very easy, how hard is it to obtain funding

or financing for coastal resilience?

- What do you see as the major barriers to obtaining funding for these efforts?

#### Limitations on Identifying and Securing Funding and Financing Mechanisms (Q3)

- What challenges have you encountered in identifying and securing appropriate funding for resilience efforts (e.g., lack of information on funding options, level of effort in applying for funding, difficulty in obtaining funding or financing, etc.)?
  - Are these challenges more significant for any particular asset, area, demographic and/or sector?
  - What approaches have you used for overcoming these challenges?

#### Resources and Tools for Coastal Resilience Funding and Financing (Q4)

- What organizations, entities, or resources have you used to get information on funding sources and mechanisms for resilience efforts?
  - On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all and 5 being completely, to what extent are these organizations/resources able to meet your needs?
- What kinds of resources or information do you need?
- How would you like to receive information on available resources/information?

#### Leveraging Cross-Sector Opportunities for Resources and Funding/Financing (Q5)

- To what extent are resilience funding/financing needs considered part of routine or planned investments (e.g., infrastructure improvements)?
- To what extent are resilience funding/financing needs evaluated across multiple sectors/programs?
- To what extent have you been able to partner with the private sector or leverage public dollars for private sector investment?

#### Wrap-Up (Q6)

- Is there any other information you would like to provide on this topic?
- Is there anyone else you recommend that we speak to, if project timing and resources allow?

## Interview Guide and Questions for Other Sector Representatives (Non-Profit, Academic, Consulting, Federal)

Thank you for participating in this discussion. The ERG team has been contracted by NOAA's Office for Coastal Management to help evaluate coastal managers' successes, and challenges related to financing coastal resilience activities and initiatives, existing and emerging financial programs and mechanisms;



and, resource needs and gaps that OCM may be able to address. As part of this project, we have been asked to interview local and state coastal managers and coastal resilience and finance experts. Your insights will be invaluable in informing our research on opportunities and challenges for coastal resilience and finance, and what support and resources NOAA can provide to facilitate coastal resilience finance.

The questions we ask are intended as a guide to our discussion. However, we welcome any input from you to help us better understand these topics and recognize that you may not be able to provide specific responses to all questions.

#### Overview of Coastal Resilience Planning and Access to Funding and Financing Information (Q1)

- Describe your role/position, and the extent to which you and your organization are involved with resilience (coastal or otherwise) efforts.
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very large and 5 being very small, how big is the gap between coastal resilience needs and existing funding or financing available to meet those needs, nationally?

#### Funding Sources and Financing Mechanisms Used for Coastal Resilience (Q2)

- What funding or financing tools or mechanisms are most commonly used for coastal resilience?
- What emerging funding or financing tools should states and communities be aware of?
- Describe any best practices associated with evaluating and selecting funding/financing options for coastal resilience.

#### Limitations on Identifying and Securing Funding and Financing Mechanisms (Q3)

- What do you see as the major barriers to funding coastal resilience efforts?
- What, if anything, are you doing to help entities overcome those barriers?

#### Resources and Tools for Coastal Resilience Funding and Financing (Q4)

- What organizations, entities, or resources have you developed/are you aware of that can support state and local coastal resilience efforts?
  - Do you communicate about these opportunities/resources to state or local governments? If so, how?
- What kinds of resources or information are lacking?
- How do the entities you serve or interact with prefer to receive information on available resources/information?

#### Leveraging Cross-Sector Opportunities for Resources and Funding/Financing (Q5)

- To what extent do you see local and state governments incorporating resilience considerations into all relevant routine or planned investments (e.g., infrastructure improvements)?
  - To what extent are financing providers targeting/addressing state and local coastal resilience needs?
- To what extent do you see resilience financing needs being integrated across other non-adaptation or resilience focused programs and sectors?
  - Can you provide examples of such integration?
- What opportunities do you see for private sector investment or other partnership in state and local coastal resilience efforts?
  - Are you aware of any examples of successful financial or other public-private partnership arrangements that you could share?

#### Wrap-Up (Q6)

- Is there any other information you would like to provide on this topic?
- Is there anyone else you recommend that we speak to, if project timing and resources allow?