NOAA RESTORE Science Program

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL 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

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-NCCOS-2019-2005608

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

Dates: Pre-proposals are required for this Announcement. The deadline for receipt of required pre-proposals at the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) / National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) RESTORE Science Program office is 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on July 30, 2018. Pre-proposals should be submitted by email to noaarestorescience@noaa.gov. The deadline for receipt of full applications is 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on October 29, 2018. Full applications should be submitted through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Pre-proposals and full applications received after the closing time and date will not be accepted.

NOAA will also accept paper applications subject to further details described in this Announcement that are postmarked or provided to a commercial carrier with tracking number and receipt on or before 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on October 29, 2018. Private metered postmarks will not be accepted. Applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their full applications and should notify the federal program officer for this Announcement (refer to Section VII) that they are submitting by paper.

Investigators are advised to submit full applications well in advance of the deadline as a precaution against unanticipated delays. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before submitting application materials. When developing your submission timeline, keep in mind the following information regarding application 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 application 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 application.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this document is to advise the public that NOAA/NOS/NCCOS is soliciting applications for the NOAA RESTORE Science Program for projects of five years in duration with the option for a five year, non-competitive renewal award for high performing projects. This funding opportunity invites applications that propose to identify, track, understand, and/or predict trends and variability in the Gulf of Mexico's living coastal and marine resources and the processes driving them. 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 June 2019, and that projects funded under this Announcement will have a September 1, 2019 start date. Total funding for this competition will be approximately $15 million over five years and approximately six projects may be funded. The minimum individual award amount is approximately $500,000 over five years (an average of $100,000 per year) and the maximum individual award amount is approximately $7.5 million over five years (an average of $1.5 million per year). An additional $15 million may be available for five year, non-competitive renewals for high performing projects.

Electronic Access: The NOAA RESTORE Science Program website (http://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/) furnishes supplementary information. Full applications should be submitted through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov).

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 directed NOAA to prioritize integrated, long-term projects that address current or anticipated marine ecosystem, fishery, or wildlife management information needs.

In developing applications for this Announcement, applicants should keep in mind the Science Program's long-term outcomes. The first outcome is the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem being understood in an integrative, holistic manner. This means focusing on the connections between species, habitats, and ecosystem processes and the cause-and-effect relationships that govern the strength of those connections. The second outcome is using this comprehensive understanding of the ecosystem to guide resource management, including restoration. Resource management can take 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 an understanding of the status of the ecosystem's living coastal and marine resources and the link between those resources and economic activity. To understand the status of living coastal and marine resources, for example, whether a resource is declining, stable, improving, or undergoing a systemic shift, requires knowledge of long-term trends and variability in those resources. If the processes driving the trends and variability in those resources can be understood, then it becomes possible to predict how those resources will change over time and space. This knowledge can be derived from the collection and analysis of long-term data on living coastal and marine resources.

Accordingly, this funding opportunity is designed to support projects that will contribute to our knowledge of the trends and variability in the Gulf of Mexico's living coastal and marine resources and the processes driving them. Consistent with the need for long-term study, these projects will be funded for five years with the option for an additional five years of funding through a non-competitive renewal award. The research findings or products from funded projects are required to be transferred to and applied by resource managers. The length of these awards will allow for long-term relationships between the researchers and the end users, which should facilitate this transfer and application. A decadal plan that describes a ten year approach to the proposed research and its application must be included in all full applications.

For this Announcement, living coastal and marine resources are defined as living organisms, including wildlife, that are found in coastal or marine waters (fresh, estuarine, nearshore, or offshore) or coastal lands and that are also of concern or importance to humans.

2. Priority

To address the need to understand trends and variability in living coastal and marine resources and further develop the scientific foundation for their management in the Gulf of Mexico, this Announcement invites applications that propose to identify, track, understand, and/or predict trends and variability in the Gulf of Mexico's living coastal and marine resources and the processes driving them.

Applications should address one or more of the following three areas of emphasis:

1. Multiple species: Work on multiple species may include, but is not limited to, the investigation of how the trends and variability in multiple species respond to the same driver, trends and variability in food web dynamics, or multi-species stock assessments.
2. Impacts of weather and/or climate events: Work on the impacts of weather and/or climate events should investigate how weather and/or climate events may drive trends and variability for one or more living coastal or marine resource. These weather and climate events may include, but are not limited to, hurricanes, precipitation events, winter storms, heat waves, drought, shifting temperature regimes, changes in sea level, and fluctuations in atmospheric or ocean circulation.
3. Economic activity: Work on economic activity should investigate the relationships between trends and variability in living coastal and marine resources and economic activity. Economic activity may include, but is not limited to, expenditures and revenues; income and employment generated; direct, indirect, and induced economic output, and changes in economic value.

Applicants must clearly identify which area(s) of emphasis they have selected in their application.

Applications must clearly describe how the research relates to one or more issues facing resource managers and how the research findings or products will be applied, including a description of the process for the transfer to and use of research findings or products by the management community. Integrating resource managers into the project team, particularly when planning the research and designing an outreach approach, is encouraged.

Analysis of long-term trends and variability in living coastal and marine resources requires the use of long-term datasets. Yet in the Gulf of Mexico the availability of long-term datasets, especially outside of fisheries and water quality, impedes resource managers' capacity to address pressing resource management issues. Therefore, applicants may approach the collection and use of datasets by proposing to:

- Use existing datasets;
- Collect additional data to complement or extend existing datasets; and/or
- Collect new datasets.

In all cases, applicants must clearly demonstrate how the proposed work will generate research findings or products of significance and utility to resource managers within the first five year period of performance for the project. To ensure this outcome, data interpretation and interaction with resource managers should occur early and often.

Applicants should assemble project teams that span the disciplines and expertise necessary to identify, track, understand, and/or predict trends and variability in the Gulf of Mexico's living coastal and marine resources and the processes driving them in the areas of emphasis identified in their application. The project team should include individuals with expertise in transferring research findings and products to resource managers or a plan for how such expertise will be obtained through partnership. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications with diverse types of institutions (e.g., institutions of higher education; not-for-profit institutions; local, state, territorial, federal, and tribal governments; for-profit organizations) and partners commensurate with the proposed research and its application.

This competition is for five year awards with the option for a five year, non-competitive renewal award for high performing projects. The initial application must include a set of management-driven goals and objectives to be accomplished during the first five year period of performance that include the transfer of findings or products to specified end users who then apply them. The application must also include a decadal plan that should demonstrate

how the initial five years of work could inform and serve as the basis for up to ten years of continuous work.

The proposed research and the resource management issue being addressed must occur in the Gulf of Mexico or its watersheds. 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, the research and its application must focus on a species, habitat, or process that has a direct, significant, and quantifiable impact on the Gulf of Mexico.

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 $15 million and will fund approximately six projects. The minimum individual award amount is approximately $500,000 over five years (an average of $100,000 per year) and the maximum individual award amount is approximately $7.5 million over five years (an average of $1.5 million per year). An additional $15 million may be available for the five year, non-competitive renewals for high performing projects.

### B. Project/Award Period

Full applications must cover an award period of five years and include a decadal plan that outlines the potential scope of the project over 10 years. Projects selected for an initial five year award may be invited to submit a new, non-competitive renewal application for an additional five year award that builds upon the initial five-year project and original decadal plan. Invitations to submit a non-competitive renewal application are at the sole discretion of the Science Program and all decisions will be considered final. The Science Program will use the findings from (1) a quality and relevancy review of the initial five-year project conducted by an expert panel of researchers and resource managers and (2) a review of programmatic, financial, and administrative performance of the initial five-year project to

determine whether an invitation to submit a subsequent five-year non-competitive renewal application is warranted. An invitation to submit a non-competitive renewal application does not obligate the Science Program to select those applications for funding. All non-competitive renewal applications will be subject to independent peer mail review and/or independent peer panel review (see Section V.A). The initial five-year project reviews described above will be made available to the independent peer mail reviewers and/or independent peer panel reviewers and will be considered in their merit review of the renewal application. Funding decisions will be based on the outcome of that review process. If a non-competitive renewal application is selected for funding, it will be appended to the original federal assistance award.

It is anticipated that final recommendations for funding under this Announcement will be made in June 2019, and that projects funded under this Announcement will have a September 1, 2019 start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

In an effort to maximize the use of limited resources, applications 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 application 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 plans to transfer project findings and products to end users, 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 application stating their desire to have the application 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 application. The application

will use the Facilities & Administrative (F&A, or indirect costs) rate associated with the main CI agreement. If the application 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 application stating their desire to have the application 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 the established partnerships with CESUs:

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 (1) the research partnership will carry out or stimulate an activity (e.g., data, products, or services) for a public purpose, and (2) NOAA will be significantly involved in the work.

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

The funding instrument for a selected application 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 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.

Applicants from federal agencies are required to have a co-investigator from at least one non-NOAA entity and it is strongly encouraged that the co-investigator(s) be from a non-federal eligible 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.

Applicants may be investigators on no more than two (2) pre-proposals and subsequent full applications, and may only be the lead investigator on one (1) of them. Investigators, including the lead investigator, may change from a pre-proposal to the full application.

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 applications 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 pre-proposal is required to apply for this Announcement. Full applications that do not have an associated pre-proposal that was submitted by the deadline will not be considered and the full application will be returned to the applicant without review.

Each application must substantially comply with the 18 elements listed under Required Elements in Section IV.B.3.(1)-(18), 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.

## IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application materials are available at http://www.grants.gov as part of the electronic application package, which includes the federal forms. For a preview and for paper applications, access these forms at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1. To request a paper copy of the application materials be sent to you, please contact the NCCOS Grants Administrator:

Laura Golden
1305 East West Hwy
SSMC 4, Station 8219
Silver Spring, MD 20910

B. Content and Form of Application

1. Pre-proposal

A pre-proposal is required to apply for this Announcement. The purpose of the pre-proposal process is to provide information to potential applicants on the relevance of their proposed project to the program priority described in this Announcement (Section I.B.) in advance of preparing a full application. Full applications will be encouraged only for pre-proposals deemed relevant; however, the final decision to submit a full application is made by the investigator. The pre-proposal should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to this competition. The pre-proposal should be no more than five (5) pages in length, single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins and must include, in order, the components listed below. If the below components are not included, the pre-proposal will not be considered and the applicant will not be eligible to submit a full application.

1) Project title.
2) Name(s), phone number(s), email address(s) and institution(s) of all investigators, and identify the lead investigator.
3) Area(s) of emphasis the application intends to address.
4) A description of the resource management issue(s) the application plans to address and its relevance to the this competition.
5) Approximate cost of the five-year project and a brief overview of the budget.
6) Brief summary of the proposed methods for the five-year project, including the approach for transferring project findings and products to end users.
7) Abbreviated decadal plan (i.e., 10 years) that provides (a) how the work accomplished in the first five years will generate additional hypotheses, impact resource management and decision-making, and inform the need for continued support in a subsequent five year period and (b) an overview of the work planned for a subsequent five years that would complement and build upon the work proposed for the initial five years.
8) Rationale and overview of how the research will leverage existing datasets or generate new datasets to address the proposed resource management issue(s).

Submit pre-proposals as an attachment to an email addressed to noaarestorescience@noaa.gov. Please name your pre-proposal file as follows: “2019 - Lead Investigator First Name Last Name.” The deadline for receipt of a pre-proposal for this Announcement is 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on July 30, 2018. Pre-proposals received after the deadline will not be reviewed.

The Science Program will conduct a review of each pre-proposal to determine whether it is responsive to the program priority as detailed in Section I.B. of this funding opportunity. Emails to encourage or discourage a full application will be sent to the lead investigator for each pre-proposal within approximately four weeks after the pre-proposal due date. The final decision to submit a full application will be made by the applicant(s) and institution(s),

regardless of the recommendations of the Science Program regarding the pre-proposal. Late pre-proposals will not be considered and associated full applications will not be reviewed or considered.

2. Application

The provisions for preparing full applications provided here are mandatory. Applications received after the published deadline (see Section IV.D.) or applications that deviate from the prescribed format will be returned to the sender without further consideration. Information regarding this Announcement and additional background information is available on the Science Program home page (http://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/). An example application 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/open-funding-opportunities.

For clarity in the submission of applications, 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. The funding period must always be specified in multi-year awards. This term may also be used to mean budget period. A budget period is typically 12 months.

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.”

Applications with subcontractors/subawards - The lead institution on a collaborative application 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 application must substantially comply with the following 18 elements or it will be

returned to the sender without further consideration. The summary, title page, abstract, project narrative, decadal plan, data management plan, references, biographical sketch, and budget narrative must be single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. The 18 elements are as follows (see Section VIII for a checklist of elements):

1) Standard Form-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 application and is the first required form in the Grants.gov application package.

2) Summary title page (one 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; and the requested funding amounts for each fiscal year with and without ship funding. 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 justification must be submitted for each subaward. For further details on budget information, please see elements 13 and 14 below. Applicants may suggest merit reviewers on a page after the summary title page.

3) One-page abstract: The abstract should appear on a separate single page, headed with the application title, institution(s), investigator(s), total proposed cost (including shiptime, if any), and budget period. The abstract shall include an introduction of the resource management issue(s), rationale, project objectives or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work to be completed. It should be written in the third person. Project abstracts of applications that receive funding may be posted on program related websites.

4) Project narrative: The narrative must be no more than 12 pages. It should thoroughly describe the project and clearly indicate the project's relevance to the program priority for this Announcement (Section I.B.). It should:

(a) Identify which area(s) of emphasis the application intends to address.

(b) Describe the project's goals and objectives and the methods to accomplish them, including a rationale and overview of how the project will leverage or build upon existing datasets or generate new datasets to address the proposed resource management issue(s). Please incorporate required information for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; see Section VI.B.(6)) considerations into this section as appropriate.

(c) Identify your end user(s) and describe how applicable and useable the findings and products of the proposed project will be for them and the broader Gulf of Mexico resource management, science, and stakeholder communities.

(d) Identify the role(s) of each investigator, including a designated lead investigator, and all project collaborators.

5) Decadal Plan: The decadal plan (i.e., 10 years) must be no more than two pages in length. It should provide: (a) a rationale for why the resource management issue(s) to be addressed by the application requires a decade of research and investment; (b) how the applicant(s) will engage the resource management community throughout the 10 years and how they should benefit from the findings and products from the research; (c) how the work accomplished in the first five years will generate hypotheses and inform the need for continued support in a subsequent five year period; and (d) an overview of the work planned for a subsequent five years that would complement and build upon the work proposed in the project narrative for the initial five years.

6) Data management plan: Provide a detailed data management plan (no more than two pages in length) that describes how metadata and data collected as part of the proposed project 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. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. Applicants that propose to collaborate with data centers or networks, except the NCEI, are advised to obtain letters of commitment that affirm the collaboration. Where possible, all applicants are strongly encouraged to use existing data centers and data portals to archive and disseminate their data. Costs associated with use of data centers, except for NCEI, or data archiving may be included in the application budget (see Element 13). Refer to Section VIII.A. for specific Data Management Guidance.

7) 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 12 page project narrative.

8) Milestone chart: Provide the anticipated timelines of major tasks, including data

management deliverables, associated with the proposed project. An example milestone chart that includes a template may be found at https://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/resources. Applicants are encouraged to use this template.

9) Biographical sketch: The lead investigator and co-investigators must provide summaries of up to two pages that include the following:

(a) A listing of professional and academic credentials and mailing address;

(b) A list of up to five publications most closely related to the proposed project and five other significant publications (additional lists of publications, lectures, etc. should not be included); and

(c) A list of up to five archived datasets most closely related to the proposed project and five other significant archived datasets.

10) Current and pending support: Describe all current and pending financial/funding support (e.g., federal, state, not-for-profit, industry) for the lead investigator and co-investigators, including unfunded collaborators making a substantial contribution to the research. Continuing grants must also be included. The capability of the investigator and collaborators to complete the proposed work in light of present 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 project 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) Permits: Provide a list of all applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work. You must respond to this requirement element whether or not permits are required.

12) Accomplishments from prior federal and state support: If any lead investigator or 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 award(s) 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; and

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

13) Budget narrative/justification: In order to allow reviewers to fully evaluate the appropriateness of costs, all applications must include a detailed budget narrative covering the proposed period of performance with a justification to support all proposed budget categories for each fiscal year.

Personnel costs should be broken out by named investigator and number of months and percentage of time requested per year per investigator. Support for each investigator should be commensurate with their stated involvement each year. 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 http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/docs/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf.

Applications 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; 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 narrative(s) should describe the work to be supported and indicate the applicability or necessity to the project. When a collaborator or contractor is known at the time of application, 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) Standard Form (SF)-424A: At time of application submission, all applicants are required to submit a SF-424A Budget Form, which identifies the budget for each fiscal year of the application. Place each fiscal year in separate columns in Section B of page 1 on the SF-424A. NOTE: This revised 424A Section B format is a NOAA requirement that is not reflected in the Instructions for the SF-424A. The budget figures must correspond with the description contained in the budget justification.

Multi-investigator applications 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 each subaward and contractor cost as a separate item in their SF-424A under line item 6.f. Contractual.

15) 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.

16) 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.

17) Alphabetized list of collaborators, advisors, and advisees: Provide ONE list per application 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 in the resumes. 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.

18) Key Contacts Form: At the time of application 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 application.

In summary, multi-investigator applications proposing a subrecipient known in advance MUST provide the following for each proposed subaward: SF-424A, budget justification, signed approval, Current and Pending Support forms for each investigator. Please also submit indirect costs rate agreement for subawards, if applicable (see Optional Elements below).

Likewise, multi-investigator applications proposing 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 18 required elements; these elements are encouraged, but not required (see Section VIII for a checklist of elements):

1) Letters of support or commitment: Letters of support or commitment are strongly encouraged, but not required. In particular, consider providing letters from individuals or partners confirming contributions to and support for the project, such as team members included in the project but not funded in the budget, end users who will be engaged throughout the project and will use the findings and products, and individuals or groups that provide access to data or other needs for the project. End users should describe in their letters of support how they anticipate using project findings and products.

2) Indirect costs rate agreement: Applications 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. Indirect costs may not be applied to ship costs (unless the indirect cost rate agreement states otherwise). An applicant without a federally approved rate should refer to Section IV.F. of this Announcement regarding options.

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 an application. Plus, the forms can be filled out online or offline—your choice.

Grants.gov Workspace also allows applicants and organizations to tailor their application 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 application. This page also contains resources to aid in setting up the workspace and the application submission process.

If you experience submission problems that may result in your application being late, send an e-mail 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 applications due to documented electronic submission problems. NOTE: If more than one submission of an application is performed, the last application 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://www.sam.gov/portal/public/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 http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl. See Section IV.G. for more information.

D. Submission Dates and Times

1. Pre-Proposal

A pre-proposal is required for applying to this Announcement. Submit pre-proposals as an attachment to an email addressed to noaarestorescience@noaa.gov. Please name your pre-proposal file as follows: “2019 - Lead Investigator First Name Last Name.” The deadline for receipt of a pre-proposal for this Announcement is 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on July 30,

2018. Pre-proposals received after the deadline will not be reviewed. Full applications submitted that do not have an associated pre-proposal that was submitted by the deadline will not be considered and the full application will be returned to the applicant without review.

2. Full Application

The deadline for receipt of full applications is 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on October 29, 2018. Applications should be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Applications received after the deadline will be rejected and returned to the sender without further consideration. Investigators submitting applications via Grants.gov are advised to submit well in advance of the deadline.

If use of Grants.gov is not feasible, an applicant is concerned about possible problems associated with the Grants.gov system, or Grants.gov is unable to accept an application electronically in a timely fashion, an applicant may submit a paper copy of their application. Paper applications must include all application elements described in this Announcement, including an SF-424 form with original ink or valid electronic signature and date from an Authorized Organization Representative, and must be stamped with an official U.S. Postal Service postmark or provided to a commercial carrier with tracking number and receipt before 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on October 29, 2018. Private metered postmarks will not be accepted. Applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their applications and should notify the federal program officer for this Announcement (refer to Section VII) that they are submitting by paper. The federal program officer will notify applicants within 48 hours of receipt of paper applications. Due to facilities access restrictions, an applicant seeking to hand deliver an application should contact the the federal program officer for this Announcement (refer to Section VII) to make advance arrangements to receive the application by 3 p.m. on the application closing date. Advance notice of at least 24 hours is recommended to assure that such arrangements can be made.

Late-arriving paper applications will be accepted for review only if the applicant can document that:

1. The application was provided to a delivery service with delivery to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1305 East-West Highway, SSMC4, Mail Station 8219, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910;
2. The application was postmarked or provided to a commercial carrier with a tracking number and receipt by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on the specified closing date; and
3. The application was received at the specified address by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time no later than five business days following the closing date. The applicant is responsible for

notifying the federal program officer for this Announcement (refer to Section VII) of its submission. If an applicant is not notified of receipt of its application by NOAA, the applicant is responsible for contacting the federal program officer for this Announcement and providing documentation that demonstrates the application was provided to the delivery service ahead of the deadline.

Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail ("email") submission of full applications will not be accepted.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications 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 March 2017). For questions, please contact contact the Grants Officer for indirect or facilities and administrative costs (refer to Section VII for contact information).

The Science Program will not fund start up or operational costs for private business ventures and neither fees nor profits will be considered as allowable costs. Ship costs may not be included in indirect cost calculations unless ship costs are calculated within the indirect cost rate of the institution. The Science Program will not pay for ship overhead expenses otherwise. If indirect costs are applied, an approved indirect cost agreement will be required before an application can be recommended for funding.

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 project 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 research will be made by the Science Program. 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 application 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://www.sam.gov/portal/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 application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive up to three email messages from Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their application. In the first 24 to 48 hours after submission, the first email will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors. Only validated applications are

sent to NOAA for review. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive a third email, generally within two days, when the application has been downloaded by NOAA.

## V. Application Review Information

### A. Evaluation Criteria

(a) Importance and Applicability (25 percent): This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For purposes of this competition, the Science Program will evaluate applications based on the following:

- How well the proposed project aligns with the priority and area(s) of emphasis selected by the applicant;
- How well the proposed project reflects the applicant's comprehensive understanding of the resource management issue(s) to be addressed;
- How well the applicant proposes to contribute to our understanding and management of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem and its living coastal and marine resources; and
- The strength of the rationale within the decadal plan for 10 years of sustained investment and research.

(b) Technical and Scientific Merit (30 percent): This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For purposes of this competition, the Science Program will evaluate applications based on the following:

- How clearly the application describes project goals and objectives;
- How feasible, scientifically sound, and innovative the methods are with respect to the application's goals and objectives;
- Whether the application demonstrates full compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws;
- How applicable and useable the findings and products of the proposed project will be for its intended end user(s); and
- Whether the application includes a data management plan including 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, and approximate total volume of data to be collected.

(c) Overall Qualifications of Applicants (15 percent): This ascertains whether the

applicant(s) possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For purposes of this competition, the Science Program will evaluate applications based on the following:

- The capability of the investigator(s) and collaborators to complete the proposed work as evidenced by the accomplishments from past research and its application; previous cooperative work; past performance regarding data management; and timely communication of findings, data, and other research products; and
- Whether the application has a diverse mix of institutions and partners commensurate with the proposed research and its application.

(d) Project Costs (10 percent): The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the needs and time-frame 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 achieving the project’s outcomes. The Science Program will also evaluate the potential impact of the project’s findings and products relative to the cost of the project.

(e) Outreach and Education (20 percent): NOAA assesses whether the proposed work provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For purposes of this competition, the Science Program will evaluate the applicant’s proposed process for transferring project findings and products to Gulf of Mexico end users (e.g., resource managers, scientists, or stakeholders) using the following:

- Whether the application identifies end users for the project’s findings and products;
- How engaged the identified end users are in the project planning and implementation process;
- How effective the proposed plan, which may include training, is for transferring the project’s findings and products to identified end users; and
- How well the applicant proposes to make project findings and products known and available to the broader Gulf of Mexico resource management, scientific, and stakeholder community.

B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full application 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 applications with non-substantive issues that can be easily rectified or cured. Ineligible, incomplete, duplicate, or non-responsive applications may be eliminated from further review.

All applications 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, applications will be evaluated and scored individually by at least three professionally and technically qualified reviewers. Each peer mail reviewer will see only certain individual applications 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) × 30) + (Rating (c) × 15) + (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 and the relative distribution of the scores across the areas of emphasis, a cutoff will be established for applications to proceed to the next stage of review. Depending on the nature and quality of the application pool and the available funding, NOAA expects approximately 40 applications may be sent forward to the independent peer panel, where they will be evaluated and scored individually by the panelists. Applications 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 comprised 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 applications being reviewed. The panel will have access to all mail reviews of applications and will use the mail reviews in discussion and evaluation of the entire slate of applications. The peer panel shall rate the applications using the evaluation criteria provided above. 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 applications. Only the panel scores will be used to rank each application. 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 applications other than to ask clarifying questions and respond to programmatic questions from the reviewers.

The federal program officer will create a ranking of the applications using the average panel scores, recommend the total duration of funding, and recommend the 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 applications, or part(s) of any particular application, and may request that applicants combine projects. In addition, applications that are highly rated by the panel but are not funded in the current competition may be subsequently considered for funding without having to repeat the competitive review process.
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 applications. The Director then sends their final recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official, the Director of NCCOS, for final funding decisions.

If the Science Program's Director position is currently filled under an Intergovernmental Personnel Act agreement, the following procedure is in effect: (1) if the Director's home institution has no application in the recommended list developed by the federal program officer they will review selections of applications to fund from the recommended list, and (2) if the Director's home institution has an application in the recommended list then they will be recused from participating in the selection process and the federal program officer will solicit input from the Science Program's Executive Oversight Board on the broad portfolio of recommendations and submit their final recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official.

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 applications will be held for the required three years, in accordance with current retention requirements, and then destroyed.

C. Selection Factors

Applications 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;
   d. By research areas; and
   e. By project types;
3. Whether this project duplicates projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies or science initiatives;
4. Program priority and policy factors (refer to Section I.B.);
5. Applicant's prior award performance;
6. Partnerships or participation of targeted groups; and
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the grants officer.

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 applications will begin in November 2018. It is anticipated that final recommendations for funding under this Announcement will be made in June 2019. Applicants should use a start date of September 1, 2019.

## 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. It is available at http://go.usa.gov/SNMR. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain Special Award Conditions unique to a project 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 and/or stating other compliance requirements for the award as applicable include. 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 apply 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 is available at https://go.usa.gov/xRW4R.

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 application preparation or application 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)

Applicants are expected to design their projects so that they minimize the potential adverse impact on the environment. NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the NEPA, 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 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_216/216-6A.html and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/nepapub/nepa_documents/RedDont/G-CEQ-GuidanceRegulations.pdf. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist

(e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

Applicants to be recommended for funding will be required to answer relevant questions from the “Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance Applicants" (OMB Control No. 0648-0538; http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf). The federal program officer will determine which questions are relevant to each specific application. Answers must be provided before the application can be submitted for final funding approval.

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts associated with their proposed project. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds may be withheld by the Grants Officer under a Special Award Condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

7. Permits

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all permits and approvals from federal, state, and local governments and private landowners where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of environmental permits must be received by the federal program office prior to release of funding. Failure to apply for and obtain federal, state, and local permits, approvals, or letters of agreement may delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding. In some cases if additional permits and approvals are required after an application is selected, funds may be withheld by the Grants Officer under a Special Award Condition requiring the recipient to submit required permits and approvals.

8. Release of Application Information

Privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, patentable ideas, or trade secrets, disclosure of which may harm the proposer, should be included in applications only

when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project. In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, 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. An application 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 application 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 application or as otherwise authorized by law. Portions of applications 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 applications so the recipient may advise NOAA of such inventions described, or other confidential, commercial or proprietary information contained in the application.

NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded applications, 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.

9. Review of Risk

After applications are proposed 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, specific 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 an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer.

10. Scientific Integrity

The Science Program adheres to the principles of scientific integrity. This policy can be found at; http://nrc.noaa.gov/scientificintegrity.html.

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. All shiptime use must be reported within performance reports.

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, 303-497-5698, frank.parker@noaa.gov.

Grants Administration Information: Laura Golden, NCCOS Grants Administrator, 240-533-0285, laurie.golden@noaa.gov; 1305 East West Hwy, SSMC 4, Station 8219, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

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; 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.

## VIII. Other Information

### A. Data Management Guidance

#### 1. Data Management Plans

Data management plans (see Section IV.B.3.(6)) submitted with Applications 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). The Science Program has held preliminary consultation with NCEI regarding these pending data.

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., NIH 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. Funding recipients should submit discovery metadata meeting NOAA standards and formats documenting these non-NOAA data archives to the federal program officer (see Section VIII for contact information).

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. Definitions of Data Management Terms:

Environmental data are recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as correlative data such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata. Digital audio or video recordings of environmental phenomena (such as animal sounds or undersea video) are included in this definition. Numerical model outputs are included in this definition, particularly if they are used to support the conclusion of a peer-reviewed publication. Data collected in a laboratory or other controlled environment, such as measurements of animals and chemical processes, are included in this definition.

Sharing data means making data publicly visible and accessible in a timely (see below) manner at no cost (or no more than the cost of reproduction), in a format which is machine-readable and based on open standards, along with metadata necessary to find and properly use the data. Data are to be made available in a form that would permit further analysis or reuse: data must be encoded in a machine-readable format, preferably using existing open-standard formats; data must be sufficiently documented, preferably using open metadata standards, to enable users to independently read and understand the data. Data should undergo quality control (QC) and a description of the QC process and results should be referenced in the metadata.

Machine-readable means the data are stored on a computer in a digital format whose structure is well described and which can be read without the aid of a human. An open-standard format is one which does not require proprietary software to be read. Metadata is documentation that is machine-readable and structured according to an open-standard format and which describes the data so that users can search for, access, read, understand, and use the data. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) EXtensible Markup Language (XML) is an acceptable metadata format.

Timely means no later than publication of a peer-reviewed article based on the data, or two years after the data are collected and verified, or two years after the original end date of the grant (not including any extensions or follow-on funding), whichever is soonest, unless a delay has been authorized by the NOAA funding program.

3. 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
3. One-page abstract
4. Project narrative
5. Decadal plan
6. Data management plan
7. References cited
8. Milestone chart
9. Biographical sketch
10. Current and pending support
11. Permits (if none, indicate such)
12. Accomplishments from prior federal and state support (if none, indicate such)
13. Budget narrative/justification (one for the lead institution and one for each subaward and subcontract; include signed approval from each subaward or subcontract institution)
14. SF-424A (one for the lead institution and one for each subaward and subcontract institution)
15. CD-511

16. SF-424B
17. List of collaborators, advisors, and advisees (ONE spreadsheet that lists for all)
18. Key Contacts Form

Optional elements:

1. Letters of support or commitment
2. Indirect costs rate agreement (requested)