FY2020 NOAA Ruth Gates Coral Restoration Innovation Grants

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY2020 NOAA Ruth Gates Coral Restoration Innovation Grants

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2020-2006361

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.482, Coral Reef Conservation Program

Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 20, 2020.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Ruth Gates Coral Restoration Innovation Grants is a tribute to the work and life of Dr. Ruth Gates and aims to build on her efforts to address the decline in coral reefs through innovative science and research. The work funded through this program is aimed at promoting long-term survival of corals by supporting the science needed to incorporate resilient corals into restoration activities and to enhance the efficiency of asexual and sexual coral restoration. The principal objectives of this grant program are to support innovative coral restoration research, to apply these innovative techniques to create resilient, genetically diverse, and reproductively viable populations of coral species, and to support the development of creative methods to improve coral outplanting efficiency and build resilient coral reef ecosystems. Projects funded through the Ruth Gates Restoration Innovation Grants will support: 1) research and development of interventions to improve coral resilience to environmental stressors, and 2) research, development, and field-testing of novel techniques to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of coral population enhancement.

Proposals selected for funding through this solicitation will be funded through cooperative agreements. One-year or multi-year awards up to three funding years will be considered. The funding for the second and/or third year (FY21 and/or FY22) will be estimated in the FY20 application, with final amounts determined in future years, pending future federal appropriations and progress towards project milestones. Proposals for multi-year funding should outline the costs expected for year two and/or year three in detail in this proposal (see Section IV.B for more details about the budget narrative for multi-year awards). NOAA anticipates typical federal funding for awards will range from $100,000-$250,000/year for a total $100,000 to $750,000 over one to three years. NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less

than $100,000 or more than $1,000,000 total over three years. NOAA anticipates approximately $500,000 will be available under this Announcement in FY20. Funds will be administered by the Office of Habitat Conservation in conjunction with the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP). Funding may be divided among the U.S. Pacific and Atlantic regions to maintain the geographic balance of the CRCP FY20 portfolio overall, as required by the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000. NOAA anticipates an additional $500,000 to $1,500,000 may be available in the next two years (FY21 - FY22) to support selected awards. Awards are dependent upon the amount of funds Congress makes available to NOAA in the FY20 - FY22 budgets.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA Ruth Gates Coral Restoration Innovation Grants solicitation is to support necessary research and apply innovations in restoration and intervention techniques in order to promote the persistence of resilient, genetically diverse, and reproductively viable coral populations and to support the development of creative methods to improve coral outplanting efficiency and build resilient coral reef ecosystems. This grant program is intended to promote long-term persistence of corals by not only supporting innovative research and restoration techniques but by encouraging collaboration between research scientists and management entities to ensure these innovative techniques align with predicted needs of U.S. states and territories in the face of environmental changes.

Coral reefs and associated seagrass and mangrove communities are among the most complex and diverse ecosystems on earth. They support important fishing and tourism industries, protect coasts from wave and storm damage, build tropical islands, contain an array of potential pharmaceuticals, and provide essential services like food security, livelihood, and culture, among other benefits.
As shallow-water, near shore communities, coral reef ecosystems are ecologically linked to adjacent watersheds and are highly vulnerable to human activity. Stressors in the coral reef environment include poor water quality from runoff and inadequate sewage treatment, sedimentation, destructive fishing practices, recreational overuse and misuse, and impacts from climate change, including changes in ocean chemistry.

In 2018, the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) established a NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan-2018) which uses a resilience-based management approach, focused on conservation that supports the ability of corals to withstand and recover from stress. The Strategic Plan-2018 focuses efforts on four areas of work: improving fisheries sustainability, reducing land-based sources of pollution, increasing resilience to climate change impacts, and restoring viable coral populations. A copy of the Strategic Plan-2018 is available at https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/strategic_plan2018/.

NOAA recognized that conventional management (e.g., fisheries management and water quality control) is insufficient on its own to foster coral recovery in the short- to medium-term given the magnitude of environmental change outpacing corals’ natural ability to adapt. As such, NOAA commissioned the National Academy of Sciences to convene a panel of

experts to review and evaluate novel ecological and genetic coral intervention strategies, such as stress-hardening, translocation of non-native stocks, manipulation of symbiotic partnerships, selective breeding, and genetic modification, that have the potential to enhance recovery and the sustainability of corals under near-future environmental scenarios. A Research Review of Interventions to Increase the Persistence and Resilience of Coral Reefs (https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25279/a-research-review-of-interventions-to-increase-the-persistence-and-resilience-of-coral-reefs) provides a detailed description of coral interventions including their benefits and tradeoffs.

Given the accelerating pace of threats to shallow-water coral reef ecosystems, NOAA recognizes the need to support the development and testing of innovative coral interventions and to improve outplanting techniques. Enhancing coral resilience and improving outplanting efficiency will be critical to the long-term success of coral populations. NOAA has developed program priorities for this competition to align with the National Academies of Science review and the CRCP Strategic Plan-2018.

B. Program Priorities

The NOAA Ruth Gates Coral Restoration Innovation Grants supports research and development to enhance coral resilience and improve the success and efficiency of shallow-water (<30 m [<90 ft] depth) coral reef restoration in an increasingly variable climate. Applicants must be U.S. based, but may have international partners; however, all in-water work must take place within the U.S. coral jurisdictions (i.e., American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands). For in-water activities that pilot novel restoration techniques or apply innovative resilience methods, applicants should partner with restoration practitioners and/or local resource management agencies to ensure that the work meets their needs, fills a gap, and/or addresses identified priorities. Applicants should provide evidence of support (e.g., letter of support, co-principal investigator, or other concrete indication of collaboration) for the project by relevant representatives of states or other government authority.

The intent of this grant program is to support the development of novel coral reef research and restoration technologies to enhance coral survival and/or efficiencies in restoration outplantings. Applications should focus on 1) novel research to increase coral resilience, 2) building on innovative laboratory research efforts to move coral intervention science towards field pilot-testing, and/or 3) explore new approaches to increase the efficiency of in-water coral restoration. Project activities may include laboratory-based work, small-scale pilot testing of innovative interventions or novel outplanting methods, or a combination of these. All proposals should include information on how activities and project milestones will be assessed for success.

Projects should fall within these two categories:
1.) Research and develop innovative coral intervention methods. Proposals in this category should focus on techniques that improve coral resilience to threats, such as ocean acidification, warming ocean temperatures, stronger and more frequent storms, or coral disease in order to promote long-term persistence of reproductively viable coral populations. Proposals are encouraged to address the interventions in the National Academy of Science's research review (see Section 1.A., above); however, the following interventions are higher priorities for this announcement:
* Increase diversity of coral populations through assisted gene flow;
* Improve techniques to support future interventions (e.g., identify stress tolerant coral colonies and/or genes and capture and seeding of coral gametes and larvae); or
* Increase thermal tolerance of corals (e.g., develop stress-hardening techniques or manipulate algal symbionts).

2.) Research and develop innovative coral restoration methods to significantly improve the success of outplanting corals at various life-stages, including asexual and sexual propagation strategies. Priority will be given to proposals that address one or more of the following issues:
* Increase the ability to scale up in-situ asexual coral restoration efforts by improving techniques for transporting live corals and/or developing methods to significantly improve efficiency and cost effectiveness of coral outplant deployment;
* Develop and test methods to improve post-settlement survival for sexual propagation techniques; or
* Determine ways to improve coral survival through multi-species restoration such as co-planting seagrass beds and corals as a way to reduce the effects of ocean acidification.

Proposals solely focused on coral restoration that do not address one of the priorities above are not a priority under this program. Expenditures on large equipment (e.g., boats and coral raceways), real property (e.g., land and buildings), capital expenditures (e.g., improvements, lab development, and general purpose equipment), and/or infrastructure are not a priority for funding under this program. Additionally, travel supported through this program must be directly related to the implementation of activities described in the project narrative.

The amount of funding for each award will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for each project, the merit and ranking of the proposals and individual tasks/projects. Federal funds have not yet been appropriated for this program, and there is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this notice does not obligate NOAA to provide any

available funds to projects.

C. Program Authority

Section 6403 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 6401-6409.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

One-year or multi-year awards up to three funding years will be considered, and recipients of multi-year awards will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years. NOAA anticipates typical federal funding awards will range from $100,000 to $750,000 over one to three years. NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than $100,000 or more than $1,000,000 over three years.

NOAA anticipates approximately $500,000 will be available under this Announcement in FY20. Dependent on the level of funding made available by Congress, NOAA anticipates an additional $500,000 to $1,500,000 may be available over the next two years (FY21 - FY22) to support selected awards.

Funds will be administered by the Office of Habitat Conservation in conjunction with the CRCP. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Any funds provided to successful applicants for subsequent-year funding requests will be determined by progress towards stated milestones, availability of funding, and at the discretion of the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation, the CRCP, and the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD).

NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for direct costs of application preparation. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all top-ranked applications.

Once funds are awarded in FY20, recipients of multi-year awards will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years. NOAA expects, but is not obligated, to provide additional funding to multi-year awards in subsequent years. Adding funds to multi-year awards is at the discretion of NOAA.

Proposals not funded in the current fiscal year may be considered for funding in the next fiscal year, FY21, without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this

announcement. Applicants of proposals not funded in the current fiscal year, but the next fiscal year, FY21, will be allowed to revise their requested award period based on the status of the project when funding is offered.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications should cover a period of performance between 12 and 36 months. NOAA anticipates that the period of performance for most awards will be for 36 months, but may select a project where the period of performance extends up to 48 months. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2020. Both federal and match pre-award costs, incurred up to 90 days prior to the award start date, may be requested and will be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Incurring pre-award costs before NOAA GMD offers a grant is at the applicant's own risk.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements, as described in 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.24, meaning that NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the awards. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, collaboration on the scope of work, providing assistance with technical aspects of the restoration and/or research project, review and comment on in-water plans to pilot restoration innovations, and review of procurement materials to the extent authorized by 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.324.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, non-profits, commercial (for profit) organizations, U.S. territories, state, local and Native American tribal governments. All in-water work must be conducted within the U.S. coral jurisdictions. Applications from federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, and others that are eligible to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

NOAA CRCP financial assistance awards are subject to statutory and regulatory matching fund policies. Federal funds for any coral conservation project under 16 U.S.C. § 6403(b) may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the award. Therefore, projects funded under this Grant Program require a 1:1 contribution of non-Federal matching funds.

Cost sharing or matching is defined by 2 C.F.R. § 200.29 as “the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute).” Any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third party in-kind contributions of property and services, will be accepted as part of an applicant’s cost sharing or matching when the contributions meet the criteria listed in 2 C.F.R. § 200.306(b). That is, the contributions: (1) are verifiable from the non-Federal entity's records; (2) are not included as contributions for any other Federal award; (3) are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives; (4) are allowable under Subpart E—Cost Principles of this part; (5) are not paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such a program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs; (6) are provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency; and (7) conform to other provisions of this part, as applicable. Contributions can come from a variety of public and private sources and can include third party in-kind goods and services such as private boat use, lab space or equipment, and volunteer labor. In addition, applicants are permitted to combine contributions for allowable costs from multiple non-Federal partners in order to meet the 1:1 match requirement, consistent with the standards described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.306.

Applicants should specify the source(s) of match in the budget narrative and should provide or may be asked to provide letters of commitment to confirm stated match contributions. Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. Applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions for each project selected for funding. Valuation of proposed cost sharing is described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.306(d)-(k). Applicants may choose to designate part or all of their Federally-negotiated indirect costs as match. This may be convenient because the valuation of such costs has already been Federally-approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to the “Indirect Costs” policies in Section IV.B.3. of this NOFO.

The NOAA Administrator or designee may waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets two requirements identified in 16 U.S.C. § 6403(b)(2): No reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement, and The probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement.

In the case of a waiver request, the applicant should provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver, including attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any

other extenuating circumstances preventing the availability of match. Match waiver requests including the appropriate justification should be submitted as part of the final application package. Please address all waiver requests to Jennifer Koss, CRCP Manager, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East West Highway, 10th Floor, SSMC4, N/ORM, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Full applications submitted through Grants.gov must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section IV.D. Late applications will not be considered for funding. Paper applications received later than 10 business days following the post-mark due date and time will not be accepted. Submission time will be documented by electronic submission to Grants.gov, a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Information regarding electronic submission through Grants.gov and for submitting paper applications is contained in Section IV.G.

All applications MUST contain ALL required forms, see IV.B. If these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they MUST be signed and dated in ink (SF-424, SF-424b, CD-511). Failure to submit signed forms shall result in disqualification from this competition. See Section IV.G. for more details.

The following information describes ineligible project proposal types and activities:
1.) Activities that alleviate the liability associated with legally required mitigation for the adverse environmental impacts of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state, or federal law are ineligible.
2.) Activities that constitute compensatory restoration for natural resource damages under federal, state, or local law are ineligible.
3.) Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute, or regulation are ineligible. Applicants planning to combine grant or matching funds with mitigation should review the Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources; Final Rule at 73 Fed. Reg. 19594 (April 10, 2008). NOAA plans to follow the approach adopted by some other Federal agencies on Page 19,636 that describes scenarios where mitigation credits may or may not be obtained in association with federal financial incentives.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, can be found on www.Grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the

application forms from www.Grants.gov, contact www.Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. Instructions for these forms are available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions.html. Information about the recommended format for full applications is contained in Section IV.B

B. Content and Form of Application

FULL APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

Applicants should apply through the www.Grants.gov website. A complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted, as described below.
Each full proposal must include the following Federal application forms:
1.) Standard Form (SF)-424: Application for Federal Assistance. If not submitted through Grants.gov, this form MUST be signed in ink by the authorized representative for the application to be eligible. The SF-424 form family may be downloaded from https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html.
2.) SF-424A: Budget Information for Non-construction Programs. Selected applications will require an SF-424A for each funding year.
3.) SF-424B: Assurances for Non-construction Programs
4.) CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying
5.) SF-LLL (if applicable): Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

In addition to the Federal application forms, NOAA recommends the following components as part of a complete application package. Page limits assume an 11- or 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Components should be organized into a maximum of four (4) PDF files outlined below:
1.) Cover Sheet and Project Summary (1 page limit),
2.) Project Narrative, and Data Management Plan (20 page limit)
3.) Budget Justification (6 page limit)
4.) Supplemental Information (15 page limit) -

The application should follow the organization of the evaluation criteria (see Section V.A) to receive a consistent review against competing applications. The information provided below may help you address the evaluation criteria.

Each application should include the following information:

1.) Cover Sheet and Project Summary (1 page limit) that includes:
Short title of the proposed cooperative agreement project;
Requested start date and end date;
Applicant organization name, address, phone number;

Principal investigator responsible for conducting the project and their contact information;
Geographic locations of the project and the site names;
Amount of grant funds requested per year;
Amount of matching funds provided per year;
Requested award start date and end date; and
One to two paragraph project summary emphasizing the project objectives and activities.

2.) Project Narrative and Data Plan (20 page limit)
Provide sufficient background and contextual information for reviewers to independently assess the significance of the proposed project.

a.) Importance and Applicability. The applicant should provide a brief summary of relevant background information that justifies the need for the proposed project or task. Identification of the problem/issue the project intends to address and describe how the project is expected to improve the resilience of corals/coral populations and/or efficiency of coral reef restoration activities. Identify the specific objective, listed under Section I.B., to which the project's objective(s) corresponds. Objectives should be simple and understandable, as specific and quantitative as possible, and attainable within the proposed timeframe, the described budget, and the human resources available. Projects should be accomplishment-oriented and identify attainable goals, outcomes, and products.

b.) Technical/Scientific Merit. Proposals should describe in detail the actions to be undertaken to resolve the issue(s)/concern(s).The project narrative is the scientific or technical plan of the task(s) that are to be accomplished to meet the project objectives, and must be written with sufficient detail to allow a review of suitability of the proposed work and the likelihood of successful completion in the stated timeframe. Please ensure your project narrative includes detailed descriptions of each task, including the rationale for the task, how it will be accomplished, specific milestones, project evaluation and assessment (i.e., how success will be measured for each task/phase of the project), and expected products. For activities involving pilot testing, the application of novel restoration methods, or the incorporation innovative research into restoration, applicants need to describe their collaboration effort with restoration practitioners to ensure the work is feasible and in areas where in-water efforts are appropriate to test the application. The applicant should also include information on how any pilot activities will be monitored for effectiveness. If the work is one component of a larger project (or the activity is a pilot project for a larger initiative), and proposed activities will continue after the end of the grant period, describe future activities and potential future funding sources (and other mechanisms) to continue the work. If the goal of the project is to build capacity for improved conservation, describe proposed plans to ensure the activities continue into the future and how success will be

evaluated.

c.) Timeline and Milestone Schedule. The project narrative should include a timeline with key milestones outlining the distinct phases of the project),expected implementation dates of each phase, major activities related to each phase, and frequency of these activities (e.g., daily, weekly, biweekly, or monthly). This includes identifying all consultation and permitting requirements for in-water activities or for the use of Endangered Species Act listed corals and their status (e.g., not applied for, pending, secured), as well as a commitment to quickly provide information needed by NOAA to analyze project impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, see Section VI.B.2). As described in Section II.A., NOAA will consider progress towards identified milestones when making funding decisions for multi-year awards in subsequent years.

d.) Table of Products/Outputs and Outcomes
Please provide a table to summarize the specific products/outputs and outcomes that will be produced under the award. All products resulting from Federally-funded awards must be provided to NOAA within 90 days of the end of the award period and must be of publishable quality and must be 508 compliant (http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?fuseAction=stdsSum). Except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security, recipients are requested to include a statement on the front page of all products to indicate the material is "Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited." If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publications should be made available to the public free of charge. NOAA may make award products available to the public, so recipients are encouraged to omit sensitive information (i.e., budget or salary information) from products submitted to NOAA.

The information in the table must include all products and outputs that will be developed in conjunction with the award. For each entry, please provide a description of the product, a working title for the product, the type or format of the product (e.g., journal publication, public service announcement, presentation, newsletter, metadata record, monitoring data, etc.), and the expected date(s) when the product will be submitted to NOAA. NOAA will use this information to ensure that products are submitted to the agency in a timely manner and made available to the public as soon as possible.

3.) Data Management Plan (2 page limit)
a.) Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the 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 NOAA 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.

b.) Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied.

The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in this Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. 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 costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. 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.

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

d.) Proposal submitters 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.
NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available at:
http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.html
Principal Investigators should indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.
More information about the NOAA Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA’s Environmental Data Management Committee website at:

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

e.) Data Management Guidance to Proposal Writers
Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Liz Fairey, Federal Program Officer, liz.fairey@noaa.gov, 301-538-6609.

Data Accessibility: The NOAA CRCP requires that public access to grant/contract-produced data be enabled. Funding recipients are expected to submit data to NOAA NCEI, which will provide public access and permanent archiving. The NOAA Program has held preliminary consultation with NCEI regarding these pending data.

Technical Recommendations: The NOAA CRCP is not offering specific technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

Resources: NOAA CRCP resources for data sharing or archiving have already been identified; proposals should not include such costs (unless data volume is expected to exceed 20GB).

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

4.) Budget Justification (6 page limit)
Reviewers will evaluate project costs by reviewing your budget justification. The budget justification narrative must include a detailed breakdown by category of applicable costs (i.e., object class) separated into federal and non-federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the award, with a detailed narrative justification for both the federal and non-federal (if applicable) shares. The object classes should match those found in the SF-424A. If requesting funds for a multi-year proposal, award costs should be broken into annual/interim funding requests up to three years in duration One, two, or three-year proposals will be accepted. If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project, a budget overview for the entire project to demonstrate how the NOAA request relates to the overall project budget and outcomes should be provided. If the project has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, the amount(s) requested or secured from other sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal should be included. If the proposed project includes a monitoring component, the applicant should provide an estimate of all

monitoring-related costs within the proposed budget.

The NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation (OHC) and GMD staff will review budget information in recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic. The narrative budget justification should be sufficiently detailed to enable a clear understanding of the cost breakdown and calculations used to derive the line item subtotals in each object class of the SF-424A budget form. An SF-424A for each year of requested funding will be required prior to an award offer, but not as part of the initial application. Additional budget development guidance is available at (https://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/docs/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf.)

5.) Supplemental Information (15 page limit)
All supplemental attachments should be combined into one file which includes a list of the documents and associated page numbers.

a.) For in-water activities,include a site location map such as a USGS topographic quadrangle map or aerial photo with site location(s) highlighted.

b.) Include brief resumes or curriculum vitae for up to three key personnel (maximum of 1 page per person) and any examples of projects similar in scope and nature that have been successfully completed by the project team.

c.) Include any other relevant supporting materials, such as letters of support (including those from local resource management agencies, restoration practitioners, and other partners documenting collaboration and financial and in-kind support), federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements, Monitoring Plan, site photos, etc. Note: Letters of support from NOAA employees are not allowable and will not be included among the application materials considered by merit reviewers. For proposals that involve collaboration with current NOAA projects or staff or take place within a National Marine Sanctuary, NOAA employees may provide a limited statement verifying the nature and extent of the collaboration and confirming prior coordination activities or a statement related to management utility of the proposed work.

d.) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental Compliance –
As part of the application package, applicants should provide detailed information in the Project Narrative or in the supplementary materials about the location and state of the environment in which the activities are to be conducted and any environmental concerns. This information should include locations and/or maps showing project sites, species and

habitats that may be affected, construction activities, and all other environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, effects on human health and safety, level of controversy of the proposed work, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species,impacts to historical or cultural sites, and impacts to coral reef ecosystems, etc.).

Under NEPA, NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of projects or proposals seeking funding from NOAA. After the application is submitted, NOAA may require additional information to fulfill NEPA and other compliance requirements. If NOAA determines that an environmental assessment is required, applicants may also be requested to assist in drafting the assessment. Applicants may 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. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can 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.

The applicants selected for funding may be required to complete a subset of questions (based on activities outlined in your application as identified by the Federal Program officer) of the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance applicants accessible at http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf 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.

Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA websites: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/ including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A for NEPA, http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_216/216-6A.html and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/CEQ%20Regulations%20for%20Implementing%20the%20Procedural%20Provisions%20of%20NEPA.pdf

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

Applicants should: (1) be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number on an application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an

application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. The federal awarding agency may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

Applicants should allow a minimum of two weeks to complete the SAM registration; registration is required only once but must be periodically renewed. Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received by March 20, 2020 at 11:59 PM Eastern time. See Section III.C for more information, including a limit on transit time, and Section IV.G. for an address to submit paper applications.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, contact the official listed in Section VII. of this announcement for referral information.

F. Funding Restrictions

Both federal and match pre-award costs incurred up to 90 days prior to the award start date may be requested and will be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Incurring pre-award costs before the NOAA GMD provides an award document (generally via NOAA Grants Online on Form CD-450) is at the applicant's own risk. The earliest date for receipt of awards for this funding opportunity is anticipated to be October 1, 2020.

The budget may include indirect (facilities & administrative [F&A]) costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.56, indirect (F&A) costs are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more

than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance). A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect (F&A) cost agreement with the federal government should be included with the application. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), an applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative, or establish a new rate through the Department of Commerce by contacting Lamar Revis, Grants Officer at NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East-West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov. Applicants may elect to propose all or part of indirect costs as cost sharing.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants should submit full applications electronically through www.Grants.gov. Users of Grants.gov will be able to create an online application workspace to submit the application. If an applicant has problems accessing the online workspace at Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

Full applications must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section IV.D. Late applications will not be considered for funding. We highly recommend that applicants do not wait until the application deadline to begin the application process through Grants.gov, as registration with SAM and DUNS are required, as described in Section IV.C.

After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt; the second validates that the submission is acceptable and timely; and the third confirms that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with both the Grants.gov help desk and the NOAA Competition Manager to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission. After submitting the application package, applicants should download a copy of the submitted application for offline record-keeping and to verify the contents of the submission zip file. Grants.gov recommends downloading the submitted application via the Details tab of the workspace and verifying the contents of each file in the zip.

Submission time for full applications will be documented by electronic submission to Grants.gov, a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt for paper applications. Facsimile or electronic mail applications will not be accepted. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered

postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received later than ten business days following the closing date will not be accepted. Paper applications should be sent to: Elizabeth Fairey, ATTN: Ruth Gates Coral Restoration Innovation Grant Applications, NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, 1315 East West Highway, SSMC3, 14224, Silver Spring, MD 20910. All applications MUST contain ALL required forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they MUST be signed and dated in ink (SF-424, SF-424b, CD-511). Failure to submit signed forms shall result in disqualification from this competition. The full application must arrive in one package, either through Grants.gov or hard copy. Applicants are responsible for tracking their own applications. Please notify the contact in Section VII. of this announcement by email if you are submitting by paper.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria and respective weights specified below. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

1.) Importance and Applicability of Proposal (Score = 0-30): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. Applications will be evaluated on how well the project aligns with the program priorities listed in Section 1.B., the likelihood the work will increase coral resilience or improve the efficiency of coral restoration, and the level of collaboration with natural resource managers or restoration practitioners. Reviewers will consider:
* The extent the proposed work directly meet the priorities listed in Section 1.B. of the funding announcement (0-15 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 - the proposal does not meet any of the priorities in Section 1.B., 5 - the proposal tangentially meets key priorities in Section 1.B., 10 - the proposal adequately meets the key priorities in Section 1.B., and 15 - the proposal clearly meets the key priorities listed in Section 1.B.);
* The likelihood that the proposed research will enhance resilience-based coral restoration or take significant steps in creating efficiencies in sexual or asexual outplants. If the proposed work is laboratory-based research, to what extent is the work filling a known gap in coral resilience research or in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of coral restoration (0-10 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 - the proposed work is unlikely to enhance resilience-based coral restoration, will not create efficiencies in outplanting, or does not fill a known gap in resilience research and represents duplicating efforts; 5 - the proposed work may enhance resilience-based coral restoration, will create some efficiencies in outplanting, or address on-going resilience research with little novel advancement of science, and 10 - the

proposed work will definitely enhance resilience-based coral restoration, will create multiple efficiencies in outplanting, and/or fills known gap in resilience research); and
* The level of support or need identified for the proposed work from state and local resource management agencies, restoration practitioners, or other resource managers as documented through direct, established partnerships and/or letters of collaboration or support (0-5 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 - no demonstrated support or need from resource managers or restoration practitioners and no letters of support included, 2.5 - the proposal demonstrates adequate support and/or letters of support are included, and 5 - the proposal demonstrates extraordinary local resources managers and/or restoration practitioners support, and letters of support articulating need are included).

2.) Technical/Scientific Merit (Score = 0-40): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Applications will be evaluated on whether there are clear identification of project goals, objectives, and methods; the level of innovation of the proposed work; technical soundness of the methods; and the likelihood of project success. Reviewers will consider:
* The extent to which the work is truly innovative in developing new techniques or methods to increase efficiency and effectiveness of coral reef restoration, enhancing coral/coral population resilience, or advances existing intervention methodologies to the next level to allow for in-water field testing (0-10 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 - the proposal is not innovative, 5 - the proposal demonstrates some innovation, 10 - the proposal is completely innovative);
* The extent to which the application is complete and clearly describes the project, objectives, and methodology that will be implemented (0-10 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 - the proposal does not clearly describe the overall project, objectives, and methodologies, and 5 - proposal provides adequate detail, is relatively clear, and 10 - the proposal provides extraordinary detail, is entirely clear);
* Whether or not the application includes a realistic implementation plan, timeline, milestones, and effective mechanisms to evaluate the progress of project tasks and project success (e.g., steps describing the expected stages of laboratory experimentation or moving from laboratory-based work to in-water field-testing), and the likelihood of meeting these milestones (0-10 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 - the proposal does not include an implementation plan and timeline, and does not include any measures to evaluate the progress of tasks or project success, 5 - the proposal includes a basic implementation plan and timeline with some measures to evaluate the progress of tasks and project success, 10 - a clear and detailed implementation plan and timeline that includes appropriate measures to evaluate the progress of tasks/logical steps and the overall success of the project); and
* The extent to which the project's overall technical approach is feasible and sound and is

likely to achieve the project's goals and objectives (including any designs for field implementation and monitoring of field work) (0-10 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 – project is not feasible/technically sound and will not achieve the stated goals and objectives, 5 - project uses appropriate techniques with reasonable confidence in ability to achieve goals and, 10 - project is technically sound and has clear objectives and goals, complete confidence in ability to achieve goals).

3.) Overall Qualification of Applications (Score = 0-10): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Reviewers will consider:
* The capacity of the applicant and associated project personnel (and proposed contractors, if activities are subcontracted) to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and descriptions of past experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing and effectively managing and overseeing similar projects (0-5 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 - no technical experience or documentation or access to technical assistance, 2.5 - adequate experience and/or access to good technical assistance, and 5 - experts in the field as demonstrated by summaries of experience with similar projects); and
* The facilities and/or administrative resources and capabilities available to the applicant to support and successfully manage laboratory and restoration work and federal funding, including the availability of NOAA or other technical expertise to guide the project to a successful completion (0-5 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 – no facilities/resources, 1.5 - minimal facilities/resources, 3 - moderate facilities/resources, and 5 - significant levels of demonstrated facilities/resources to support and successfully manage coral reef conservation work).

4.) Project Costs (Score = 0-15): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and the proposed time frame. Reviewers will consider:
* Whether the budget is cost-effective, reasonable and reflects the ability of the work to be completed for the funding proposed (0-5 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 – not cost effective, unreasonable costs that do not support the applicant’s ability to complete the work, 2.5 – appears moderately cost-effective for anticipated benefit and will likely be able to complete the work for described costs, and 5 – reasonable costs, extraordinarily cost-effective, and can definitely be completed with the requested funds);
* Budget Detail. Has the applicant demonstrated a realistic understanding of costs by providing a budget (broken down by SF-424A object classes) that provides sufficient detail and credible cost estimates and justifications for both federal and non-federal shares? Multi-year or multi-phase award requests should include annual/interim milestones that correspond

to logical funding request increments. (0-8 points; technical reviewer score guidelines: 0 – proposal does not provide a realistic budget narrative, 3 – proposal provides some budget narrative details with some questionable cost estimates, 5 - the proposal provides an adequate budget narrative with realistic cost estimate, and 8 – proposal provides an extraordinarily detailed budget narrative with realistic cost estimates);
* The extent to which applicants were able to secure the required 1:1 non-Federal matching funds or has requested a match waiver for the proposed project? (0-2 points; technical reviewer score guidelines: 0 - no match or leverage proposed and has not requested a match waiver, and 2 - proposed match that meets required 1:1 non-federal match or requests a waiver).

5.) Outreach and Education (Score = 0-5): This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. Reviewers will consider:
* The suitability of the products and whether the level of outreach is appropriate for the proposed task/project including the dissemination of information, data, results to the state or territory management agencies, and/or appropriate user groups (i.e., restoration practitioners) (0-3 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 - the proposal does not include any information on products or disseminating data/research results to management agencies and/or restoration practitioners, 1.5 - the proposal includes typical methods of disseminating information (e.g., peer review papers or websites), and 3 - the proposal includes suitable products and extraordinary steps to disseminate information (e.g., in-person meetings, white papers, presentations, etc.)); and
* Whether or not the applicant has provided a sufficient data plan as described in the funding announcement (0-2 points; technical reviewer score guidance: 0 - the proposal does not include a data plan and 2 - the proposal includes a sufficient data plan).

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will undergo an initial administrative screening to determine if they are eligible and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Applications are screened to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see Section IV.C Submission Dates and Times); the applicant is eligible to apply; and includes a project summary, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B. Content and Form of Application. NOAA does not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause the application to be rejected or receive a poor evaluation. However, if deficiencies are identified by NOAA or the applicant, the applicant may correct any deficiencies in their application before the deadline. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be

made to it.

Eligible applications will undergo a technical review, ranking, and selection process to determine how well they meet the program priorities and evaluation criteria of this solicitation and the mission and goals of NOAA. Eligible applications will be evaluated by three or more merit reviewers as part of a technical review based on the Evaluation Criteria listed in Section V.A. Applications will also be provided to the respective government management agency (e.g., U.S. Coral Reef Task Force point of contact) from the jurisdiction where the proposed project will occur for further review. The point of contact will be asked to prioritize proposals and provide comments on all applications submitted for work in their jurisdiction. This is intended to enhance coordination of coral reef conservation activities in each jurisdiction and to ensure proposed activities are appropriate and do not duplicate other efforts.

After the technical review, a panel may meet to make final recommendations to the Selecting Official regarding which proposals best meet the program objectives and priorities (Sections I.A and I.B). The panel will be comprised of federal employees and may convene in person or by teleconference, video conference, or other electronic means to discuss applications.

If convened, the panel will be presented with the top-ranked applications, per the results of the technical review. Panelists will also receive the technical review scores and comments for each application. The panel will rate all top-ranked proposals on the following scale:
1 – Fair: application marginally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B. and was moderately responsive to the Evaluation Criteria;
2 – Good: application adequately addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B. and was strongly responsive to the Evaluation Criteria; and
3 – Excellent: application exceptionally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B., and was highly responsive to the Evaluation Criteria.

If a panel is held, the panel’s ranked list will be the ranking considered by the Selecting Official for recommending applications for funding. If a panel is not held, the technical review ranking will be the ranking considered by the Selecting Official for recommending applications for funding.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official will recommend applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following selection factors:
1.) Availability of funding;

2.) Balance/distribution of funds: a) by geographic area, b) by type of institutions, c) by type of partners, d) by research areas; or 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 set out in Sections I.A. and I.B.;
5.) An applicant's prior award performance;
6.) Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
7.) Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA GMD.

Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not among those recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications submitted in hard copy will be kept on file in accordance with NOAA records requirements and then destroyed.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

In addition, the NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.205. NOAA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. NOAA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

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 concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. 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 addressed in a timely fashion 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. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Applicants will receive notification that their application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA GMD by June 30, 2020. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2020. Applicants that initiate award activities in anticipation of federal funding do so at their own risk, and are advised not to begin award-related work until a notice of award is received electronically from the NOAA GMD in Grants Online, NOAA's online financial assistance management system.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities including monitoring, the award duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each Ruth Gate Coral Restoration Innovation Grant Program award will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA GMD, and NOAA staff that will administer these restoration awards.

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

business office of the recipient organization. The official notice of award is the Commerce Form 450 (CD-450), Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer Electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1.) 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. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/cXC7A.

2.) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at 2 C.F.R. 200, implemented by the Department of Commerce at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, apply to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/cXCJQ.

3.) The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions and NOAA Standard Administrative Terms will apply to awards in this program. A current version of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions is available at https://go.usa.gov/xVHng. The NOAA Standard Administrative Terms are found at: https://go.usa.gov/xVHnK. Current versions are subject to change. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain specific award conditions, including those limiting the use of funds for compliance activities such as outstanding environmental compliance requirements, which will be applied on a case-by-case basis, and requirements for submitting progress reports. These award conditions are subject to change prior to award, but examples can be provided by the contact listed in Section VII.

4.) NEPA Requirements - See Section IV.B.5.e., above.

5.) NOAA's Data Sharing Policy - See Section IV.B.3., above.

6.) Certifications Regarding Tax Liability and Felony Criminal Convictions - When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide certain applicants 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. A copy of the current version of this certification may be viewed at https://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/docs/unpaid_tax_liability_form.pdf.

7.) Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Federal appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not yet have been appropriated for the programs listed in this notice. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for direct costs for proposal preparation if these programs

fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards. NOAA reserves the right to halt activity under the award through enforcement procedures under 2 C.F.R. 200.338-.342, remedies for non-compliance, if the recipient is not fulfilling the requirements of the project as outlined in the grant award. Non-compliance with a federally approved project may result in termination of the award as described in 2 C.F.R.200.339.

8.) Minority Serving Institutions - The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

9.) NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards - If NOAA-operated, leased, or owned facilities are involved in any awards funded under this announcement, such awards are subject to the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards involving NOAA Operated Facilities (May 2018) found at: http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/facilities_assault_policy.html.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.327-329 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

Narrative progress reports shall be due on the same fiscal year schedule as financial reports (Oct. 30 and April 30) covering April 1 - September 30 and October 1 - March 31, respectively. A comprehensive final report covering all activities during the award period is required and must be received by NOAA within 90 days after the end date of this award. Copies of all materials (including but not limited to brochures, posters, videos, DVDs, publications, reports, management plans, public service announcements, workshop proceedings, etc.) produced through the award, along with copies of any reports submitted by subcontractors as part of the award, must be provided to the program office within 90 days of the end of the award. Except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security, recipients are requested to include a statement on the front page of all products to indicate the material is "Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited." If the applicant has

requested publication costs, resulting journal publications must be made available to the public free of charge.

All products must be appropriate for public dissemination and acknowledge the support provided by NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program as described at: http://coralreef.noaa.gov/about/graphicid.html. Because products may be made available to the public via the Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS, http://coris.noaa.gov), it is the recipient's responsibility to ensure that products are professionally written and edited and do not contain sensitive information. Media products must be Section 508 compliant (https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-section-508-standards/section-508-standards).

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 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 (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards of $25,000 and over.

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative or technical questions regarding this announcement, contact the Competition Manager: Liz Fairey. She can be reached by phone at 301-427-8632, by fax at 301-713-1594, by email at Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov or by mail at: Liz Fairey, NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Habitat Conservation, 1315 East West Highway, SSMC3, 14224, Silver Spring, MD, 20910. Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact NOAA staff before submitting an application to discuss their NOAA project ideas with respect to technical merit and NOAA's objectives. NOAA will make every effort to respond to prospective applicants on a first come, first served basis. These discussions will not include review of draft proposals or site visits during the application period.

VIII. Other Information

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out an award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, codified by the Department of Commerce at 1327.101. All cost reimbursement sub-awards (e.g. subgrants, subcontracts) are subject to those federal

cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

Access to Information: Applications submitted in response to this Announcement may be subject to requests for release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552). 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. Department of Commerce regulations implementing 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.

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed, and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.