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 Act Science Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-NCCOS-2015-2004313

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 required LOIs at the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science / Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research (NCCOS/CSCOR) office is 5 p.m., Eastern Time on January 30, 2015. LOIs should be submitted by email to Mary.Payne@noaa.gov. The deadline for receipt of full applications at the NCCOS/CSCOR office is 3 p.m., Eastern Time on March 17, 2015. Applications should be submitted through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Applications received after the closing date and time will not be accepted. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this document is to advise the public that NOAA/NOS/NCCOS is soliciting research applications from the NOAA Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring, and Technology Program (NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program) for projects typically 1 to 2 years in duration. 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 2015, and that projects funded under this announcement will have a September 1, 2015 start date. Total funding for this research: approximately $2,000,000 to $2,500,000. Approximately 3 to 7 projects are expected to be funded at the level of approximately $200,000 to $400,000 per project.

Electronic Access: The following web sites furnish supplementary information:

NOAA Restore Act Science Program website: http://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council's Restore the Gulf website: http://www.restorethegulf.gov/

Department of the Treasury Interim Final Rule implementing the RESTORE Act: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-08-22/pdf/2014-20102.pdf

Applications should be submitted through Grants.gov, http://www.grants.gov.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

In 2012, the U.S. Congress passed the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE Act) (Pub. L. 112-141). The RESTORE Act transfers 80% of all administrative and civil penalties paid by responsible parties in connection with the Deepwater Horizon incident to a Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund. The RESTORE Act also establishes several programs, funded by the Trust Fund, to aid in the ecological and economic recovery of the Gulf Coast states. In addition to the activities supported by the RESTORE Act, criminal penalties derived from the Deepwater Horizon incident are supporting ecological restoration and science for the Gulf of Mexico.

Under Section 1604 of the RESTORE Act, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was directed to establish a Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring, and Technology Program (NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program) in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This program is to be funded by 2.5% of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Trust Fund plus 25% of the interest accrued on amounts in the Trust Fund. The RESTORE Act directs the RESTORE Act Science Program "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."

The RESTORE Act specifies that NOAA may expend funds for marine and estuarine research; marine and estuarine ecosystem monitoring and ocean observation; data collection and stock assessments; pilot programs for fishery independent data and reduction of exploitation of spawning aggregations; and cooperative research. In addition, the Act states that the priority for fund expenditure should be given to integrated, long-term projects that: (1) build on, or are coordinated with, related research activities; and (2) address current or anticipated marine ecosystem, fishery, or wildlife management information needs. Funding restrictions are listed in Section E.

The NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program represents an opportunity and capacity to help integrate the science efforts across the Gulf into something that would consider the connectivity and entirety of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem and advance overall understanding and management as an integrated system.

Numerous documents have been developed in recent years that identify science needs in the Gulf of Mexico. Many of these documents were produced with extensive stakeholder input and in consultation with resource managers throughout the Gulf states. In developing the goals for this program, these documents were referenced to ensure high priority and recurring needs were captured. The goal presented here was constructed to be responsive to the language of the Act and consistent with science needs identified previously for the region. The NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program will enable the collection and dissemination of scientific information to better inform decision making related to the following goal:

Support the science necessary for better understanding and management of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem, specifically:

healthy, diverse, sustainable, and resilient estuarine, coastal and marine habitats;

healthy, diverse, sustainable, and resilient coastal and marine resources, including fisheries; and

resilient and adaptive coastal communities.

NOAA's interest is to provide timely and high-quality scientific results that can be used to develop alternative management strategies to support the sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem. To meet this goal, highest consideration will be given to applications incorporating management-driven research studies involving both the natural and social sciences, which includes participation by the state or federal resource management community. Because of the complex relationships among land-based activities, watershed/inshore/offshore interactions, and local economies and values, the overall research proposal should consider social and economic aspects in their research as appropriate. Results from funded projects should be applicable to the development of alternative management strategies, and the prediction of changes in the ecosystem in response to such management strategies. Scientific information, syntheses, models, and ecosystem forecasting capabilities resulting from this research should be clearly usable by resource managers to make more informed decisions on management and restoration of the Gulf of Mexico.

B. Program Priorities

1. Background

The current Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) requests proposals for 1- and/or 2-year projects to synthesize current scientific understanding and management needs, supporting the short-term investment priorities listed in Section 3.2 of the Science Plan Framework (http://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/RESTOREScienceProgramFramework_Final_2013_12.pdf)

- Comprehensive inventory and assessment (i.e., strengths/weaknesses) of ongoing ecosystem modeling efforts (conceptual and quantitative);

- Identification of currently available health/condition indicators of Gulf of Mexico ecosystem components, including humans, followed by comparative analysis of strengths and weaknesses and design/testing of additional indicators; and

- Assessment of monitoring and observation needs and development of recommendations to build from existing assets to establish a Gulf wide monitoring and observation network.

These short-term priorities should not be confused with the long-term priorities listed in Section II of the NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program Science Plan. The short-term priorities were developed to provide foundational information for framing Gulf of Mexico ecosystem science priorities, such as ecosystem linkages, processes, and gaps whereas the long-term priorities are intended to support new, innovative research that will advance understanding and better inform management decisions. These short-term priorities were further refined using three topical areas identified as critical needs supporting broad restoration and management efforts in the Gulf of Mexico. The three topical areas include:

i. Ecosystem and Living Marine Resources Management -- There is a recognized need to improve our understanding of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem and advance the scientific foundation for improved fisheries and other living marine resources management. For example, improving our current capabilities in understanding predator-prey relationships, recruitment, and the role of lower trophic levels would all serve to inform stock assessments for federally managed species and protected resources. Integrating habitat, biogeochemical, and physical oceanographic parameters (e.g., current patterns which can influence recruitment success) into assessments and advancing the state of the science for multi-species models and food web dynamics are also areas of need that can improve the scientific underpinnings of fisheries stock assessments and ecosystem models. Similarly, ecosystem modeling suites or ensembles may be used to predict the effects of major management actions (e.g., freshwater and sediment diversions) on coastal and pelagic systems as a whole, providing a tool to integrate species and habitat protection and restoration efforts while supporting adaptive management. Improvements in monitoring capabilities and technology will result in long-term improvements to the quality and quantity of data feeding population assessments and ecosystem models, ultimately improving their reliability and utility as decision-support tools in the Gulf of Mexico.

ii. Climate Change and Extreme Weather Impacts on Sustainability of Restoration -- The impacts of climate change (e.g., sea level rise, salinity changes, landscape changes, temperature increases) or extreme events such as hurricanes are not routinely incorporated into restoration planning. To date, limited scientific predictive guidance has been developed

for the design and adaptive maintenance of restoration projects. In the Gulf, tens of billions of dollars will be expended to construct restoration projects over the next two decades. Key needs of trustee state and federal agencies include determining the types of information that should be incorporated into the design of large-scale restoration projects proposed for the Gulf to ensure the long-term sustainability of the proposed projects in the face of anticipated climate-driven changes and extreme weather in the environment.

iii. Integration of Social/Behavioral/Economic Science into Restoration and Management of the Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem -- Integrating social/behavioral/economic science into the decision making and modeling activities in the Gulf, in close collaboration with the management community, will help to ensure that restoration dollars and management decisions will return the greatest net benefit to society. Social science information and analysis can be used in project planning stages to help identify projects that maximize societal benefits while achieving restoration goals. Further, choosing the appropriate metrics and indicators of community well-being will enable assessment of the outcomes of restoration activities and determine which ones are achieving societal goals, and how they should be modified if they are not. The development and employment of these types of economic and social indicators support an adaptive management approach to Gulf ecosystem restoration. Key needs include determining the connection and trade-offs between ecosystem services and their relationships to ecosystem functions toward a more efficient and effective coastal and fishery management capability and describing the impacts on society and/or the environment as a result of a change in, or loss of, an ecosystem service or function.

The specific research needs identified for these topical areas are defined below by short-term priority (as applicable). Not all topical areas are included under each short-term priority. Proposals must address one or more of the bulleted priorities described in the next section and can span more than one of the short-term Priorities.

2. Priorities

The Program will entertain proposals in the areas listed below. Please note that the focus of the NOA RESTORE Act Science Program will not be on supporting long-term monitoring and observation systems. No new data collection will be supported under this FFO; rather this solicitation focuses on the analysis of existing data and information and recommendations for future utilization and integration.

A. Short-term Priority: Comprehensive inventory and assessment (i.e., strengths/weaknesses) of ongoing ecosystem modeling efforts (conceptual and quantitative):

i. Topical Area-Ecosystem and Living Marine Resources Management: Conduct an up to date inventory, review of applicability/utility, and gap analysis of existing ecosystem models and their potential predictive capabilities of the impacts of habitat, and living marine

resource management actions in the Gulf of Mexico. This evaluation may include models developed for other ecosystems, and an accompanying assessment of applicability and transferability to the Gulf of Mexico.

ii. Topical Area-Climate Change and Extreme Weather Impacts on Sustainability of Restoration: Conduct a literature survey and develop an annotated bibliography of published and unpublished work on climate change and extreme events as they may impact coastal ecosystem restoration projects. This literature survey should include areas outside the Gulf (both US and internationally) and an assessment of applicability and transferability to Gulf of Mexico restoration needs.

B. Short-term Priority: Identification of currently available health/condition indicators of Gulf of Mexico ecosystem components, including humans, followed by comparative analysis of strengths and weaknesses and design/testing of additional indicators:

i. Topical Area-Ecosystem and Living Marine Resources Management: Conduct an up to date inventory, review of applicability/utility, and gap analysis of ecosystem indicators to support sustainable living marine resources management that have been, or could be, applied in the Gulf of Mexico.

iii. Topical Area-Integration of Social/Behavioral/Economic Science into Restoration and Management of the Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem: Use existing assessments of community health and economic indicators to determine their utility in selecting projects that improve our ability to assess Gulf of Mexico restoration success, broader ecosystem sustainability, and provide societal benefits (e.g., ecosystem services). Identify any critical gaps in indicators and determine a path forward.

iii. Topical Area-Integration of Social/Behavioral/Economic Science into Restoration and Management of the Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem: Develop a comprehensive assessment of capabilities to evaluate changes in ecosystem services (economic and non-economic) related specifically to Gulf of Mexico restoration and broader ecosystem sustainability. Identify any critical gaps, including baseline data and models, and determine a path forward to address critical management needs.

C. Short-term Priority: Assessment of monitoring and observation needs and development of recommendations to build off existing assets to establish a Gulf wide monitoring and observation network:

i. Topical Area-Ecosystem and Living Marine Resources Management: Conduct an inventory and evaluation, including recommendations for how to address key gaps going forward, of existing Gulf of Mexico observations and monitoring programs. Propose integration, coordination, governance and implementation strategies that build from existing monitoring programs to form a comprehensive habitat and living marine resource monitoring

system in the future. This may include synthesis and integration of existing data. Examples of data to be considered may include biogeochemical, oceanographic, socio-economic and living marine resources. This topical area should leverage existing assets and data that could lead to the establishment of a Gulf-wide monitoring and observations network that would effectively support a holistic ecosystem-based approach to habitat and living resources management.

ii. Topical Area-Climate Change and Extreme Weather Impacts on Sustainability: Develop a strategy that articulates how existing information could be integrated to assess the impacts of climate change and extreme events on specific types of restoration projects and overall on restoration programs across the Large Marine Ecosystem (Science Plan Framework, Section 4.4.2 [http://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/RESTOREScienceProgramFramework_Final_2013_12.pdf]). This strategy should include an assessment of existing parameters and instrumentation necessary to measure climate change and extreme events as they relate to Gulf restoration projects, their strengths and limitations, and recommendations for how to address key gaps going forward. This data utilization and integration strategy should support trustee agencies' development of adaptive management plans for projects and programs as climate change and extreme events alter physical and biological conditions. This strategy should build on existing observation and monitoring frameworks in 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. NOAA is committed to continual improvement of the grants process and accelerating the award of financial assistance to qualified recipients in accordance with the recommendations of the Business Process Reengineering Team. In order to fulfill these responsibilities, this solicitation announces that award amounts will be determined by the applications and available funding. It is anticipated that total funding for this research will be approximately $2,000,000 to $2,500,000. Approximately 3 to 7 projects are expected to be funded at the level of approximately $200,000 to $400,000 per project.

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific

project or to obligate any 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 being included under the award. Publication of this notice does not obligate any agency to any specific award or to obligate any part of the entire amount of funds available. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.

B. Project/Award Period

Full applications may cover a project/award period up to approximately 2 years.

During the implementation phase of research projects funded under this announcement, regardless of the funding mechanism used, Program personnel will analyze financial statements and progress reports for each continuing project, and will have dialogue with the principal investigators (PIs) and authorized representatives of the recipient institutions to discuss research progress and expected time lines for the remaining award period.

It is anticipated that projects funded under this announcement will have a September 1, 2015 start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Funding instruments available are research project grants and cooperative agreements.

(1) Research Project Grants: A research project grant is one that does not anticipate substantial programmatic involvement by the federal government during the period of performance. Applicants for grants must demonstrate an ability to conduct the proposed research with minimal assistance, other than financial support, from the federal government.

(2) Cooperative Agreements: A cooperative agreement is used when substantial involvement is anticipated between DOC and the recipient during the period of performance and is appropriate when the federal government will assist recipients in conducting the proposed research. The application should be presented in a manner that demonstrates the applicant's ability to address the research problem in a collaborative manner with the federal government or federal researchers. 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.

NOAA will review the applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria. Before issuing awards, NOAA will determine whether a grant or cooperative agreement is the appropriate instrument based upon the need for substantial NOAA involvement in the project. If a cooperative agreement is determined to be the appropriate instrument, the RESTORE Act Science Associate Program Director will participate in important activities, which may include evaluation and selection of applicants for subaward funding, education about and discussion of research activities, participation in meetings, guidance on the Program's philosophy, directions, and priorities, and research strategy discussions.

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. If the grantee is at an institution that has a NOAA cooperative institute (CI), they are allowed to submit applications that reference the CI by attaching a cover letter to the application stating their desire to have the application associated with the CI. This letter should specify the name of the Cooperative Institute, the CI cooperative agreement number, and the NOAA-approved research theme and task that applies to the proposal. The application will use the Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rate associated with the main CI agreement. If the application is selected for funding, NOAA will notify the university that a separate award will be issued with its own award number. However, the award will include two Special Award Conditions (SACs): (1) the existing University/NOAA Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) would be incorporated by reference into the terms of the competitive award, and (2) any performance report(s) for the competitive project 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 submitted through the CI, since the terms of these awards will specify that this is a CI project via the MOA.

Research applications selected for funding from non-federal researchers will be funded through a research project grant or cooperative agreement. Research applications selected for funding from NOAA applicants will be funded through an intra-agency transfer. Non-NOAA federal applicants will be funded through an interagency transfer, 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 legal authority to receive funds from another federal agency. Because this announcement is not proposing to procure goods or services from the applicants, the Economy Act (31 U.S.C. § 1535) is not an appropriate basis. Support may be solely through the RESTORE Act Science Program or partnered with other federal offices and agencies.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, other non-profits, state, local, Indian Tribal Governments, commercial organizations, and U.S. Territories that possess the statutory authority to accept funding for this type of research.

Federal agencies that possess the statutory authority to accept funding for this type of research may apply. Federal agencies are strongly encouraged to collaborate with partners from a non-federal eligible entity, in which case the agency would be collaborators in a multi-institutional submission. If you have additional questions, contact Laura Golden at (301) 713-3338 x151.

The NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program Funding Opportunities will not be used to hire and fund the salaries of any permanent federal employees, but may fund travel, equipment, supplies, and contractual personnel costs associated with the proposed work.

PIs 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, Texas); however, PIs that are not employed by or associated with Gulf of Mexico-based eligible entities are encouraged to collaborate with partners from a Gulf of Mexico-based eligible entity.

Foreign researchers may participate by submitting a subaward through an eligible U.S. entity.

The Department of Commerce (DOC) and NOAA support cultural and gender diversity and encourages women and minority individuals and groups to submit applications to the NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program. In addition, DOC/NOAA is 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. DOC/NOAA encourages applications involving any of the above institutions to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Letters of Intent (LOIs) are required for this announcement. Any applicant that submits a full proposal, but did not submit a LOI by the deadline will not be considered and the proposal will be returned to the proposer without review. Each application must substantially comply with the sixteen elements listed under Required Elements, Section IV.B.2(1)-(16) of this FFO, or it will be returned to sender without further consideration. A checklist with the required and requested application elements can be found in the Section VIII of this FFO. The NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program adheres to the principles of

scientific integrity. NOAA's policy can be found; http://nrc.noaa.gov/scientificintegrity.html. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary federal, state and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize the potential adverse impact on the environment. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they have sufficient environmental documentation to allow program staff to determine whether the proposal is categorically excluded from further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, or whether an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is necessary in conformance with requirements of the NEPA. For those applications needing an Environmental Assessment, affected applicants will be informed after the peer review stage and will be requested to assist in the preparation of a draft of the assessment (prior to award). Failure to apply for and/or obtain federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analysis where necessary (e.g., NEPA environmental assessment) will also delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Laura Golden

1305 East West Hwy

SSMC 4, Station 8219

Silver Spring, MD 20910

B. Content and Form of Application

1. Letters of Intent (LOI)

The purpose of the LOI process is to provide information to potential applicants on the relevance of their proposed project and the likelihood of it being funded in advance of preparing a full application. Full applications will be encouraged only for LOIs deemed relevant, however, the final decision to submit a full proposal is made by the investigator. When an applicant submits a full proposal, but not a LOI by the deadline, the proposal will not be considered and will be returned to the proposer without review. The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the targeted competition. The LOI should be no more than two pages in length, single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins and should include in order the components listed below. If the below components are not included, the LOI risks a delayed response and may not be considered.

1) Identification of the Competition that is being targeted in the LOI.

2) Specification of a tentative project title in the LOI.

3) Name(s), phone number(s), email address(s) and institution(s) of all PI(s), and specification of which individual is the lead PI.

4) Approximate cost of the project.

5) Statement of the problem and its relevance to the targeted competition.

6) Brief summary of work to be completed and the methodology to be used.

The Associate Program Director from the RESTORE Act Science Program will review each LOI to determine whether it is responsive to the Program's goals and priorities, as advertised in this notice. Letters or emails to encourage or discourage a full application are scheduled to be sent out two weeks after the LOI due date. In general, full proposals will be encouraged if they show evidence of application to NOAA's RESTORE Act Science Program priorities as detailed in Section I.B. of this FFO. The final decision to submit a full application will be made by the applicant's PI, regardless of the recommendations of the Associate Program Director regarding the LOI. Late LOIs will not be considered and their associated full applications cannot be submitted.

2. Application

The provisions for preparing full applications provided here are mandatory. Applications received after the published deadline (refer to DATES) 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 are available on the NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program home page (http://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/). An example application can be found at: http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/docs/sample_application.pdf and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are also available.

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

Funding and/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, using fixed year funds. This term may also be used to mean budget period. A budget period is typically 12 months.

Period of Performance - The period 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 multi- institutions - Collaborative applications with more than one institution requesting direct funding by NOAA. Each multi-institution must send their application documents to the lead institute for submission via grants.gov. If funded, each institution receives a separate award from NOAA.

Applications with subcontractors - Collaborative applications with only the lead institution requesting direct funding by NOAA. If funded, the lead institution will disburse funds to the subcontractor or sub recipient institutions.

Required Elements

Each application must substantially comply with the following sixteen elements or it will be returned to sender without further consideration. The Summary, Title page, Abstract, Project Description, References, Biographical Sketch, Budget Narrative and Collaborators List must be single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. The sixteen elements are as follows:

(1) Standard Form 424. At the time of application submission, 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. Multi-institutional applications must include signed SF-424 forms from all institutions requesting direct funding. Original signatures are required on SF-424 forms provided to a lead institution by a collaborating institution for grants.gov submission.

(2) Summary title page. One page maximum. The Summary title page identifies the project's title, starting with the acronym: RESTORE SCIENCE and the PI's name and affiliation, complete address, phone, and email information. The requested funding amounts for each fiscal year with and without ship funding should be included on the Summary title page. Multi-institution applications must also identify the lead investigator for each institution and the requested funding for each fiscal year for each institution on the title page. Lead investigator and separate budget information are 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 (14) Standard Form SF-424A and (11) Budget narrative/justification of this part.

(3) One-page abstract/project summary. The summary (abstract) should appear on a separate single page, headed with the proposal title, institution(s), investigator(s), total proposed cost and budget period. It should be written in the third person. The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly and allows the respondents to summarize these key points in their own words. Project summaries of applications that receive funding may be posted on program related websites.

The project summary shall include an introduction of the problem, rationale, scientific objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work to be completed.

(4) Project description. The description of the proposed project must include narratives of the Proposed Research and not be more than 17 pages in length including 2 pages for the new data sharing plan.

The Proposed Research narrative must be thorough and explicitly indicate its relevance to the program goals and scientific priorities by:

(a) Identifying the topic that is being addressed by the proposal;

(b) Describing the proposed scientific objectives and research activities in relation to the present state of knowledge in the field and in relation to previous and current work by the proposing PI(s). Each award requires a project description that can be easily divided into annual increments of meaningful work representing solid accomplishments.

(c) Discussing how the proposed project lends value to the program's goals;

(d) Identifying the function of each PI. The Lead PI(s) will be responsible for communicating with the Associate Program Director on all pertinent verbal or written information.

(e) Providing a detailed data management plan that describes how metadata and data collected as part of the project will be disseminated to the broader community, and plans for longer term archiving of these data (no more than 2 pages).

1. PIs that propose to collaborate with data centers or networks are advised to obtain letters of commitment that affirm the collaboration. Where possible, all PIs are strongly encouraged to use existing data centers and data portals to archive and disseminate their data. Costs associated with use of data centers, or data archiving, should be included in the application budget. See the Section on the NOAA Data Reporting requirements below (Section VI.C.).

2. The data management plan should also include a description and justification of data funding needs to align with the Data/Information sharing plan for preservation,

documentation, and sharing of data, samples, physical collections, and any other science-related products.

The data management plan should include, at a minimum, publications and outputs, and data/information sharing experience from any prior, or ongoing, Gulf Coast Restoration Council, the Gulf State's Center(s) of Excellence, NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program funding, and any other science or restoration activities that are in the Gulf of Mexico, e.g., the National Academies of Science Gulf Research Program, the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund projects.

(5) References cited. Reference information is required. Each reference must include the names of all authors in the same sequence they appear in the publications, the article title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publications. 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 17 page proposal descriptions.

(6) Milestone chart. Provide time lines of major tasks covering the duration of the proposed project.

(7) Biographical sketch. All PIs and co-PIs must provide summaries of up to 2 pages that include the following:

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

(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, and the rest should not be included.

(8) Current and pending support. Describe all current and pending financial/funding support (e.g., federal, state, not-for-profit, industry) for all PIs and co-PIs, 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 CSCOR web site for your use: http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/applicants/forms. You must respond to the requirement whether or not you have any current and/or pending support.

(9) 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

(10) Accomplishments from Prior Federal and State Support. If any PI or co-PI identified on the project has received federal or state funding awards in the past five years for research relevant to this FFO, 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) a brief description of outputs and outcomes; and

f) as appropriate, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

Reviewers will be asked to comment on the quality of the prior work described in this section of the proposal. You must respond to the requirement whether or not you have accomplishments from prior relevant support.

(11) Budget narrative/justification. In order to allow reviewers to fully evaluate the appropriateness of costs, all applications must include a detailed budget narrative with a justification to support all proposed budget categories for each fiscal year. Personnel costs should be broken out by named PI and number of months and percentage of time requested per year per PI. Support for each PI should be commensurate with their stated involvement each year in the milestones chart (see Section IV.B.2.(6) Milestone chart).

Any unnamed personnel (graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, technicians) should be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to PI 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. Proposals must include sufficient resources to analyze, interpret, publish, and archive data and results of the plan (see data policy Section VI.C. Reporting). For additional information concerning each of the required categories and appropriate level of disclosure please see http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/applicants/requirements.

A separate budget justification is required for each institution in a multi-institutional project and for each subcontract. Signed approval from each subaward and contractor's institution is also required.

(12) CD 511. Certification Regarding Lobbying. Lead institutions can submit these forms through the grants.gov CD511 document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on documents from the submitting institution. However, these forms submitted through grant.gov as "Optional Documents" must have hard (i.e., written) signatures that are provided to the lead institution for submission.

(13) SF 424B. Assurances - Non-Construction Programs. Lead institutions can submit these forms through the grants.gov SF 424B document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on documents from the submitting institutions. However, these forms submitted through grants.gov as "Optional Documents" must have hard (i.e., written) signatures that are provided to the lead institution for submission.

(14) Standard Form 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 proposal. Place each fiscal year in separate columns in Section B of page 1 on the SF424A. (Note that 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 descriptions contained in the proposal. Multi-institution applications must include a SF-424A for each institution, and multi-investigator applications using a lead investigator with a subaward approach must submit a SF-424A for each subaward. Each subaward should be listed as a separate item.

Provide separate budgets for each subaward and contractor regardless of the dollar value and indicate the basis for the cost estimates. Describe products/services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. List all subaward and contractor costs under line item 6.f. contractual on the SF-424A. Signed approval from the institution of each subaward and contractor must be provided. Indirect cost may not be applied to ship costs.

(15) Provide one list that includes all (US and Foreign) collaborators, advisors, and advisees for each investigator (PI and co-PIs, postdocs, and subawardees), complete with corresponding institutions. Submit only one combined and alphabetized list per application. 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 advisor or postdoctoral sponsor. Advisors include an individual's own graduate and postgraduate advisors. Unfunded participants in the proposed study should also be listed (but not their collaborators). This information is critical for identifying potential conflicts of interests and avoiding bias in the selection of reviewers.

(16) Key Contact Form. At the time of application submission, all applicants must submit the Key Contacts form. This form can be found on the NCCOS/CSCOR website: http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/docs/key_contacts_form.pdf. This form identifies the official applicant contacts.

Application format and assembly. Applications submitted via grants.gov APPLY should follow the format guidelines below:

Attachments must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat PDF format to maintain format integrity. Please submit the required documents as described below. Follow the instructions found on the grants.gov web site for application submission into the grants.gov system. All required forms that do not have specific placeholders in the Mandatory Document box must be submitted in the Optional Form box as Other Attachments. Attach and submit the file labeled with the name of the institution - budget narrative, project description, milestone chart, etc. For a collaborative application, repeat this procedure for each collaborating institution.

Save your completed application package with two different names before submission to avoid having to re-create the package should you experience submission problems. 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. Their phone number is posted on the grants.gov web site. The Associate Program Director associated with the Request For Applications will use programmatic discretion in accepting applications due to documented electronic submission problems. PLEASE 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.

In addition to the sixteen required elements, it is requested that the indirect rate agreement be provided upon application submission. It is allowable for applicants to suggest merit reviewers on a page after the Summary Title Page. These forms can be uploaded into the Optional Form box under Other Attachments in grants.gov.

Collaborative applications must be submitted by the lead institution and the following documents must be attached to the application for each collaborating institute:

Multi-institutional submissions - SF424, SF424A, Budget Justification, SF424B, CD511, Key Contacts and current and pending support are required. PLEASE NOTE: Signed SF424s from each applicant requesting direct funding is a submission requirement. We also request submission of the indirect rate agreement for each applicant.

Sub-contractor submissions - SF424A, Budget Justification, and current and pending support are required. Signed approval from the institution of each subaward and contractor

must be provided. We also request submission of the indirect rate agreement for each sub-contractor.

PLEASE NOTE: Permits, accomplishments, Biographical sketches and the collaborators list must also be supplied to the lead institution in order for them to be combined within the lead application information.

Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, applicants are required to use the System for Award Management (SAM - formally the Central Contractor Registration - CCR) capabilities accessible through the U.S. Department of Treasury's System for Award Management (https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/), Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010), http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl

C. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for receipt of required Letters of Intent at the NCCOS/CSCOR office is 5 p.m., Eastern Time on January 30, 2015. LOIs should be submitted by email to Mary.Payne@noaa.gov. The deadline for receipt of full applications at the NCCOS/CSCOR office is 3 p.m., Eastern Time on March 17, 2015. Applications should be submitted through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Note that late-arriving hard copy 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 & Atmospheric Administration, 1305 East-West Highway, SSMC4, Mail Station 8219 8th Floor, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-328;

2) Delivery was guaranteed by 3 p.m., Eastern Time on the specified closing date; AND

3) The application was received in the NCCOS/CSCOR office by 3 p.m., Eastern Time no later than 2 business days following the closing date.

Investigators submitting applications electronically are advised to submit well in advance of the deadline.

IMPORTANT: All applicants, both electronic and paper, should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicant schedules for delivery of the application. Electronic

applicants are advised that volume on grants.gov is currently extremely heavy, and if grants.gov is unable to accept applications electronically in a timely fashion, applicants are encouraged to exercise their option to submit applications in paper format. Paper applicants should allow adequate time to ensure a paper application will be received on time, taking into account that guaranteed overnight carriers are not always able to fulfill their guarantees.

LOIs or applications received after the deadlines, will not be reviewed.

D. 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.

E. Funding Restrictions

1. General Funding Restrictions: Indirect Costs: Regardless of any approved indirect cost rate applicable to the award, the maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which DOC will reimburse the recipient shall be the lesser of (a) the line item amount for the federal share of indirect costs contained in the approved budget of the award, or (b) the federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on the indirect cost rate approved by a cognizant or oversight federal agency and current at the time the cost was incurred, provided the rate is approved on or before the award end date. NCCOS/CSCOR will not fund start up or operational costs for private business ventures and neither fees nor profits will be considered as allowable costs. 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 Program (discussed in Section I.A.) 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 and will apply the following criteria for all research proposed to the Program under this Federal Funding Opportunity:

If the research being proposed is captured within any of the following three categories, then it is NOT eligible for funding under the RESTORE Act Science Program:

Substantially part of work that is currently tracked in NOAA Line Office Annual Operating Plans (AOPs), any grant or other funding mechanism documentation, or other budgetary or program management documents (using appropriated funds); or

Substantially part of work that has been proposed in a NOAA budget formulation program change summary (regardless of success) or other budget formulation documents at the NOAA Line Office level since July 2012 (using appropriated funds); or

Substantially duplicative of efforts implemented by NOAA, i.e., conducted by NOAA federal scientists or contract scientists on behalf of NOAA (using appropriated funds).

Final determination of the eligibility of the proposed research will be made by the Program.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Full applications must include evidence of linkages between the scientific questions and management needs.

Please refer to important information in submission dates and times (Section IV.D.) above to help ensure your application is received on time.

By receiving funding from the NOAA RESTORE Science Act Program, all applicants agree to specified requirements outlined in this FFO (see references cited under Section VI.C. Reporting of this document).

Applications submitted in response to this announcement are strongly encouraged to be submitted through the grants.gov web site. The full funding announcement for this program is available via the grants.gov web site: http://www.grants.gov. This announcement will also be available by contacting the program official identified below. You will be able to access, download and submit electronic grant applications for NOAA programs in this announcement at http://www.grants.gov. The closing dates will be the same as for the paper submissions noted in this announcement. NOAA strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through grants.gov.

Applicants must contact the Grants Administrator, Laura Golden, at 301-713-3338 x 151 for non-electronic submission instructions.

Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of full applications will not be accepted.

All multi-institutional proposals must be submitted through grants.gov via the lead institution.

Electronic submissions should be sent via grants.gov. Paper submissions should be sent to:

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

1305 East West Highway

SSMC 4, Station 8219

Silver Spring, MD 20910

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goal: 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, plans for preservation, documentation, sharing of data, multimedia and survey or data collections should be adequately and clearly outlined and this information will be used in the evaluation process. (30 percent)

2. Technical/scientific merit: This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. (30 percent)

3. Overall qualifications of applicants: This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. This includes the capability of the investigator and collaborators to

complete the proposed work as evidenced by past research accomplishments, previous cooperative work, timely communication, and the sharing of findings, data, and other research products. (15 percent)

4. Project costs: The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. (10 percent)

5. Outreach and education: NOAA assesses whether this project 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 applicant must demonstrate clear connections to relevant management and restoration entities that will use the results of the proposed work and define the specific products, outcomes, and timing of the proposed work that will be used in achieving this goal. (15 percent)

B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. All applications will be evaluated and scored individually by a group of at least three professionally and technically qualified reviewers in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by independent peer mail review and/or by independent peer panel review. Both federal and non-federal experts may be used in this process. The peer mail reviewers and/or peer panel reviewers will be several individuals with expertise in the subjects addressed by particular applications. Each mail reviewer will see only certain individual applications within his or her area of expertise, and score them individually on a scale of one to five, where scores represent respectively:

Excellent (5),

Very Good (4),

Good (3),

Fair (2), and

Poor (1).

The merit reviewer applies a rating of 1 – 5 to each criterion and the total score is calculated from the weights. For example: If the criterion is given 40% weight and the reviewer give this criterion 4 out of 5 then the criterion is scored as a 32. (Rating = 4 out of 5, Percentage = 40; Total = 4/5 X 40 = 32). Each criterion is scored in the same way. All scores are added together and the final score is categorized as follows: Rating: 5 Excellent = 100 - 90; 4 Very Good = 89 - 80; 3 Good = 79 - 70; 2 Fair = 69 - 60; and 1 Poor = 59 and below.

The Associate Program Director will neither vote nor score applications as part of the independent peer panel nor participate in discussion of the merits of the applications, but may respond to programmatic questions from the panel.

Those applications receiving an average panel score of "Fair" or "Poor" will not be given further consideration, and applicants will be notified of non-selection. For the applications scored by the reviewers as either "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Good," the Associate Program Director will (a) create a ranking of the applications to be recommended for funding using the average panel scores, (b) determine the total duration of funding for each application, and (c) determine the amount of funds available for each application subject to the availability of fiscal year funds. Awards may not necessarily be made in rank order (refer below to Section V.C). In addition, applications rated by the panel as either "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Good" that are not funded in the current fiscal period, may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without having to repeat the competitive review process.

Recommendations for funding, developed by the Associate Program Director, are sent first to the CSCOR Director to validate the integrity of the competitive process, and then to the Program Director for review. The Program Director then sends his/her recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official, the Director of NCCOS, for final funding decisions. The Program Director will solicit input from the Program's Executive Oversight Board on the broad portfolio of recommendations; there will be no review by the Executive Oversight Board of individual proposals.

If the Program Director position is filled under an Intergovernmental Personnel Act agreement, then the following comes into effect: (1) if the Program Director's home institution has no proposal in the recommended list developed by the Associate Program Director, he/she will review selections of proposals to fund from the recommended list, and (2) if the Program Director's home institution has a proposal in the recommended list, then he/she will be recused from the decision.

In making final funding decisions, the Selecting Official will award in rank order from the peer-review process unless the proposal(s) is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the selection factors listed below in Section V.C below and based on a review of the full portfolio by the Executive Oversight Board.

PIs may be asked to modify work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), verbatim anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the applicant. Declined applications will be held in NCCOS/CSCOR for the required 3 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/distribution of funds:

a. Geographically

b. By type of institutions

c. By type of partners

d. By research areas

e. By project types

3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies.

4. Program priorities and policy factors. Refer to Section I.B.

5. Applicant's prior award performance.

6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups.

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 March 2015. Applicants should use a start date of September 1, 2015.

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.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 17, 2012 (77 FR 74634) are applicable to this solicitation. A copy of the notice may be obtained at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/. Please note that on December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance titled, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (OMB Uniform Guidance)" (https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards), which streamlines the language from eight existing OMB circulars, including Cost Principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-122) and administrative requirements (OMB Circulars A-102 and A-110), into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. Once adopted, the OMB Uniform Guidance will supersede DOC's uniform administrative requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24. The DOC expects to adopt the OMB Uniform Guidance by December 26, 2014, meaning that the OMB Uniform Guidance will apply to all new awards and to additional funding to existing awards made after December 26, 2014, including to awards expected to be awarded under this announcement. In addition, the audit requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance will apply to audits of non-federal entities beginning on or after December 26, 2014. Therefore, applicants should familiarize themselves with the OMB Uniform Guidance. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the OMB Uniform Guidance may be found at https://cfo.gov/cofar/.

Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals that are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. 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_216/216-6.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.

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. 064-0538). The Program Manager will determine which questions are relevant to each specific proposal. 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 or environmental impact statement, if NOAA determines such documentation 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 of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

C. Reporting

All performance (i.e., technical progress) reports shall be submitted electronically through the Grants Online system unless the recipient does not have internet access. In that case, performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Associate Program Director. All financial reports shall be submitted in the same manner. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

Data Reporting Requirement

Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

1. A Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as part of the Project Description. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information 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; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data.

2. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data.

3. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

Any data collected in projects supported by the RESTORE Act Science Program should be delivered to a National Data Center (NDC), such as the National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC), in a format to be determined by the institution, the NDC, and the Associate Program Director. Information on NOAA NDC's can be found at http://www.nodc.noaa.gov/. It is the responsibility of the institution for the delivery of these data; the DOC will not provide additional support for delivery beyond the award. Additionally, all biological cultures established, molecular probes developed, genetic sequences identified, mathematical models constructed, or other resulting information products established through support provided by the RESTORE Act Science Program are encouraged to be made available to the general research community at no or modest handling charge (to be determined by the institution, Associate Program Director, and DOC).

Proprietary or Privileged Information

Patentable ideas, trade secrets, privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, disclosure of which may harm the proposer, should be included in proposals only when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project. Such information should be clearly marked in the proposal or included as a separate statement accompanying the proposal and should be appropriately labeled with a legend such as, "The following is [proprietary or confidential] information that [name of proposing organization] requests not be released to persons outside the Government, except for purposes of review and evaluation." While NOAA will make every effort to prevent unauthorized access to such material, it is not responsible or in any way liable for the release of such material.

Release of Grantee Proposal Information

A proposal that results in a NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program 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. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, NOAA will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for merit review of the proposal or as otherwise authorized by law.

Portions of proposals resulting in grants that contain descriptions of inventions in which either the Government or the grantee owns a right, title, or interest (including a non-exclusive 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 grantee of receipt of requests for copies of funded proposals so the grantee may advise NOAA of such inventions described, or other confidential, commercial or proprietary information contained in the proposal.

NOAA Administrative Order 215-101 https://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/nao_212-15.php

NOAA Data Sharing Policy for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Procedural Directive

https://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php

OMB Circular A-16 - Coordination of Geographic Information, and Related Spatial Data Activities

OMB Circular A-130 - Management of Federal Information Resources

Data_Sharing_Policy_for_NOAA_Grants_general_information.ppt¿ (https://geo-ide.noaa.gov/wiki/index.php?title=Main_Page)

FAQ for Data Sharing for NOAA Grants PD (https://geo-ide.noaa.gov/wiki/index.php?title=FAQ_for_Data_Sharing_for_NOAA_).

Felony and Tax Certifications for Corporations.

In accordance with current federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives certifying that the corporation has no federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any federal law.

VII. Agency Contacts

Technical Program Information: Dr. Becky Allee, Science Planning Team Lead, 228.688.1701, Internet: becky.allee@noaa.gov

Grants Administration Information: Laura Golden, NCCOS/CSCOR Grants Administrator, 301-713-3338/extension 151, Internet: Laurie.Golden@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Collection of information requirements

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

This notification involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 4040-0004, 4040-0006, 4040-0007 and 0348-0046.

FOIA- Freedom of Information Act

Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or

Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

Checklist for Required and Requested Documents:

SF-424

Title Page

Abstract

Project Description

References

Milestone Chart

Bio Sketch

Current and Pending Support

Permits (if none, say so)

Accomplishments for prior Federal and State support (if none, say so)

Budget Narrative and Justification (One for the lead institution and each institution in a multi-institutional project and/or each subcontract).

CD-511

SF-424B

SF-424A (One for the lead institution and each institution in a multi-institutional project and/or each subcontract)

Alphabetized Collaborator List (ONE list for all)

Key Contact form

Signed Approval from subaward/contractor institutes

Indirect Rate Agreement (requested)