NOAA RESTORE Science Program 2021

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: NOAA RESTORE Science Program 2021

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-NCCOS-2021-2006590

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.451, Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring, and Technology

Dates: Letters of intent (LOI) are required for this Announcement. The deadline for receipt of LOIs is 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on September 29, 2020. LOIs should be submitted to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) RESTORE Science Program by email (noaarestorescience@noaa.gov). The deadline for receipt of full proposals is 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on December 15, 2020. Full proposals should be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). LOIs and full proposals received after their respective deadlines will not be reviewed or considered.

If use of Grants.gov is not feasible, contact the NCCOS Grants Administrator (see section VII for contact information) as soon as possible and no later than a week before the due date to assess whether alternative arrangements can be made.

Investigators are advised to submit full proposals via Grants.gov well in advance of the deadline as a precaution against unanticipated delays. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before submitting proposal materials. When developing your submission timeline, keep in mind the following information regarding proposal submission on Grants.gov:
(1) Grants.gov requires applicants to complete a free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM), which may take between three and five business days or as long as several weeks to process as described in section IV.G. of this Announcement.
(2) If you submit a full proposal via Grants.gov, you will receive a series of email notifications for up to two business days before learning via validation or rejection whether NOAA has received your proposal.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this document is to advise the public that

NOAA/NOS/NCCOS is soliciting proposals for the NOAA RESTORE Science Program for projects of 12 months in duration. This announcement invites proposals that request funding to scope and design a research project that informs a specific Gulf of Mexico natural resource management decision. Funding is contingent upon the availability of funds in the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund. It is anticipated that final recommendations for funding under this Announcement will be made in May 2021, and that projects funded under this Announcement will have a September 1, 2021 start date. Total funding for this competition will be approximately $2.5 million over 12 months and approximately 20 projects may be funded. The minimum individual award amount is approximately $25,000 over 12 months and the maximum individual award amount is approximately $125,000 over 12 months. Information regarding this Announcement, including webinars and additional background information, is available on the Science Program website (https://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/ffo-2021).

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The mission of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) RESTORE Science Program is to carry out research, observation, and monitoring to support, to the maximum extent practicable, the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem, fish stocks, fish habitat, and the recreational, commercial, and charter-fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico. NOAA was authorized to establish and administer the Science Program, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, by the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act) (Public Law 112-141, Section 1604). The RESTORE Act also directs NOAA to prioritize integrated, long-term projects that address current or anticipated marine ecosystem, fishery, or wildlife management information needs.

In developing proposals for this Announcement, applicants should keep in mind the Science Program's long-term outcomes. The first outcome is an integrated understanding of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem. This means focusing on the connections among species, habitats, and ecosystem processes and the cause-and-effect relationships that govern the strength of those connections. The second outcome is using this integrated understanding of the ecosystem to guide natural resource management, including restoration. Natural resource managers and natural resource management bodies are individuals or groups of individuals with authority to make decisions regarding the human use of or interaction with natural resources. Natural resource management takes many forms, including wildlife and fishery management, state and federal rulemaking and permitting, conservation practices by public or private landowners, place-based management, and restoration planning.

B. Program Priorities

1. Background

Effective management of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem requires that natural resource managers and natural resource management bodies have access to the best available science and that research conducted to inform management decisions is actionable. To be actionable, the research findings and products have to relate to the spatial and temporal scale of the decision that needs to be made. Fisheries managers need timely information on fish abundance and recruitment as well as information on catch and other causes of mortality, such as harmful algal blooms, before setting catch targets. Wetland restoration managers

need site-specific information on soil conditions and hydrology as well as models for how human use, subsidence, and sea level rise could alter conditions over time before selecting a site and restoration technique. Land use planners for coastal counties and municipalities seeking to preserve coastal habitats and species and manage development require habitat maps, information on how species are using and moving between habitats, downscaled climate and sea level rise projections, and estimates of human population and economic growth in their area when deciding on zoning maps and regulations.

One way to obtain actionable science is for resource managers to collaborate with researchers in an iterative manner throughout the four phases of a research project - scoping; design; research and development; and transfer and application of findings and products. The collaboration of all parties across the four phases of a research project to inform a specific natural resource management decision can be described as co-production of science or simply, co-production. Examples of co-production as well as guidelines and best-practices can be found in Beier et al. (2017), Djenontin and Meadow (2018), Gross and Hagy (2017), Vincent et al. (2018), Laudien et al. (2019), and Miller et al. (2017).

This funding opportunity lays the foundation for the co-production of actionable science in two ways. One way is by focusing on the creation of partnerships between natural resource managers and researchers. The second way is by providing those partnerships with funding to jointly scope and design a research project that informs a future natural resource management decision.

A second competition for funding to execute and apply actionable science will follow this competition. These two competitions will be independent of one another.

2. Priority

This announcement invites proposals that request funding to scope and design a research project that informs a specific Gulf of Mexico natural resource management decision.

The scoping phase begins during the development of the proposal and should be iterative throughout the project as new information is gained. In their proposal, applicants must describe what specific activities and steps they have taken and will continue to take to accomplish two objectives for the scoping phase. The first objective is developing a shared understanding of the resource management decision among the natural resource managers and researchers comprising the project team and the second objective is building and maintaining relationships among them.

For the first objective of the scoping phase, applicants must describe the specific natural resource management decision to be made in the future that they intend to address. The specific natural resource manager or natural resource management body responsible for making the decision must also be identified. Applicants should describe the context of the decision and its related uncertainties that could be reduced by additional research. Applicants should also outline the timeline for the decision and concisely describe the steps involved in making the decision, highlighting those steps where additional research findings and products could inform the decision.

For the second objective of the scoping phase, applicants should describe how they have and will continue to build relationships between natural resource managers and researchers. In assembling their project team, applicants should work closely with natural resource managers, researchers, and, if applicable, resource users and other stakeholders. It is required that at least one of these natural resource managers either leads or is included on the project team. Applicants should describe the composition of their team, how they intend to work together, how they intend to use the plans generated by this project in the future, and how ownership of those plans would be shared among the project team. A letter of support is required from the natural resource manager or natural resource management body responsible for the identified resource management decision. The letter should describe their role as an equal partner in the project and how they intend to work as part of the project team.

For the design phase, applicants should propose the specific activities and steps they will take to: 1) formulate research questions and determine the methods for addressing them, 2) identify approaches for developing their research findings into products for informing the natural resource management decision, and 3) select strategies and processes for how the findings and products will be transferred to a resource manager or management body and applied to the natural resource management decision.

Proposals selected for funding will be required to develop two plans connected to their specific natural resource management decision during their period of performance, a research and development plan and an application plan. The research and development plan should include the following elements: 1) a description of the natural resource management decision and related research questions; 2) goals and objectives; 3) methods; 4) a list of expected products; 5) a schedule with milestones; 6) a list of the resource managers, researchers, and other stakeholders involved and their roles and responsibilities; 7) a data management plan; 8) a budget with potential sources of future funding; and 9) a mechanism for updating the plan as the research and development process progresses. The application plan should include the following elements: 1) a description of the findings and products to

be transferred and applied; 2) goals and objectives; 3) a description of the activities necessary to transfer and apply the findings and products; 4) a schedule with milestones; 5) a list of the resource managers, researchers, and other stakeholders involved and their roles and responsibilities; 6) a budget that includes the cost of future operations, if necessary, with potential sources of future funding; and 7) a mechanism for updating the plan as the application process progresses.
No new environmental data collection will be supported through this competition. However, applicants may propose to assemble and synthesize existing datasets, conduct modeling, or other similar activities to gain additional knowledge from previously collected environmental data as part of their scoping and design phases.

Applicants are encouraged to work with individuals and organizations who have expertise in facilitating information exchange and partnerships between the natural resource management and research communities. These individuals and organizations can be described as boundary spanners or boundary organizations, respectively (Gustafsson and Lidskog, 2018). They are able to make valuable contributions by assisting with engaging the natural resource management, research, and other stakeholder communities; facilitating meetings; and designing strategies and processes for the transfer and application of project findings and products.

The natural resource management decision being addressed must impact resources that occur in the Gulf of Mexico, its watersheds, or connecting waters. The Gulf of Mexico is defined as the ocean basin bounded by the United States along its northeastern, northern, and northwestern edges; Mexico on its southwestern and southern edges; and Cuba on its southeastern edge. This definition of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem includes the estuarine and marine environments of the basin’s continental shelf and its deepwater environments. If occurring in a watershed, which includes freshwater wetlands and uplands, or waters connected to the Gulf of Mexico through the Yucatan Channel and the Straits of Florida, the natural resource management decision must focus on a resource that has a direct, significant, and quantifiable impact on the Gulf of Mexico.

References

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Gross, C. and J.D. Hagy III. 2017. Attributes of successful actions to restore lakes and estuaries degraded by nutrient pollution. Journal of Environmental Management. 187:122-136. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2016.11.018.

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Laudien, R., E. Boon, H. Goosen, and K. van Nieuwaal. 2019. The Dutch adaptation web portal: seven lessons learnt from a co-production point of view. Climatic Change. 153:509–521. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-018-2179-1.

Miller, B.W., A.J. Symstad, L. Frid, N.A. Fisichelli, and G.W. Schuurman. 2017. Co-producing simulation models to inform resource management: a case study from southwest South Dakota. Ecosphere 8(12):e02020. https://doi.org/10.1002/ecs2.2020.

Vincent, K., M. Daly, C. Scannell, and B. Leathes. 2018. What can climate services learn from theory and practice of co-production? Climate Services. 12:48-58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cliser.2018.11.001.

C. Program Authority

Public Law 112-141, Section 1604, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring and Technology Program; 33 U.S.C. § 1321 note.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Funding is contingent upon availability of funds in the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund. It is anticipated that total funding for this funding opportunity will be approximately $2.5 million and will fund approximately 20 projects. The minimum individual award amount is approximately $25,000 over 12 months, and the maximum individual award amount is approximately $125,000 over 12 months.

B. Project/Award Period

Full proposals must cover an award period of 12 months. It is anticipated that final recommendations for funding under this Announcement will be made in May 2021, and that

projects funded under this Announcement will have a September 1, 2021 start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

In an effort to maximize the use of limited resources, proposals from non-federal, non-NOAA federal, and NOAA federal applicants will be evaluated in the same competition, with different funding instruments applicable to the type of applicant.

The funding instrument for a full proposal selected for funding from a non-federal applicant is expected to be a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is similar to a grant, but used when substantial Federal Government involvement is anticipated. This means that the recipient can expect substantial agency collaboration, participation, or intervention in project performance. Substantial involvement exists when responsibility for the management, control, direction, or performance of the project is shared by the assisting agency and the recipient; or, the assisting agency has the right to intervene (including interruption or modification) in the conduct or performance of project activities. Substantial involvement will be coordinated and communicated by the Science Program, and may include, but is not limited to, collaboration and participation by NOAA, involvement in investigator meetings, setting up management advisory groups, development of the 'research and development' and 'application' plans described in the program priority (section I.B.), review of financial expenditures, and communication of project results.

If the non-federal applicant is at an institution that has a NOAA Cooperative Institute (CI), and their proposed project fits within the scope of that CI, then they may include a cover letter with their proposal stating their desire to have the proposal associated with the CI. This letter should specify the name of the CI, the CI cooperative agreement number, and the NOAA-approved research theme and task that applies to the proposal. The proposal will use the Facilities & Administrative (F&A, or indirect costs) rate associated with the main CI agreement. If the proposal is selected for funding, NOAA will notify the institution that a separate award will be issued with its own award number. The new award will include two Special Award Conditions: (1) the existing institution/NOAA memorandum of agreement (MOA) would be incorporated by reference into the terms of the competitive award, and (2) any progress report(s) for the competitive award must follow the timetable of the funding program and be submitted directly to the funding program. Report(s) will be copied to the CI's administrator when due, to be attached to the main cooperative agreement progress report as an appendix. This will allow the CI to coordinate all the projects funded through the CI, since the terms of these awards will specify that this is a CI project via the MOA.

If the non-federal applicant is at an institution that has a NOAA approved Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) and meets the criteria described below for using that

status, they may include a cover letter with their proposal stating their desire to have the proposal associated with that CESU. This letter should specify the name of the CESU. Of the 17 CESUs across the nation, NOAA is a member of 10: North and West Alaska, California, Hawaii-Pacific Islands, South Florida-Caribbean, Gulf Coast, Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast, Chesapeake Watershed, North Atlantic Coast, Pacific Northwest, and Great Plains. The following criteria must be met for NOAA to use a CESU partnership:

(1) The proposed project must fit within the objectives of the National CESU Network Program, which are to provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners in biological, physical, social, cultural, or engineering disciplines needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context.

(2) The proposed project must fit the intent of the CESU's existing Cooperative and Joint Agreement, which means (a) the research partnership will carry out or stimulate an activity (e.g., data, products, or services) for a public purpose, and (b) NOAA will be significantly involved in the work.

The funding instrument for a selected proposal from an eligible NOAA federal applicant will be an intra-agency transfer of funds.

The funding instrument for a selected proposal from a non-NOAA federal applicant will be through an inter-agency transfer of funds, provided legal authority exists for the federal applicant to receive funds from another agency. PLEASE NOTE: Before non-NOAA federal applicants may be funded, they must demonstrate that they have applicable legal authority for an inter-agency transfer of funds. Non-NOAA federal applicants that intend to be the lead institution should contact the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) Grants Administrator to discuss technical details (refer to section VII for contact information). Support may be solely through the Science Program or partnered with other federal offices and agencies.

The intra- and inter-agency transfers of funds are not federal assistance (grants or cooperative agreements), and the policies described in this Announcement applicable to federal assistance awards do not apply to federal entities receiving intra- and inter-agency transfers of funds. In the agreements implemented in these situations, NOAA will be substantially involved in the projects in a manner similar to the cooperative agreements with non-federal parties. Contact the NCCOS Grants Administrator for more information (refer to section VII for contact information).

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education; not-for-profit institutions; local, state, and tribal governments; for-profit organizations; and U.S. territories and federal agencies that possess the statutory authority to accept funding for this type of work. The lead applicant must be from a U.S. based entity.

Science Program funding opportunities may not be used to hire and fund the salaries of any permanent federal employees. Federal award recipients may use their funding to cover travel, equipment, supplies, and contractual personnel costs associated with the proposed work.

Investigators are not required to be employed by an eligible entity that is based in one of the five Gulf of Mexico States (Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas). However, investigators that are not employed by or associated with Gulf of Mexico-based eligible entities are strongly encouraged to collaborate with partners from Gulf of Mexico-based eligible entities.

Foreign researchers may participate by submitting a subaward or contract through an eligible U.S. entity. Science Program funding may not be spent in Cuba.

The DOC and NOAA support cultural and gender diversity and encourage proposals involving women and minority investigators, participants, and groups. In addition, the DOC and NOAA are strongly committed to broadening the participation of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. The DOC and NOAA encourage any of the above institutions to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

A letter of intent (LOI) is required to apply for this Announcement. Full proposals that do not have an associated LOI that was submitted by the deadline will not be considered and the full proposal will be returned to the applicant without review.

Each proposal must substantially comply with the 17 elements listed under Required Elements in section IV.B.3.(1)-(17), or it will be returned to the sender without further consideration. A checklist with the required and optional elements can be found in section

VIII.B.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Proposal materials are available at http://www.grants.gov as part of the electronic proposal package, which includes the federal forms. Please contact the NCCOS Grants Administrator should you have an issue accessing the materials (see section VII for contact information).

B. Content and Form of Application

1. Letter of Intent

A letter of intent (LOI) is required to apply for this Announcement. The purpose of the LOI process is to provide information to potential applicants on the relevance of their proposal to the program priority described in this Announcement (section I.B.) in advance of preparing a full proposal. Full proposals will be encouraged only for LOIs deemed relevant; however, the final decision to submit a full proposal is made by the investigator. The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to this competition. The LOI should be no more than one page in length, single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins and must include, in order, the components listed below. If these listed components are not included, the LOI may not be considered and the applicant may not be eligible to submit a full proposal:

(1) Tentative project title;

(2) Names, institutions, and roles (briefly) of all investigators, including the natural resource manager(s) from the management body responsible for the management decision;

(3) A brief description of the specific natural resource management decision to be made in the future that your project will address, including its context and related uncertainties that could be reduced by additional research;

(4) The approximate timeline for when the management decision is expected to be made and how additional research findings could inform the decision;

(5) A brief description of the activities and steps your team is proposing to take to scope and design the research project; and

(6) The approximate cost of the project, including a brief overview of its budget.

The Science Program will conduct a review of each LOI to determine whether it is responsive to the program priority as detailed in section I.B. Emails to encourage or discourage a full proposal will be sent to the lead investigator for each LOI within

approximately four weeks after the LOI due date. The final decision to submit a full proposal will be made by the applicant(s) and institution(s), regardless of the recommendations of the Science Program regarding the LOI.

2. Application

The provisions for preparing full applications (hereafter, “proposals”) provided here are mandatory. Proposals received after the published deadline (see section IV.D.) or proposals that deviate from the prescribed format will be returned to the sender without further consideration. Information regarding this Announcement, including webinars and additional background information, is available on the Science Program website (https://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/ffo-2021). An example proposal may be found at https://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/resources. Please note the example is available for general guidance purposes only; applicants must comply with the complete instructions included within this Announcement. Answers to frequently asked questions are available at https://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/ffo-2021/faqs.

For clarity in the submission of proposals, the following definitions are provided for applicant use:

- Funding or Budget Period - The period of time when federal funding is available for obligation by the recipient. This term may also be used to mean budget period. A budget period is typically 12 months. The funding period must always be specified in multi-year awards, if applicable.

- Period of Performance - The period of time established in the award document during which federal sponsorship begins and ends. The term “award period” or “project period” may be used interchangeably with “period of performance.”

- Proposals with subcontractors/subawards - The lead institution on a collaborative proposal may request direct funding by NOAA. If funded, the lead institution will disburse funds to the contractor(s) or sub-recipient institutions. A sub-recipient receives funds from the lead institution to carry out part of the federal award. A contractor provides property or services needed to carry out the project in the federal award.

3. Required Elements

Each proposal must substantially comply with the following 17 elements or it will be

returned to the sender without further consideration. The summary title page, abstract, project narrative, data management plan, references, biographical sketch, and budget narrative must be single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. The 17 elements are as follows (see section VIII.B. for a checklist of elements):

(1) Standard Form (SF)-424: All applicants requesting direct funding must submit the Standard Form, SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance,” to indicate the total amount of funding proposed for their institution for the whole project period. This form is to be the cover page for the original proposal and is the first required form in the Grants.gov proposal package.

(2) Summary title page (one (1) page maximum): The summary title page includes, in order, the project's title; the lead investigator’s name, affiliation, complete address, phone number, and email address; the natural resource manager’s name, affiliation, complete address, phone number, and email address; and the requested funding amounts for each fiscal year. Separate budget information is not requested on the title page for institutions that are proposed to receive funds through a subaward to the lead institution; however, an accompanying budget narrative must be submitted for each subaward. For further details on budget information, please see elements 12 and 13 below. Applicants may suggest merit reviewers on a page after the summary title page.

(3) Abstract (one (1) page maximum): The abstract should appear on a separate single page, headed with the proposal title, institutions, investigators, total proposed cost, and budget period. The abstract should include an introduction to the natural resource management decision that will be addressed, including its context and related uncertainties that could be reduced by additional research; the rationale for selecting this decision; project objectives; and a brief summary of the work to be completed. It should be written in the third person. Project abstracts of proposals that receive funding may be posted on program related websites.

(4) Project narrative: The description of the proposed project must be no more than five (5) pages. The project narrative must indicate the project’s relevance to the stated program priority (refer to section I.B.) by:

(a) Describing the specific natural resource management decision to be made in the future that the project will address, including its context and related uncertainties that could be informed by additional research;

(b) Identifying the specific natural resource manager or natural resource management body responsible for making the decision;

(c) Outlining the timeline for the decision and concisely describing the steps involved in

making it, highlighting those steps where additional research findings and products could inform the decision;

(d) Describing the composition of the project team, how the team intends to work together, and the roles and responsibilities of each team member;

(e) Describing how the team intends to use the plans generated by this project in the future and how ownership of those plans would be shared among the project team; and

(f) Describing the specific activities and steps the project team will take to: 1) formulate research questions and determine the methods for addressing them, 2) identify approaches for developing research findings into products for informing the management decision, and 3) select strategies and processes for how the findings and products will be transferred to a resource manager or management body and applied to the natural resource management decision.

(5) Data management plan: Provide a data management plan up to one (1) page in length that aligns with the specific Data Management Guidance provided in section VIII.A. The plan should describe how metadata and data used as part of the proposed work will be disseminated to the broader community, and plans for long-term archiving of these data. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The Science Program will not offer specific technical guidance; however, use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget (see element 13).

(6) References cited: Each reference must include the names of all authors in the same sequence they appear in the publication, the article title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. While there is no established page limitation, this section should include bibliographic citations only and should not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the five page project narrative.

(7) Natural resource management letter of support: Each proposal must include a letter of support from the natural resource manager or natural resource management body responsible for the identified resource management decision that describes their role as an equal partner in the project and how they intend to work as part of the project team. Additional letters of support or commitment are strongly encouraged, but not required (see section IV.B.4.).

(8) Milestone chart: Provide the anticipated timelines of major tasks associated with the

proposed work. Applicants are required to use the milestone chart template (which includes an example) included with the electronic proposal package (and also available at https://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/resources; OMB Control No. 0648-0384).

(9) Biographical sketches: Each investigator must provide a summary of up to two pages that includes their email and mailing addresses, a list of professional and academic credentials and accomplishments, and a list of up to five examples or publications that describe their past experience working with researcher and natural resource manager partnerships and transferring and applying research findings and products in a natural resource management context.

(10) Current and pending support: The lead investigator, co-investigators, and unfunded collaborators making a substantial contribution to the research must provide a description of all current and pending financial/funding support (e.g., federal, state, not-for-profit institutions, for-profit organizations). The capability of the investigator and collaborators to complete the proposed work in light of present and future commitments to other projects should be addressed. Therefore, please discuss the percentage of time investigators and collaborators have devoted to other federal or non-federal projects, as compared to the time that will be devoted to the proposed work solicited under this notice. A current and pending support form is available on the NCCOS website for your use: https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/about/funding-opportunities/application-forms/. You must respond to the requirement whether or not you have any current and/or pending support.

(11) Accomplishments from prior federal and state support: If the lead investigator or any co-investigator identified on the project has received federal or state funding awards in the past five years for research relevant to this funding opportunity, information on the awards is required. The following information must be provided:

(a) The award number, amount, and period of support;

(b) The title of the project;

(c) A summary of the results of the completed work;

(d) Publications resulting from the award;

(e) Archived datasets resulting from the award;

(f) A brief description of outputs and outcomes, especially the application of research findings and products in a natural resource management context; and

(g) As appropriate, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

(12) SF-424A: Applicants are required to submit a SF-424A Budget Form, which identifies the budget for each fiscal year of the proposal. Place each fiscal year in separate columns in

section B of page 1 on the SF-424A. NOTES: This revised SF-424A section B format is a NOAA requirement that is not reflected in the Instructions for the SF-424A. For this announcement, applicants are limited to one (1) year of funding. The budget figures must correspond with the description contained in the budget justification.

Multi-investigator proposals using a subaward approach must submit a SF-424A for each subaward that has the same budget figures as its corresponding budget justification. The lead institution should list the total for subcontracts under 6.f. “Contractual” and the total for subawards under 6.h. “Other” in their SF-424A.

(13) Budget narratives: All proposals must include a detailed budget narrative covering the proposed period of performance with a justification to support all proposed budget categories.

Personnel costs should be broken out for each named investigator, number of months, and percentage of time requested per investigator. Support for each investigator should be commensurate with their stated involvement. Any unnamed personnel (e.g., graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, technicians) should be identified by their job title and their personnel costs explained similar to investigator personnel costs above. The contribution of any personnel to the project goals should be explained.

Travel costs should be broken out by number of people traveling, destination and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Equipment costs should describe the equipment to be purchased and its contribution to the achievement of the project goals. Applicants may include publication costs. For additional information concerning each of the required budget categories and appropriate level of disclosure please see https://go.usa.gov/xwJxQ.

Proposals are permitted to include the costs of project-level data management, including coordinating, organizing, documenting, formatting, or otherwise preparing datasets for submission to NOAA or non-NOAA data facilities; establishing and maintaining data access tools and services and related metadata; and managing non-digital data that are not required to be made publicly accessible, including laboratory notebooks, preliminary analyses, drafts of scientific papers, plans for future research, peer review reports, communications with colleagues, or physical objects such as laboratory specimens.

A separate budget narrative is required for each institution that is proposed to receive funds through a subaward or subcontract to the lead institution. The budget narratives should describe the work to be supported and indicate the applicability or necessity to the project.

When a collaborator or contractor is known before applying, signed approval from the institution of each subaward and subcontract must accompany its budget justification. The lead institution is responsible for sending funds to its subaward and subcontract institutions. For acquisition contracts, the purpose and cost or price must be fully justified and the contract must comply with 2 C.F.R. 200.317-.326.

(14) CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying: Required only for the lead institution, which may submit this form through the Grants.gov CD511 document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on documents from the submitting institution.

(15) SF-424B: Assurances - Non-Construction Programs: Required only for the lead institution, which may submit this form through the Grants.gov SF-424B document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on documents from the submitting institutions.

(16) Alphabetized list of collaborators, advisors, and advisees: Provide ONE list per proposal that includes all collaborators, advisors, and advisees and their respective institutions for each investigator (lead investigator, co-investigators, postdocs, sub-awardees, etc.). The combined and alphabetized list should be on a spreadsheet with column headers for First Name, Last Name, and Institution. Collaborators are individuals who have participated in a project or publication within the last 48 months with any investigator, including co-authors on publications. Collaborators also include those persons with whom the investigators may have ongoing collaboration negotiations. Advisees and advisors do not have a time limit. Advisees are persons with whom the individual investigator has had an association as thesis or dissertation advisor or postdoctoral sponsor. Advisors include an individual’s own graduate and postgraduate advisors. Unfunded participants in the proposed study should also be included on the list, but not their collaborators. This information is critical for identifying potential conflicts of interests and avoiding bias in the selection of reviewers.

(17) Key Contacts form: At the time of proposal submission, applicants must submit the Key Contacts Form for the lead institution. This form can be found on the NCCOS website: https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/about/application-forms. This form identifies the official contacts for each proposal.

In summary, multi-investigator proposals proposing a subrecipient known in advance MUST provide the following for each proposed subaward: SF-424A, budget narrative, signed approval, and current and pending support forms for each investigator.

Likewise, multi-investigator proposals that include a contractor known in advance MUST provide signed approval, cost or price justification, and current and pending support forms for each contractor. Applicants should also provide the Key Contacts Form for acquisition contracts and may provide additional information similar to that requested in this section for a subaward if it may help NOAA evaluate the cost or price and assure compliance of the contract with 2 C.F.R. 200.317-326.

4. Optional Elements

Applicants may include other materials as listed below in addition to the 17 required elements; these elements are encouraged, but not required (see section VIII.B. for a checklist of elements):

(1) Additional letters of support or commitment: Letters of support or commitment in addition to the required natural resource management letter (see section IV.B.3. required element 7) are strongly encouraged, but not required. Consider providing letters from partners that confirm contributions to and support for the proposed work, such as team members included in the project but not funded in the budget, additional end users who will be engaged throughout the proposed work, and individuals or groups that provide access to data or other needs for the proposed work. End users should describe in their letters of support how they anticipate using the plans generated from the project.

(2) Indirect costs rate agreements: Proposals that request funds for indirect costs for institutions that have a current federally approved rate should provide the indirect cost rate agreement for the lead institution and each institution that is proposed to receive funds through a subaward or subcontract to the lead institution. An applicant without a federally approved rate should refer to section IV.F. of this Announcement regarding options.

(3) SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: If lobbying activity is or has been secured to influence the outcome of a covered federal action, complete the SF-LLL standard lobbying disclosure form found at https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html and include it with your proposal package.

5. Application Format and Assembly

Workspace is the standard way for organizations or individuals to apply for federal grants in Grants.gov. Workspace allows a grant team to simultaneously access and edit different forms within a proposal. Plus, the forms can be filled out online or offline—your choice.

Grants.gov Workspace also allows applicants and organizations to tailor their proposal workflow. Please refer to https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html to determine which of the three approaches your institution should take when completing a Workspace proposal. This page also contains resources to aid in setting up the workspace and the proposal submission process.

If you experience submission problems that may result in your proposal being late, send an email to support@grants.gov and call the Grants.gov help desk (800-518-4726). The federal program officer for this Announcement will use programmatic discretion in accepting proposals due to documented electronic submission problems. NOTE: If more than one submission of a proposal is performed, the last proposal submitted before the due date and time will be the official version.

C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to build the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, to the extent applicable, any applicant awarded in response to this Announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at https://sam.gov/SAM/. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance published at 2 CFR Part 25, which may be accessed online at https://go.usa.gov/xwJxd. See section IV.G. for more information.

D. Submission Dates and Times

1. Letter of Intent

A LOI is required for applying to this Announcement. Lead investigators should submit their LOI as an attachment to an email addressed to noaarestorescience@noaa.gov. Please name your LOI file as follows: “2021 - Lead Investigator First Name Last Name - X.”, where “X” is a number (e.g., 1, 2, etc.) that differentiates LOIs should you submit more than one. The deadline for receipt of a LOI for this Announcement is 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on September 29, 2020. Late LOIs will not be considered and associated full proposals will not be reviewed or considered.

2. Full Application

The deadline for receipt of full proposals is 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on December 15, 2020.

Full proposals should be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Full proposals received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered. Investigators are advised to submit full proposals via Grants.gov well in advance of the deadline as a precaution against unanticipated delays.

If use of Grants.gov is not feasible, contact the NCCOS Grants Administrator (see section VII for contact information) as soon as possible and no later than a week before the due date to assess whether alternative arrangements can be made.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Proposals under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2), an opportunity for public notice and comment is not required for this notice relating to grants, benefits, and contracts. Because this notice is exempt from the notice and comment provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required, and none has been prepared. It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

F. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Costs

If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the DOC or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06 (effective April 2019) found at https://go.usa.gov/xwUZp. For questions, please contact the Grants Officer for indirect or facilities and administrative costs (refer to section VII for contact information).

2. Funding Restrictions specific to the RESTORE Act

The RESTORE Act stipulates the eligible activities for the Science Program and what the funds may NOT be used for. Per the Act, "The funds ...may not be used for any existing or planned research led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, unless agreed to in writing by the grant recipient." NOAA has interpreted this language to mean that if the proposed work is captured within any of the following three categories, then it will be considered as "existing or planned research led by NOAA":

(1) Substantially part of work that is currently tracked in NOAA Line Office Annual Operating Plans, part of any NOAA grant or other NOAA funding mechanism documentation, or part of other NOAA budgetary or program management documents; or
(2) Substantially part of work that has been proposed in a NOAA Budget Formulation Program Change Summary or other budget formulation documents at the NOAA Line Office level since July 2012, regardless of success; or
(3) Substantially duplicative of efforts implemented by NOAA (i.e., conducted by NOAA federal scientists or contract scientists on behalf of NOAA).

Final determination of the eligibility of the proposed work will be made by the Science Program. The Science Program will also not fund start-up or operational costs for private business ventures and neither fees nor profits will be considered as allowable costs. For questions, please contact the federal program officer (refer to section VII for contact information).

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any proposal materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, an applicant must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) (both of which require periodic renewals). Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. Applicants can register for SAM online at https://sam.gov/SAM/; allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration, which will require the applicant's Employer Identification Number. The entire registration process, including Grants.gov, DUNS, and SAM, may take up to three or more weeks to complete, and the registration must be renewed annually. PLEASE ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME FOR THESE STEPS.

After electronic submission of the proposal through Grants.gov, the person submitting the proposal will receive up to three email messages from Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their proposal. In the first 24 to 48 hours after submission, the first email will confirm receipt of the proposal by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the proposal has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors. Only validated proposals are sent to NOAA for review. After the proposal has been validated, this same person will receive a third email, generally within two days, when the proposal has been downloaded by NOAA. If an applicant has not received an email verifying that the proposal has been downloaded by NOAA, the applicant is responsible for contacting the federal program officer for this Announcement and providing documentation that demonstrates the proposal was submitted

to Grants.gov ahead of the deadline.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

(a) Importance and Applicability (25 percent): This assesses whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For purposes of this competition, the Science Program will evaluate proposals based on (1) how well the applicant demonstrates an integrated understanding of the specific natural resource management decision, its context, and related uncertainties that could be reduced by additional research and (2) how well the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the timeline for the decision and the steps in the decision-making process where additional research findings and products could inform it.

(b) Technical and Scientific Merit (25 percent): This assesses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For purposes of this competition, the Science Program will evaluate proposals based on the efficacy of the proposed activities and steps for (1) formulating research questions that relate to the natural resource management decision and determining methods to address them, (2) identifying approaches for developing research findings into products, and (3) identifying strategies and processes to transfer and apply the findings and products to the natural resource management decision.

(c) Overall Qualifications of Applicants (20 percent): This assesses whether the applicants possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For purposes of this competition, the Science Program will evaluate the capability and composition of the project team to complete the proposed work based on (1) their past accomplishments and subject matter expertise, (2) their experience with collaborative activities such as planning and stakeholder engagement, and (3) their demonstrated capability to transfer and apply research findings and products in a natural resource management context.

(d) Project Costs (10 percent): This assesses whether the budget is realistic and commensurate with the needs and timeframe of the proposed work. For purposes of this competition, the Science Program will evaluate the completeness of the budget narrative and how realistic the budget is for completing the proposed work.

(e) Project Team Integration (20 percent): This assesses how well the project team is

integrated. For purposes of this competition, the Science Program will evaluate proposals based on (1) the assigned roles and responsibilities of project team members, (2) the degree to which the natural resource manager is an equal partner and integrated member of the project team, (3) how the team intends to use the plans generated by this project in the future, and (4) how ownership of those plans would be shared among the partners.

B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full proposal has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine if it is timely, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for proposals with non-substantive issues that can be easily rectified or cured. Ineligible, incomplete, duplicate, or non-responsive proposals may be eliminated from further review.

All proposals that pass this initial administrative review will be evaluated individually by independent peer mail review and/or independent peer panel review. Both federal and non-federal experts may be used in this process. The federal program officer identified in section VII is responsible for conducting the evaluation process described in this Announcement.

For peer mail review, proposals will be evaluated and scored individually by at least three professionally and technically qualified reviewers. Each peer mail reviewer will see only certain individual proposals within their area of expertise and score them individually on a scale of 0 to 100 in accordance with the assigned weights of the evaluation criteria (refer to section V.A.).

The peer mail reviewer applies a rating of 1 – 5 to each criterion (refer to section V.A.), where the rating represents the reviewer's view of how well the applicant met the standards described for a particular criterion using the following scale:

- Poor (1): the applicant has not addressed the criterion adequately and/or it has substantial deficiencies;
- Fair (2): the applicant has minimally addressed the criterion and/or it has moderate deficiencies;
- Good (3): the applicant has addressed the criterion adequately and/or it has low deficiencies;
- Very Good (4): the applicant has addressed the criterion satisfactorily and/or it has no deficiencies; or
- Excellent (5): the applicant has addressed the criterion exceptionally well and/or is outstanding.

The total score (0-100) is then calculated using the weights and ratings for each criterion), as

follows:

[(Rating (a) × 25) + (Rating (b) × 25) + (Rating (c) × 20) + (Rating (d) × 10) + (Rating (e) × 20)]/5 = Total score

Total scores from each review are averaged and rounded to the nearest integer. Based on the scores from mail peer review, a cutoff will be established for proposals to proceed to the next stage of review. Depending on the nature and quality of the proposal pool and the available funding, NOAA expects approximately 50 proposals may be sent forward to the independent peer panel, where they will be evaluated and scored individually by the panelists. Proposals not sent forward to the peer panel will not be given further consideration and applicants will be notified of non-selection.

The peer panel will be diverse and inclusive and composed of several individuals with a range of professional and technical expertise such that the panel, as a whole, covers the range of topics addressed by the proposals being reviewed. The panel will have access to all mail reviews of proposals and will use the mail reviews in discussion and evaluation of the entire slate of proposals. The peer panel shall rate the proposals using the evaluation criteria (refer to section V.A.). Individual peer panel reviewers will consider the relative weighting of the evaluation criteria in providing their individual score. The individual peer panelists' scores shall be combined, using one or more methods, to obtain a numerical ranking of the proposals. Only the panel scores will be used to rank each proposal. When more than one non-federal reviewer is used, no consensus advice will be given by the independent peer mail review or the review panel. The federal program officer will not vote, score, or participate in discussion of the merits of any proposals other than to ask clarifying questions and respond to programmatic questions from the reviewers.

The federal program officer will create a ranking of the proposals using the average panel scores and make recommendations on which proposals to fund and at what amounts given the program priority, the approximate number of expected awards, and the approximate amount of funding available for this competition. Following the evaluation process, applicants recommended for funding may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. NOAA may select some, all, or none of the proposals, or part(s) of any particular proposal, may request that applicants combine projects, and may delay a potential award to a subsequent period without re-competition.

Recommendations for funding are sent to the Science Program's Director for review. The Director will solicit input from the Science Program's Executive Oversight Board on the

broad portfolio of recommendations; there will be no review by the Executive Oversight Board of individual proposals. The Director then sends their final recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official, the Director of NCCOS, for final funding decisions.

In making final funding decisions, the Selecting Official will award in rank order from the peer-review process unless selection out of rank order is justified based on the selection factors (refer to section V.C.).

When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), verbatim anonymous copies of peer reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the applicant. Declined proposals will be held for the required three years, in accordance with current retention requirements, and then destroyed.

C. Selection Factors

Proposals may be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

(1) Availability of funding;
(2) Balance or distribution of funds:
(a) Geographically;
(b) By type of institutions;
(c) By type of partners; and
(d) By topical areas.
(3) Whether this project duplicates projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other state and federal agencies or science initiatives;
(4) Program priority and policy factors (refer to section I.B.);
(5) Applicant's prior award performance; and
(6) Partnerships or participation of targeted groups.

Awards may also be modified for selected projects depending on budget availability or according to the selection factors listed above.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will begin in December 2020. It is anticipated that final recommendations for funding under this Announcement will be made in May 2021. Applicants should use a start date of September 1, 2021.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is provided electronically through the Grants Online system to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization.

The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online. The authorizing document, the CD-450 award cover page, is provided to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization.

In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain Special Award Conditions unique to a proposed work that will be applied on a case-by-case basis. For example, the award may include conditions that limit the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements or stating other compliance requirements for the award as applicable. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a federal award to ensure they are fully aware of the relevant terms that have been placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register Notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements

Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which applies to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4.

3. Department of Commerce Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system. A current version of this document (April 2019) is available at https://go.usa.gov/xwUZp.

4. Unpaid Tax Liability and Recent Felony Conviction Certification

When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide certain applicant organizations a form to be completed by the applicant's authorized representative making a certification regarding federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any federal law by the organization.

5. Limitation of Liability

Funding for this Announcement is contingent upon availability of funds in the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for proposal preparation or proposal preparation costs. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA or any other agency to award any specific project or to obligate any part of the entire amount of available funds. If one incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, one would do so solely at one's own risk of these costs not receiving an award. See also 2 C.F.R. 200.308(d)(4). Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.

6. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq., as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508) for projects proposed to receive NOAA federal funding. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A for NEPA, http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_216/216-6A.html, and the NOAA Companion Manual, https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-NAO-216-6A-Companion-Manual-03012018.pdf. Applicants to be recommended for funding are required to provide information as needed to complete the NEPA analysis and may be required to answer questions from the “Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance Applicants" (OMB Control No. 0648-0538; https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf). The federal program officer will determine which questions are relevant for each project. If needed, answers must be provided before the proposal can be submitted for final funding approval.

7. Release of Application Information

Privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, patentable ideas, or trade secrets, disclosure of which may harm the applicant, should be included in proposals only when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed work. In the event that a proposal contains information or data that the applicant does not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the proposal, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. A proposal that results in an award will be available to the public on request, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary, or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the proposal aids identification of what may be specifically exempt. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, and 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for the Department of Commerce to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA.

Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, NOAA will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and contractors, and to outside reviewers when necessary for merit review of the proposal or as otherwise authorized by law. Portions of proposals resulting in awards that contain descriptions of inventions in which either the Government or the funding recipient owns a right, title, or interest (including a nonexclusive license) will not normally be made available to the public until a reasonable time has been allowed for filing patent applications. NOAA will notify the recipient of receipt of requests for copies of funded proposals so the recipient may advise NOAA of such inventions described, or other confidential, commercial, or proprietary information contained in the proposal.

NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the data management plan from funded projects, or use information from the data management plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.

8. Review of Risk

After proposals are recommended for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.205. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications, or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA

may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be timely addressed in order to receive a new award. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, Special Award Conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.207. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject a proposal in its entirety if information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected proposals and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer.

9. Scientific Integrity

The Science Program adheres to the principles of scientific integrity. This policy can be found at https://nrc.noaa.gov/Scientific-Integrity-Commons.

C. Reporting

All performance (i.e., technical progress) reports shall be submitted electronically through NOAA's electronic Grants Online system unless the recipient does not have electronic access. In that case, performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the federal program officer. All financial reports shall be submitted in the same manner.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000. See 2 C.F.R. Parts 25, 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

Technical Program Information: Frank Parker, Associate Director and federal program officer, 301-602-5577, frank.parker@noaa.gov.

Grants Administration Information: Jennifer Hinden, NCCOS Grants Administrator, 240-533-0197, jennifer.hinden@noaa.gov.

Data Management Information: Jessica Morgan, NCCOS Scientific Data Coordinator, 240-533-0297, nccos.data@noaa.gov.

Indirect or Facilities and Administrative Costs Information: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 301-628-1308, lamar.revis@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

A. Data Management Guidance

1. Data Management Plans

Data management plans (see section IV.B.3.(5)) submitted with proposals MUST reflect one or more of these option(s):

Option A: For the majority of oceanographic and ecological data, except those listed below, funding recipients are expected to submit data to NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) for long-term preservation, which will provide public access, archiving, discovery metadata meeting NOAA standards and formats, and a Digital Object Identifier (DOI). NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.

Option B: For any other data not appropriate for submission to NOAA NCEI, funding recipients are expected to submit data to an appropriate data facility (i.e., National Institutes of Health GenBank for genomics data) that preserves data, properly manages archived data to assure their quality, mints DOIs, and makes archived data and related information available to users in a timely and efficient manner.

Option C: For limited-release data that are limited by law, regulation, policy, security requirements, commercial or international agreements, or valid technical considerations, funding recipients may request permission from the federal program officer not to make data publicly accessible.

2. Data and Manuscript Requirements

Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the Science Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards. Contact the federal program officer for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients (see section VII for contact information).

Applicants are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

Contact the NCCOS Scientific Data Coordinator for questions regarding data management and implementing this guidance (see section VII for contact information).

B. Checklist for Required and Requested Elements:

Required elements:

1. SF-424
2. Summary title page (one (1) page maximum)
3. Abstract (one (1) page maximum)
4. Project narrative (five (5) page maximum)
5. Data management plan (one (1) page maximum)
6. References cited
7. Natural resource management letter of support
8. Milestone chart
9. Biographical sketches
10. Current and pending support
11. Accomplishments from prior federal and state support (if none, indicate such)
12. SF-424A (one for the lead institution and one for each subaward and subcontract institution)
13. Budget narratives (one for the lead institution; one for each subaward and subcontract including signed approval)
14. CD-511
15. SF-424B

16. Alphabetized list of collaborators, advisors, and advisees (ONE spreadsheet that includes the list for all investigators)
17. Key Contacts form

Optional elements:
1. Additional letters of support or commitment
2. Indirect costs rate agreements (requested)
3. SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)