The State of Rhode Island seeks to catalyze the formation of Innovation Campus(es) that will help bridge the gap between our universities’ research capacity and the commercialization of that research into new products, businesses, and jobs in the blue economy. To that end, the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (RI Commerce), in partnership with the University of Rhode Island (URI), is issuing an invitation for projects to support the growth of the blue economy within our commercial industry innovation and social enterprise ecosystem.

Rhode Island’s “Blue Economy Technology Cluster” (RI BETC) application to the U.S. EDA’s Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) was recently selected as a finalist eligible to compete for up to $100 million in federal funds to advance the growth of the blue economy. The following component projects proposed under Rhode Island’s “Blue Economy Technology Cluster” (BETC) application have been pre-identified as candidates for potential innovation campus projects:

1. Rhode Island Smart-Bay Platform and Infrastructure Development
2. Rhode Island Blue Tech Innovation Center (BTIC)
3. Aquaculture, Fisheries, and Seafood Technology: A Smart Shellfish Hatchery
Funding Opportunity

In this Innovation Campus process, the component project lead entities, as well as the coalition and industry partners from the RI BETC application to the EDA BBBRC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), are invited to apply. New potential partners are also invited to apply with the consent of the RI BETC lead entities to which they intend to reply. Respondents must limit responses to no more than one response per component project group.

Qualified respondents may also submit proposed compliant Blue Economy projects to this process that are not contained within the URI BETC EDA BBBRC application; however, it is possible that these submissions will not be considered for funding under this Innovation Campus program, but may be considered for other purposes and funding opportunities in the future.

The selected proposal(s) will receive a portion of available funding that, in total, will add up to $7 million in state funds, and the consortium will be required to provide matching private or federal funds that exceed the committed state funding. Following selection of the partner(s), the structure of the proposed Innovation Campus will be subject to negotiation in order to adhere to specific guidelines governing qualified EDA matching funds. The matching private or federal funds must: (i) be secured and committed to the project for the period of performance, (ii) be available as needed, and (iii) not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that may preclude its use consistent with the requirements of the state or project agreements.

The state provided bond funds must be used only (a) to acquire land or other real property or any interest, estate or right therein as may be necessary or advantageous to accomplish the purposes of this act; (b) to direct payment for the preparation of any reports, plans and specifications, and relocation expenses and other costs such as for furnishings, equipment designing, inspecting, and engineering, required in connection with the implementation of the project; (c) to direct payment for the costs of construction, rehabilitation, enlargement, provision of service utilities, and razing of facilities, and other improvements to land in connection with the implementation of the project; and (d) to direct payment for the cost of equipment, supplies, devices, materials and labor for repair, renovation or conversion of systems and structures as necessary for the project.

The comprehensive strategies envisioned and executed by the winning application(s) will include a visionary programming concept and physical design and will maximize collaboration and opportunities across industry, academic, and research tenants. As expanded upon in this document, the proposed Innovation Campus should, among other things, include a diversity of partners, physical spaces, and uses.

Background

The Blue Economy and Ocean Science & Technology (aka “BlueTech”) industry cluster includes but is not limited to Defense & Maritime, Offshore Energy & Renewables, Aquaculture & Fisheries, and Ports & Shipping industries. The industry cluster for this Rhode Island Innovation Campus, as well as the application to the EDA BBBRC challenge, was selected based on Rhode Island Innovates 2.0, Rhode Island’s current comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS), which outlines the state’s economic environment and opportunities for the future. The Ocean “BlueTech” economy is a crucial component of this report’s recommendations for advancing the state’s overall economy.
The Application Process

Candidates will propose their ideas for a transformative concept that supports an overall strategy for catalyzing commercial activity, job growth, research capacity, and innovation in the Blue Economy. An ideal qualified application will bolster Rhode Island’s strengths as a leader in innovation nationwide.

Respondents should provide a one- to two-page (12pt) Innovation Campus Partner Project Vision which includes:

1. A descriptive vision for the intended programmatic concept, including research focus(es), proposed industry and academic tenants, and programs and collaboration opportunities.
2. An explanation of the ways in which the respondents’ application is consistent with and will advance the BBBRC submission.
3. A narrative description of the respondents’ interest in committing substantial resources to the growth of Rhode Island’s innovation economy and the respondents’ understanding of opportunities for industry and academic collaboration to significantly contribute to this goal within key industries.
4. A description of the initial concept for the physical design of any facility, including the envisioned scale, location, types of facilities, and use(s) of space by proposed tenants.
5. Respondents must provide a statement projecting the economic impact of the proposed concept, including the number companies and/or of full-time equivalent jobs created upon initiation of consortium operations, along with a long-term projection for additional companies and/or jobs created over time.

Respondents should also provide an additional one- to two-page (12pt) Partner’s Statement of Qualifications which includes:

1. Overview and examples of relevant team capacity and experience necessary to successfully execute the vision of their proposed Innovation Campus project, including the team proposed and experience with public-private collaboration and contributions to innovation initiatives.
2. An outline of the financing, including the required matching funds (which exceed those requested) that respondents anticipate will be incorporated into their proposal. This should include how the proposed funding could be used as a match for the BBBRC application.
3. Description of intended matching funds to be raised/pledged, the sources of those funds, and their intended use(s). Description of intended use of requested bond funds (must be a capital investment).

Applications will be evaluated and ranked with the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>MAXIMUM SCORE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Vision</td>
<td>35 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Qualifications</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Approach and Strength</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Written Proposal Evaluation Points</td>
<td>75 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Performance</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL MAXIMUM POINTS</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
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Funds will be allocated from up to $7 million in bond funds previously approved by Rhode Island voters, and funds requested must be exceeded by matching funding from non-state sources. Other state incentives may be available; however, such funding will not qualify as a match for bond funding.

RI Commerce and URI reserve the right to adjust criteria and alter the program at any time prior to the submission deadline. RI Commerce and URI reserve the right to extend deadlines or to terminate this solicitation at any time, and by responding hereto, no person, firm, or entity is vested with any rights in any way whatsoever.

Submissions are due no later than February 28, 2022 (per schedule below) and should be sent to the Business Engagement Center at bec@uri.edu and hilary.fagan@commerceri.com.

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<tr>
<th>MILESTONE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invitation release</td>
<td>January 31, 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFP submissions due</td>
<td>February 28, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island Innovation Campus designation of partner(s)</td>
<td>March 15, 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation Campus partner contracting</td>
<td>Fall 2022</td>
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