ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL 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: 2014/2015 Saltonstall Kennedy (2014/15 S-K)

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-FHQ-2015-2004246

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.427, Fisheries Dev and Utilization Research and Dev Grants and Coop Agreements Program

Dates: To be considered timely, applications must be received and validated by http://www.Grants.gov (Grants.gov), by 11:59 pm, Eastern Standard Time (EST) 12/15/2014, 60 days after the posting date of this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO). Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, applications postmarked or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm EST 60 days after the posting date of this FFO may be accepted. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received more than five calendar days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail (e-mail) applications will be accepted.

When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that you are encouraged to apply through Grants.gov. This electronic submission system is relatively complex for first time users and involves several preliminary registrations to be completed before your application can be submitted. If you have already used Grants.gov, the required registrations may have already been completed. Please allow sufficient time for the application to be submitted electronically and for possible computer delays. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications not adhering to postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected and returned to the sender without further consideration.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Saltonstall-Kennedy Act established a fund, commonly known as the S-K fund, used by the Secretary of Commerce to provide grants or cooperative agreements for fisheries research and development projects addressing aspects of U.S. fisheries, including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing, marketing, and associated infrastructures. Under this authority, and subject to the availability of funding, grants and cooperative agreements are made on a competitive basis to assist in carrying out projects related to U.S.

commercial and recreational fisheries. The term “fisheries” encompasses wild capture, marine aquaculture and recreational fishing. The objective of the S-K Grant Program is to address the needs of the fisheries and fishing communities in optimizing economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries and practices, dealing with the impacts of conservation and management measures, and increasing other opportunities to keep working waterfronts viable. U.S. fisheries means any fishery, commercial or recreational, that is, or may be, engaged in by citizens or nationals of the United States, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, or the Federated States of Micronesia. Proposals submitted under this competition must address at least one of the following: (1) maximize fishing opportunities and jobs; (2) improve the cost effectiveness and capacity for observations; (3) increase the supply, quality, and diversification of domestic seafood; and (4) improve the quality and quantity of fishery information from the U.S. territories.

This FFO includes information on application requirements and evaluation criteria for research proposals requesting a maximum of $400,000 in total federal funding for up to a two-year period. Matching funds are not required. Awards are anticipated to start no earlier than June 1, 2015.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The objectives of the S-K Grant Program, and, therefore, the funding priorities, have changed over the years since the program began in 1980. The program has evolved in response to changing Federal fishery management laws and policies and research needs.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson--Stevens Act) (16 U.S.C. §1801 et seq.) requires us to undertake efforts to prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished fisheries, ensure conservation, minimize bycatch, protect essential fish habitats, and realize the full potential of U.S. fishery resources. It further requires that NOAA take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities; provide for the sustained participation of such communities; and, to the extent possible, minimize the adverse economic impacts of conservation and management measures on such communities.

The objective of the S-K Grant Program is to address the needs of fishing communities in optimizing economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries and practices, dealing with the impacts of conservation and management measures, and increasing other opportunities to keep working waterfronts viable. NMFS seeks applications that demonstrate direct benefits to U.S. fishing industries and encourages proposals that involve fishing community participation. U.S. fisheries means any fishery, commercial or recreational, that is, or may be, engaged in by citizens or nationals of the United States, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, or the Federated States of Micronesia.

NOAA's Next-Generation Strategic Plan, which is available online at http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp/, provides a framework for targeting NOAA's resources to best meet science and management needs, pursuant to the Strategic Plan. NOAA goals include Healthy Oceans: Marine fisheries, habitats, and biodiversity sustained within healthy and productive ecosystems.

The NOAA Fisheries Priorities and Annual Guidance for 2014, which is available online at http://www.npfmc.org/wpcontent/PDFdocuments/CM/cm112713/NOAAFisheriesPriorities2014.pdf, considers core mission functions in context of current fiscal conditions. For 2014, the focus remains on two core mandates: 1) Ensure the productivity and sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities through science based decision making and compliance

with regulations, and 2) Recover and conserve protected resources through the use of sound natural and social sciences.

To accomplish these goals, we aim to conserve, protect, manage, and restore living marine resources and coastal and ocean resources that are critical to public health and the vitality of the U.S. economy. The S-K Grant Program is seeking to fund projects that contribute to these goals.

Successful applications will be those aimed at helping fishing communities resolve issues that affect their ability to engage in fishing activities; make full use of those species that are currently under Federal or state fishery management plans; and address the socioeconomic impacts of overfishing and overcapacity. The S-K Grant Program is open to applicants from a variety of sectors, including individuals, industry, academia, and state and local governments. We encourage applications that involve collaboration between industry and the other sectors listed.

B. Program Priorities

Program Priorities are grouped into four themes— (1) maximize fishing opportunities and jobs; (2) improve the cost effectiveness and capacity for observations; (3) increase the supply, quality, and diversification of domestic seafood; and (4) improve the quality and quantity of fishery information from the U.S. territories. Each application must address and list on the application cover sheet at least one of the themes, along with the letter theme that further refines the activity. (Example: Theme # 1 - Maximize Fishing Opportunities and Jobs, A) if you select more than one priority, you should list your primary theme first on the application cover sheet. Note: Themes are not listed in order of importance

Theme #1 - MAXIMIZE FISHING OPPORTUNITIES AND JOBS

Projects under this theme are intended to:

A) Develop and support community-based bridge plans that enhance community resilience, from the perspectives of both fishery working waterfront and living marine resource communities. Projects under this theme are designed to help coastal fishing industries adapt to reductions in allowable catches by retooling their fishing fleets, shore services, and port facilities into sustainable and innovative businesses.

Utilize fishing industry shoreside services. Many shoreside support services upon which the fishing industry relies are in decline by less fish being landed. These include ice, fuel, haul--out, auction, and processing companies. We are looking for projects that involve

creative opportunities that would enhance the short and long term vitality of commercial fishing related businesses.

Promote clean, sustainable fishing practices that enhance fuel efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

B) Improve the understanding of the socioeconomic aspects of fisheries to increase information on current and future consequences of management choices for use by decision makers and stakeholders. Scope includes commercial, recreational, and subsistence fishing and fishing -related businesses and fishing communities.

Research examples could include but are not limited to:

- qualitative and quantitative baseline research on specific fishing communities;
- cost- income data;
- analyses of the socioeconomic impacts of specific management measures on certain fisheries;
- analyses of factors influencing demand for recreational fishing trips by anglers;
- market analyses to determines factors that influence and trace the demand and supply of specific seafood products, including imports; factors limiting fishing community sustainability;
- research into fishing community innovations in organization/governance, cooperatives, marketing, risk-pooling, access to capital/permits/catch allocations, and other improvements to promote sustainability;
- data and evaluative models to assist decision makers in analyzing optimal allocations of allowable biological catches

C) Assess the impact of climate change, ocean acidification, and other stressors on fisheries resources and the communities sustained by these resources.

Aid in the understanding and integration of all the interactions that a target fish stock has with predators, competitors, and prey species; other ocean uses e.g. energy projects that can prohibit/inhibit fishing biology and ecology; the complex interactions between fisheries and their habitat; the effects of fishing on fish stocks and their habitat, or strategies to improve the seafood industry’s use of the ecosystem.

Research examples could include the following but are not limited to:

• Identify how fishing communities may have to adapt considering potential effects of climate change on fisheries.

• Build stock assessment models that consider potential changes in fishery performance and management effectiveness due to change in climate and ocean chemistry.

D) Develop and/or transfer selective commercial, non-commercial, and recreational fishing gears or procedures that reduce bycatch impacts and other collateral effects.

Proposals that reduce impacts to protected species, candidate/species of, and fish stocks that are overfished or where overfishing is occurring are encouraged.

Projects that reduce or eliminate adverse interactions between fishing operations and non-targeted, protected, or prohibited species, essential fish habitat (EFH); or critical habitat, including the inadvertent take, capture, or destruction of such species or their habitats.

Projects that improve the survivability of fish discarded or intentionally released and of protected species released in fishing operations, including predation by various species such as dolphin.

Projects that investigate discard mortality in the commercial, non-commercial, and recreational fisheries as a means to improve post release survival.

Research examples could include but are not limited to:

- investigations on barotrauma;
- best practices in fish handling;
- and quantitative techniques in estimating post--release survival of fish during recreational fishing trips

Projects that reduce or eliminate impacts of fishing activity on essential fish habitat (EFH) that adversely affect the sustainability of the fishery.

Research examples could include but are not limited to:

- development of gear technologies and/or changes to fishing practices to reduce the destruction of habitat (such as coral and SAC habitats by trawl, pot, anchor, or transiting), bycatch of sea turtles in bottom otter trawl or gillnet gear;
- development of new or improvement of existing gear modifications designed to reduce incidental interactions between fishing gear and marine mammals, including studies to investigate new gear which could effectively reduce serious injury and mortality of sea

turtles, right whales and other large whales in the U.S. commercial fisheries and through the development of entanglement mitigation gear;

- improvement in the understanding of how interactions between fishing operations and protected species occur, including interactions between trawl gear fisheries and marine mammals, and between fixed gear fisheries and large whales

Theme #2 - IMPROVE THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND CAPACITY FOR OBSERVATIONS

Projects under this theme are intended to:

A) Improve the cost -effectiveness, accuracy, timeliness, and methods for the collection, reporting and dissemination of both fishery dependent data (commercial, non-commercial, recreational and for--hire fisheries) and fishery independent data (surveys).

Projects sought should:

- deliver cost effective and adaptive electronic tools to support electronic monitoring and electronic reporting that will complement other fishery -dependent data collections, including fishery observer and catch/effort monitoring programs;

- track and integrate and multiple fishery- dependent data streams such as vessel and dealer reports for a single trip;

- provide advanced fishery -independent sampling techniques to improve data collection in otherwise inaccessible habitats, and improve current stock assessments by refining estimates of population dynamics;

- improve current sampling methods and/or introduce new methods to obtain fishery -independent data for fisheries or locations that are not included in existing surveys

Theme #3 - INCREASE THE SUPPLY, QUALITY, AND DIVERSIFICATION OF DOMESTIC SEAFOOD

Projects under this theme are intended to:

A) Demonstrate aquaculture technologies in pilot- commercial scale projects that will create jobs in fishing communities, produce healthful local seafood, revitalize working waterfronts and support traditional fishing communities. Provide training for fishermen and others in coastal fishing communities in aquaculture production methods. Document and

assess socioeconomic impacts of marine aquaculture operations. Provide research on environmental impacts of aquaculture facilities.

Projects examples could include but are not limited to:

- projects which demonstrate the feasibility of culturing marine fish species identified as potential or suitable candidates for aquaculture;

- projects which explore alternate feed sources that reduce the demand for marine protein, such as use of fish processing trimmings in aquaculture feeds;

- projects which investigate alternative ways to minimize aquaculture activities' interactions with marine mammals and other living marine resources;

- projects which evaluate the commercial feasibility of promising aquaculture technologies and business models;

- projects which aim to improve or facilitate the adoption of aquaculture industry best management practices

Projects should include, where feasible, participation of the traditional fishing communities or promote the development of community- based aquaculture organizations, cooperatives or associations at the local, state and/or regional levels.

B) Promote better business practices to increase product market value, such as increasing market prices for commercial fish species by promoting business practices such as safe handling (i.e., brining fish, using ozone boxes) and other value -added practices on vessels and onshore to produce higher quality fish for sale. Projects may also include adoption of technologies such as smart phones and tablets that support the fishing industry and the public's interest in the sustainability of marine fisheries by improving the traceability of seafood from fishing vessels to consumers.

Develop collaborative and improved regional, national, and global public relations and marketing opportunities that can position the U.S. domestic seafood industries to better compete in globally competitive commodity markets, stabilize and maintain domestic fishing cultures that have faltered due to suppressed prices, improve perception of and confidence in U.S. domestic wild caught seafood products that may be impacted by natural or man made catastrophes, and improve fish prices. Fishermen will financially benefit from the development of new domestic and foreign markets for abundant low -value and underutilized species. We are looking for projects that support the creation of new marketing opportunities.

Develop usable products from economic discards and byproducts of processing.

Collect data on population dynamics, life histories, etc., of fish not currently under Federal fishery management plans (FMPs), for the Regional Fishery Management Councils to determine the feasibility of developing a new federally managed fishery that could provide additional fishing opportunity.

Improve stock assessments, as high uncertainty in fisheries stock assessments leads to lower allowable catches.

Studies to improve stock definitions and understanding of stock boundaries.

Theme #4- IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF FISHERY INFORMATION FROM THE U.S. TERRITORIES

Projects under this theme are intended to:

A) Improve the quality and quantity of fishery information from the U.S. territories covered by the Magnuson-Stevens Act, including the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and the Commonwealths of the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico, that can be used for establishing, enhancing and monitoring Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and ecosystem-based information for Federal fisheries management in these territories.

Projects examples could include but are not limited to:

- projects improving catch accountability by enhancing fishery statistics in each territory through a variety of techniques, including expanded creel surveys, fish dealer sampling, and other mechanisms;

- projects that would expand fishery bio-sampling and analysis of bio-sampling data, including activities that would include sampling shoreside and at fish dealers the species of fish most relevant for management;

- projects that conduct fishery independent reef fish surveys;

- projects that build critical on -island capacity which could include building home-grown scientific capacity by partnering with local academic institutions to include students in the fishery statistics data collection and bio-sampling life history studies.

- building technical capabilities to conduct data collection and analysis in terms of analyzing data for annual catch limits.

C. Program Authority

Authority for the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program is provided under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act (S-K Act), as amended (15 U.S.C. 713c-3).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Depending upon the availability of appropriations, NOAA anticipates $10-20 million may be available to fund new projects under this competition. The S-K Grant Program anticipates that typical awards will range from $50,000 to $250,000. Project proposals requesting less than $25,000 or greater than $400,000 will not be accepted or reviewed. The number of awards made as a result of this solicitation 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 the amount of funds made available to the S-K Program. There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by the same applicant during this competitive solicitation; however, multiple applications submitted by the same applicant must clearly identify different projects and each application will be rated individually in the competitive review process. If you have several projects that you are seeking funding for, submit a separate application for each project; do not consolidate several projects into one application.

B. Project/Award Period

We will award grants or cooperative agreements for a maximum project period of two years (24 months), but shorter term project proposals are welcomed. Applications that propose project periods beyond this 24 month duration will not be considered. The requested award start date must begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month. The earliest start date for projects will be June 1, 2015, depending on the availability of Federal funding as provided by Congress, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including National Environmental Policy Act analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument (grant or cooperative agreement) will be determined by the NOAA Grants Office. A cooperative agreement will be used if the proposed project involves substantial Federal scientific or programmatic involvement. Substantial involvement means that, after award, NOAA scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role; it is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities. The dominant role and prime responsibility resides with the awardee for the project as a whole, although specific

tasks and activities may be shared among the awardees and NOAA. Examples of substantial NOAA involvement may include non-compensated collaboration in research or approval of key stages in the project before subsequent steps are undertaken. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between you and NOAA/NMFS representatives.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

You are eligible to apply for a grant or a cooperative agreement under the S-K Grant Program if:

1. You are a citizen or national of the United States;

2. You are a citizen of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, or the Federated States of Micronesia; or

3. You represent an entity that is a corporation, partnership, association, or other non-Federal entity, non-profit or otherwise (including Indian tribes), if such entity is a citizen of the United States or NMI, within the meaning of section 2 of the Shipping Act, 1916, as amended (46 U.S.C. § 5050.

We recognize the interest of the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior in defining appropriate fisheries policies and programs that meet the needs of the U.S. insular areas, so we encourage applications from individuals, government entities, and businesses in U.S. insular areas. We support cultural and gender diversity in our programs and encourage women and minority individuals and groups to submit applications We are also committed to broadening the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), which include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities, in our grant programs. To find out more about MSIs go to http: http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html.

We encourage applications from members of the fishing community and applications that involve fishing community cooperation and participation. We will consider the extent of fishing community involvement when evaluating the potential benefit of funding a proposal.

Non Eligible Applicants

You are not eligible to submit an application under this program if you are an employee of any Federal agency; a Regional Fishery Management Council (Council); or an employee of a Council. However, Council members who are not Federal employees can submit an application to the S-K Grant Program.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or matching is required. The S-K Act, as amended, does not require that you share in the total cost of the project. If you choose to cost-share and if your application is selected for funding, you will be obligated to account for the amount of cost share dollars reflected in the award documents, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. If project costs are shared, NMFS must provide at least 50 percent of total project costs.

The funds you provide as cost sharing may include funds from private sources or from state or local governments, or the value of in-kind contributions. Federal funds or funds used to match other federal aid cannot be used as match. In-kind contributions may include, but are not limited to, personal services volunteered to perform tasks in the project, and permission to use, at no cost, real or personal property owned by others. We will determine the appropriateness of all cost sharing proposals, including the valuation of in- kind contributions, on the basis of guidance of relevant OMB guidance.

Please note that by December 26, 2014, DOC anticipates adopting the OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (OMB Uniform Guidance), which is codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The OMB Uniform Guidance supersedes and streamlines requirements from previous OMB circulars, including the uniform requirements that had been codified at 15 C.F.R. Parts 14 and 24.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive funding under this competition; however federal scientists can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on proposals. Should you wish to partner with a NMFS employee, who will act as a partner in the proposed research project, a written agreement of this participation must be provided, detailing their involvement, signed by the employee's supervisor. NMFS involvement could include planning, scheduling, conducting, and analyzing proposed project activities and frequent contact with the Applicant to help solve technical problems/situations as they arise during performance of the award.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application package, consisting of the standard forms, i.e., Forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at http://www.grants.gov (Grants.gov). Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. If you do

not have internet access, an application package may be received by contacting Daniel Namur, S-K Program Manager, NOAA/NMFS (F/MB); 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13358, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282, Phone: (301) 427-8730, or e-mail: Dan.Namur@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

A complete standard NOAA grant application package is required in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Your application must contain all required forms; if these forms are not signed via the Grants.gov application process, they MUST be signed in ink. Paper applications without inked signatures on their forms will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed. Each application must include:

Federal application forms, including:

o Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

o Form SF-424A, Budget Information, Non-construction Programs must be completed, and there should be a detailed budget justification narrative (described below) to accompany the SF-424 budget forms. Indicate any matching funds, if applicable.

o Form SF-424B, Assurances must be completed for each submitted application.

o Form CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying

o Form SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable). You must complete and submit this form if you have made or have agreed to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer of employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, and officer of employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of or the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or loan. Recipients may not use funds awarded under a Federal grant or cooperative agreement to conduct such lobbying activities.

- a Project Summary (described below, limit 2 pages)

- a Narrative Project Description (described below, limit 25 pages)

- a detailed narrative Budget Justification(described below). Provide justifications for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget justification should be broken out and detailed using the same budget categories as noted on the SF-424A budget form.

- other Supporting Documentation and relevant attachments the applicant deems important to the overall understanding and evaluation of the proposed project (combined into one PDF document).

All pages must be single-spaced or double-spaced, printed or typed in at least a 12–point font with one-inch margins on 8.5″ x 11″ paper. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out. Failure to follow the requirements will result in the rejection/return of the application.

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov is inaccessible, paper applications will be accepted. Paper applications must be submitted with completed, signed, original forms in hard copy and an electronic copy of the entire application on CD, including scanned signed forms.

If the applicant has completed the entire application in Grants.gov but is unable to submit it via Grants.gov, then this application package should be provided via CD along with printed and signed, as applicable, versions of forms SF-424, SF, 424-A, SF-424B, CD-511, and SF-LLL. The authorized representative MUST sign and date these forms over the printed signature that will appear in the signature box. Paper applications should not be bound in any manner.

Content Requirements:

A. Project Summary

Provide a summary of the proposed project (two page maximum), including applicant organization, project title, SK priority that the project addresses, project location, requested award dates, funding requested, name and title of Principal Investigator, collaborating partners, species/resources to be addressed, a brief but clear description of proposed activities and anticipated benefits/outcomes. It is critical that the project summary accurately describe the project being proposed and convey all essential elements of the project for public dissemination.

B. Narrative Project Description

The project narrative comprises the research plan for the project. The narrative must be detailed enough for reviewers to make a clear connection between the proposed activities and the proposed project costs. The major part of the narrative should be devoted to a description and justification for the proposed project, including details of the method to be used. It should also include a timeline for major activities of the proposed project, and should indicate who will be responsible for which activities. There should be no ambiguity about who will perform particular parts of the project, and the time at which these activities take place. You must provide a narrative description of your project that includes the

information listed below. The project description may not exceed 25 pages. The tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations that you submit to document the project and the problem/opportunity you seek to address are included in the 25-page limit. The following do not count towards the 25-page limit: standard application forms, project summary, budget and justification, letters of support, curriculum vitae, lists of permits, NEPA questionnaire, and data sharing plan.

The project narrative should closely follow the organization of the evaluation criteria (see Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria) for the application to receive a consistent review against competing applications. The narrative should demonstrate your knowledge of the need for the project, and show how your proposal builds upon any past and current work in the subject area, as well as relevant work in related fields. The narrative should highlight any relationship to fishery management plans, or other fishery-related strategic planning or management documents, and if the project will yield environmentally compatible socioeconomic benefits, such as increased business opportunities, recreational opportunities, or decreased safety hazards. You should not assume that we already know the relative merits of the project you describe. You must describe your project as follows:

1. Project goals and objectives - Identify the specific S-K Grant Program priority (described in Section I. B. Program Priorities) to which the proposed project responds. Identify the problem/opportunity you intend to address and describe its significance to the fisheries resource and fishing community. Objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible; clear as to the "what and when," but should avoid the "how and why", and attainable within the time, money and human resources available. Projects should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific performance measurements. If you are applying to continue a project previously funded under the S-K Grant Program, describe in detail your progress to date and explain why you need additional funding. If the proposal is for renewed support, include a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work. We will consider this information in evaluating your current application.

2. Project impacts - Describe the anticipated impacts of the project on the fisheries resource and the fishing community in terms of reduced bycatch, increased product yield, or other measurable benefits. Identify the benefits that will be achieved as a result of this effort, both to the recipient and the general public as a whole.

3. Evaluation of project - Specify the criteria and procedures that you will use to monitor and evaluate the relative success or failure of a project in achieving its objectives.

4. Need for government financial assistance - Explain why you need NOAA financial assistance for the proposed work, and why other funding sources, if applicable, cannot fund

all the proposed work. List all other sources of funding you have or are seeking for the project.

5. Federal, state, and local government activities and permits - It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, State, and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. You must note whether or not permits are required. If no permits are required, this section must indicate "no permits are required". If yes, provide a list of all applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work and an indication of the status of any permits needed (e.g., not yet applied, permit application submitted/pending, permit granted, etc.) or a statement indicating that no permits are necessary. List any existing Federal, state, or local government programs or activities that this project would affect, including activities requiring: certification under state Coastal Zone Management Plans; Section 404 or Section 10 permits issued by the Corps of Engineers; experimental fishing or other permits under Federal Fishery Management Plans (FMP); environmental impact statements to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act; scientific permits under the Endangered Species Act and/or the Marine Mammal Protection Act; or Magnuson-Stevens Act Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation if the project may adversely affect areas identified as EFH. Describe the relationship between the project and these FMPs or activities, and list names and addresses of persons providing this information. You may obtain information on these activities from the NMFS Regions (see Section VII- Agency Contacts). This section does not count towards the 25-page limitation.

6. Project work plan -

a) What is the project design? What specific work, activities, procedures, statistical design, or analytical methods will you undertake? You should provide sufficiently detailed information on the proposed activities and potential environmental effects so that NOAA can analyze the impacts of the project as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (see Section VI. B.2.) NOAA has developed a NEPA questionnaire to assist in the evaluation of the possible environmental impact of your application and certain questionnaire items must be completed and submitted as part of your application. The NEPA Questionnaire is located at http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf. You must fill in Sections A, B, D, and E. If you are proposing activities relative to fisheries sampling and research, fill out Section H. Failure to complete all of the indicated questions will result in the application being considered incomplete. The NEPA questionnaire does not count towards the 25 page limitation.

b) Who will be responsible for carrying out the various activities? Describe how you/your organization (or others) will monitor progress and measure the project's impacts. Provide information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including the technical and administrative points of contact as appropriate.

c) Data Sharing Plan: 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 costs, in a timely manner (typically no later than 2 years after the data is created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security requirements. Your application must include a data sharing plan to make available to the public all environmental and other data created during the course of the project. If the proposed activities will not generate any environmental data, you are still required to have a data sharing plan. Such a data sharing plan could include the statement "this project will not generate any environmental data." The data sharing plan does not count towards the 25 page limitation. The plan is required as part of NOAA's data sharing policy described in Section VI.B.3, and will be reviewed as part of the Evaluation Criteria under V.A.1.

d) What are the major products/deliverables and how will project results be disseminated? Describe any expected products of the project, such as a training manual, management plan, brochures, number of people trained, video, technique, or piece of equipment. Detail if/how products will be distributed to potential users (resource managers, researchers, other interested parties), what outreach will be conducted, and how NOAA support for the project will be acknowledged in the dissemination of results.

e) What are the project milestones? Display timelines for major tasks, target milestones for important immediate and final products, and key project outcomes. This includes identifying all consultation and permitting requirements and their status (e.g., not applied for, pending, secured). Describe the time lines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2), rather than by specific dates. Identify the individual(s) responsible for the various specific activities.

7. Project management - Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Proposals should demonstrate the applicant organization's knowledge and experience in delivering the project requested in this application. The principal investigator may or may not be the applicant; however, if the applicant is not the principal investigator, there must be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and principal investigator (e.g., the applicant may be responsible for managing the grant funds and the principal investigator will be responsible for completing the work).

Include the resume or curriculum vitae of the principal investigator(s) and any consultants and/or subcontractors, and indicate their level of involvement in the project. Include copies of any agreements between you and the participants describing the specific tasks to be performed. Agreement documents and resumes/curriculum vitae (2 page maximum) should be included in the "Supporting Documentation." This information does not count toward the project narrative's 25 page limitation.

8. Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant - Describe how Federal, state and non-government entities, particularly members of fishing communities, will participate in the project, and the nature of their participation. Also describe the involvement of NOAA staff with the project, if applicable.

9. Outreach and Education - How will this project provide a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources? This includes the degree to which the potential users of the results, i.e., industry or state resource managers, have been involved in the planning of activity, will be involved in the execution of the activity and/or are providing funds, and whether there is a plan to disseminate the results to user groups (including Regional Fishery Management Councils, etc.,) and the public. Describe specific outreach goals, activities and deliverables.

C. Budget Justification

In order to allow reviewers to fully evaluate the appropriateness of proposed costs, the budget justification narrative must include a detailed breakdown of total project costs by category of cost (object class) separated into federal and non-federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the project, with appropriate narrative justification for both the federal and non-federal (if applicable) shares. The object classes must match those found in Form SF-424A. The budget justification narrative 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 Form SF-424A. You are encouraged to include a budget table to further clarify the cost breakdown. If applicable, describe briefly the basis for estimating the value of the cost sharing derived from in-kind contributions. The source of any non-federal matching funds or in-kind contributions should be detailed.

a) The budget narrative must include: Personnel costs, including salary and wages, should be broken out by named principal investigator (PI) and number of months requested per year per PI as a percentage of their normal salary rate. Support for each PI should be commensurate with their stated involvement, which may or may not correspond to their current position. Any unnamed personnel (graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, technicians) should be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to PI personnel costs above. Fringe benefits should be identified separately from salary and wages; fringe benefit rates should be applied consistently, and should apply equally to both Federal and non-Federal (matching) funds, if applicable. Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. If fringe costs are more than 35% of salaries, please provide a detailed breakdown of what is included in the fringe costs.

b) Travel costs should be broken out by number of people traveling, destination and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Projected travel costs should be inclusive of transport costs, lodging costs, and per Diem expenses for all travelers, which are to be described in detail in the budget narrative. If travel details for a particular trip are unknown, explain the basis for estimating proposed costs. To qualify for support, attendance at meetings or conferences must enhance the investigator's capability to perform the research or disseminate its results. Domestic travel is to be justified separately from foreign travel, since the latter may require additional clearances. You must adhere to the provisions of the 'Fly America Act' and use U.S.-flagged vessels for transport. Any foreign travel necessary to implement the project should be highlighted in the project and budget narratives since such travel would require additional clearances.

c) "Equipment" is non-expendable, tangible personal property with a unit cost of $5,000 or more and a useful life of more than one year. Items that do not meet the equipment definition must be included under supplies. List each piece of equipment separately and reference the type/model to be purchased and its contribution to the achievement of the project goals. General use equipment must be used 100% for the proposed project if charged directly to the award; if the equipment will be used for multiple projects, only a portion of the expense that is commensurate with the actual use of the equipment during the project may be requested. Equipment purchases are not a priority under this competition.

d) Supplies should be itemized to the level of detail known or may be based on established historical costs. You should include the quantity/number of units and cost per unit to justify expenses listed in the supplies category, especially when supply costs exceed $5000 in aggregate.

e) Contractual costs should be itemized separately, according to standard budget categories that appear in Form SF-424A; all types of contractual costs should be included in the Contractual line on Form SF-424A and explained in detail in the budget narrative. You must indicate the basis for each contract's cost estimate and specify the products or services to be obtained through all contracts.

f) Other costs should be listed by type of material or nature of expense and should be broken down by quantity/number of units and cost per unit, if applicable.

g) The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an approved indirect cost rate agreement with the federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., electricity, rent, water, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. For this solicitation, the federal share of the indirect costs must not exceed the lesser of either the indirect costs the applicant would be entitled to if the negotiated federal indirect cost rate were used or 25 percent of the federal

direct costs proposed. For those situations in which the use of the applicant's indirect cost rate would result in indirect costs greater than 25 percent of the federal direct costs, the difference may be counted as part of the voluntary non-federal share. A copy of the most recent approved negotiated indirect costs agreement with the federal government that covers the award period must be included with the application.

D. Supporting Documentation - This section should include the supporting documentation such as: qualifications of the primary project personnel (resumes or curriculum vitae, limit two pages each), agreements with key partners, a copy of your indirect cost rate agreement, and letters of support received from the relevant jurisdictional representatives, partners, or communities involved in the project.

C. Submission Dates and Times

To be considered timely, applications must be received and validated by Grants.gov, by 11:59 pm, Eastern Standard Time (EST) 12/15/2014, 60 days after the posting date of the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO). Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, applications postmarked or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm on 12/15/2014 may be accepted. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received more than 5 calendar days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail (e-mail) applications will be accepted.

When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that you are encouraged to apply through Grants.gov. This electronic submission system is relatively complex for first time users and involves several preliminary registrations to be completed before your application can be submitted. If you have already used Grants.gov, the required registrations may have already been completed. Please allow sufficient time for the application to be submitted electronically and for possible computer delays. 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. Applications not adhering to postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected and returned to the sender without further consideration.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on Form 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, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC's are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

E. Funding Restrictions

Projects that primarily involve business start-up or infrastructure development are not eligible for funding under the S-K Grant Program.

The S-K Grant Program will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, travel or salaries for Federal employees, or profit as allowable costs in the proposed budget. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Project costs can only include support for activities conducted between the effective start date and end date of the award, and cannot include activities undertaken either before or after the agreed upon dates. Applicants will not be reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award. Such expenditures may not be considered as part of the applicant's cost share or matching contribution.

SK Grant Program and the NOAA's Grants Management Division staff will review budget information for recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic.

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. 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 relevant OMB Cost Principles, which NOAA anticipates will be located at 2. C.F.R. Part 200. All cost reimbursement subawards (subgrants, subcontracts, etc.) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Registration Process

1. Required registrations: You must complete and maintain the following registrations to be eligible to submit an application using the Grants.gov website. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. Registration can take between 3 days to 4 weeks or more, so applicants should begin the registration process as soon as possible.

(a) Grants.Gov: The first step in submitting an application online is to complete a one-time registration process. Individuals wishing to submit a grant application, using Grants.Gov, are required to complete this one time registration process. Neither a Data

Universal Number System (DUNS) number nor the System for Award Management (SAM, formerly CCR) registration is necessary for Individual Registration.

(b) Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) - All Applicant Organizations (optional for Individual Applicants) must be issued a DUNS number. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit identification number provided by Dun and Brad Street. It will be used as the Universal Identifier when applying for federal awards or cooperative agreements. You may request a DUNS number by calling 1-866-705-5711 (toll free) or through the internet at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. Your DUNS Number assignment is free.

(c) System for Award Management (SAM) – All Applicant Organizations (optional for Individual Applicants) must complete and maintain an active registration, which requires renewal at least annually. New registrations take an average of 14 business days for new registrations. The renewal process may require as much time as the initial registration. SAM registration includes the assignment of a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code for domestic organizations which have not already been assigned a CAGE Code. To register, go to: http://www.SAM.gov. Registration is free.

2. Only authorized individual(s) will be able to submit the application, and the system may need time to process a submitted application. After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic acknowledgment of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by NOAA.) Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt; the second confirms that there are no errors with an application submission; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). You should save and print the proof of submission. If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with both the Grants.gov help desk and the S-K Program Manager Daniel Namur to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support

3. NMFS employees working in S-K Program offices are not allowed to assist in the preparation of an application or proposal, except that these individuals may provide you with information on program goals, funding priorities, application procedures, and completion of application forms. Because this is a competitive program, S-K Program staff will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for an application or proposal.

If you do not have internet access, a hardcopy (paper) application package may be requested from and submitted to Daniel Namur, S-K Program Manager, NOAA/NMFS (F/MB); 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13358, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria, the maximum score for each of which is indicated below in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors that the reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets the criterion. We encourage applicants to make explicit connections to the evaluation criteria and factors in their applications. Written comments are required to justify provided scores in each section of the review. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals (30 points). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities.

Does the proposal describe its relevance to a SK Grant Program Priority in Section B, and how information gathered will contribute to NOAA mission to enhance the understanding of the fishery resource and contribute to the body of information on which management decisions are made? Does this study address an important problem, providing a clear definition of the problem, need, issue or research need to be addressed? Can the research question be answered using existing data? If not, is this the best method to obtain the data? Where applicable, is the participation of U.S. fishermen meaningfully incorporated into the project design? Will the project(s) yield environmentally compatible socio-economic benefits, such as increased business opportunities, recreational opportunities, or decreased safety hazards? The appropriateness of the data sharing plan: Has the proposal included a Data Information Sharing Plan including description of the types of environmental data and information 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, sharing and security; and prior experience in publishing such.

Using the scale below, score Item 1 (lowest score possible is 0)

Poor Fair Good Commendable Excellent

0----------8----------15----------23----------30

2. Technical and/or scientific merit (35 points). This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

Proposals should provide a clear definition of the approach to be used, including descriptions of field work, theoretical studies, and laboratory analysis to support the proposed research. Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Are the objectives in the proposal clearly defined and focused, realistic and can be reached within the proposed project period? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider ways to resolve the issues or implement alternative tactics? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies? Is sufficient detail provided in the proposal about the methods proposed for monitoring and evaluating the success of the project, and are they appropriate? Does the project demonstrate support, cooperation and/or collaboration with the fishing industry? Is there sufficient description of the project's environmental impact? Have permits been applied for or acquired?

Poor Fair Good Commendable Excellent

0----------10----------20----------30----------35

3. Overall qualifications of the applicants (10 points). This criterion assesses whether the applicant, and team members, possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

Does the applicant have the capacity/knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners that show adequate administrative capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the proposed project? Does the proposal include resumes of the. Principal Investigator(s)? In cases where subcontracts are proposed for carrying out specific tasks, are the quality/appropriateness of the personnel, facilities and procedures (laboratory methods, work plan and or quality oversight procedures) adequate?

Poor Fair Good Commendable Excellent

0----------4----------6----------8----------10

4. Project costs (15 points).This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. Cost effectiveness of the project is considered.

Is the proposed budget cost-effective and realistic based on the applicant's stated objectives, time frame, and amount of overall project budget already secured from other

sources? Is the proposed budget sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of costs by object class?

Poor Fair Good Commendable Excellent

0----------4----------8----------10----------15

5. Outreach and education (10 points). 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.

Does the proposal identify anticipated benefits, potential users, indicators of success, and methods of disseminating results? Is an effective method proposed for dissemination of project results? Are the various target audiences, such as the fishing community or the general public, identified? Will the outreach methods acknowledge NOAA Fisheries support of the project?

Poor Fair Good Commendable Excellent

0----------4----------6----------8----------10

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Screening - An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to determine compliance with application requirements and completeness of application materials. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete or non-responsive will be eliminated from further review.

When applications are received they will be 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; the proposed project addresses one of the funding priorities; and includes a project summary, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B. Content and Form of Application. We do not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause your application to be rejected so that you would have an opportunity to correct them. However, should we do so and provide you information about deficiencies, or should you independently decide it is desirable to do so, you may correct any deficiencies in your application before the deadline. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it. If your application does not conform to the requirements listed above, and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will be returned and rejected without further consideration.

2. Technical Review - After the initial screening, independent written technical evaluations from three or more appropriate federal, private or public sector experts (e.g.

industry, academia, or governmental experts) with subject matter expertise will be obtained to determine the technical merit of the proposal. Their evaluation will be based solely on the information included in the application and in accordance with the criteria described in Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. No consensus advice will be given. These reviewers will be required to certify that they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the application(s) they are reviewing. NOAA will protect technical reviewer identity to the maximum extent permitted by law. Following completion of the technical review, the individual technical review scores will be averaged to determine the final technical score for each application. Applications will be ranked in descending order by their final technical scores. A "cutoff" score will be established that is based in part, on the amount of funds available for grants. Applications that scored below the cutoff will be eliminated from further consideration.

3. Constituent Panel Review - For those applications at or above the cutoff technical evaluation score, NMFS may solicit individual comments and evaluations from a panel or panels of 3 or more representatives selected by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries (AA), NOAA. If this option is elected, Constituent Panel members will be chosen from various sectors, including the fishing industry, state governments, non-government organizations, and others, as appropriate. The Constituent Panel's role is to enhance the Agency's understanding of this select group of proposals received under the competition before selection recommendations are made. Should Constituent Panel Review(s) be conducted, panelists will be provided with the applications, a summary of the technical evaluations (including scores and comments), and for applications to continue a previously funded project, information on progress on the funded work to date.

Each panelist will evaluate in a group setting (meeting or webinar), the applications in terms of the significance of the problem or opportunity being addressed, the degree to which the project involves collaboration with fishing community members and other appropriate collaborators, proposed means to disseminate project results, and benefits (industry, resource, economic) derived from investment in the project. Prior to the Constituent Panel discussion, each panelist will independently assign a numerical rating between 1 and 4 (poor to excellent) for each application according to the following scale, and provide comments to support their score:

1– Poor; application was marginally responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V. A) but does not address program priorities outlined in the FFO.

2– Fair; application was adequately responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V. A) and marginally addresses program priorities outlined in the FFO.

3– Good; application was strongly responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V. A) and partially addresses program priorities outlined in the FFO.

4– Excellent; application was highly responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V. A) and exceptionally addresses program priorities outlined in the FFO.

Panel members will be required to certify that they do not have a conflict of interest and that they will maintain confidentiality of the panel deliberations. NOAA will protect panelist identity to the maximum extent permitted by law.

During the Constituent Panel Meeting or Webinar reviewers can revise their scores and comments. Panelists must individually submit their final score to the S-K Program Manager by the end of the panel meeting or Webinar. No consensus advice will be given by the panelists on recommendations or scores. After the panel scores are submitted, a compilation of all proposals in rank order is developed based on the average score from the constituent review panel with the cutoff placed at the amount of funds to be made available from the congressional process.

4. Funding Recommendations

Technical Review Only - The SK Program Manager, in consultation with the NMFS Regional Administrators (RAs) and Office Directors (ODs) and Science Center Directors (SDs) will develop a recommendation for project funding for those applications that scored above the cutoff score.

Constituent Panel Review (if applicable) - The SK Program Manager will use the Constituent Panel ranking and review comments along with input from the NMFS Regional Administrators (RAs), Science Center Directors (SD), and Office Directors (ODs), to develop a recommendation for project funding.

Not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate. For a proposal to be selected for funding the applicant may be required to modify objectives, work plans and budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. Awards are not necessarily made to the highest ranked applications.

C. Selection Factors

The AA, as the Selecting Official, will review the funding recommendation and comments of the RAs/ODs/SDs to determine which applications will be recommended to the NOAA Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall recommend proposals to the Grants Officer for funding in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors listed in no order of significance:

1. Availability of funding;

2. Balance and distribution of funds;

a. By research area;

b. By project type;

c. By type of Applicant;

d. By type of partners;

e. Geographic distribution;

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies;

4. Program priorities as noted in Section I A. & B.

5. Applicant's prior award performance in conducting a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Selecting Official may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality:

6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups; and

7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications being considered for funding are expected to be complete by May of 2015. The earliest start date for projects will be June 1, 2015, dependent upon availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive notification from a NMFS Regional representative that the application has been recommended for funding selection to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project, and is not a guarantee of funding. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. This notification will be issued to the Authorizing Representative of the project either electronically through use of Grants Online or in hard copy. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding

until the Applicant's Authorized Representative has received official notice of the award from the NOAA Grants Officer and has reviewed and accepted the terms of the award. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not recommended for funding or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in IV.B (Content and Form of Applications). Unselected paper applications will be returned to the applicant.

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an 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.

Award documents provided by the Grants Officer may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award as applicable and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award so they are fully aware of the relevant Standard Terms and Conditions as well as any Special Award Conditions that have been placed on the award.

Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements.

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on December 17, 2012 (77 FR 74634), and are applicable to this FFO. You may obtain a copy of this notice by contacting the agency contact(s) listed under Section VII, or by going to the website http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-12-17/pdf/2012-30228.pdf. Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact must furnish information requested to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Administrative Requirements - Successful applicants that accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the Department of Commerce and NOAA standard terms and conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in Grants Online, NOAA's financial assistance management system. In addition, award documents provided by the NOAA Grants Office though the Grants Online award package may contain program and project-specific special award conditions.

2. NEPA Requirements - As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, of applications that request Federal funding. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). Program applications should, to the best extent, provide what they know about their projects at the time of submitting their grant application. Examples of the level of detail to be incorporated into proposals to assist in the environmental review can be found in http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf.

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. Funds will not be released until NOAA completes the requisite NEPA analysis and documentation. Funds may be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to obtain all necessary federal, state, and local government permits and approval for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposed activities to minimize the potential for adverse impacts to the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests for, or approval of required environmental permits should be included in the application package. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they contain sufficient information to allow NOAA staff to conduct a NEPA analysis so that appropriate NEPA documentation, required as part of the application package, can be submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division along with the recommendation for funding for selected applications.

3. NOAA’s Data Sharing Policy - 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 2 years after the data are collected or created), except

where limited by law, regulation, policy or security requirements. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) must be made publicly available at the time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with published data. 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 decision. If your proposed activities do not generate any environmental data, your application is still required to have a data sharing plan. Such a data sharing plan could include the statement that "this project will not generate any environmental data". More information about the Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental data Management Committee website at: http://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php

4. Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2015 appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that amount of funds have not yet been determined for the SK Grant Program described in this notice and are advised that the competition described herein may be subject to cancellation due to unavailability of funding or revision of agency priorities. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award funding for specific projects or obligate available funds. You should not initiate your project in expectation of Federal funding until you receive a grant award document signed by an authorized NOAA official. If you incur any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, you do so solely at your own risk of these costs not being included under the award. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

5. Paperwork Reduction Act - This collection of information contains requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms (SF) 424, 424A, 424B, and LLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0040, 0348-0044, 0348-0043, 0348-0046 and 0605-0001. 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 PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

6. Administrative Procedure Act/Regulatory Flexibility Act - Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required by the Administrative procedure Act or any other law for rules concerning public property, loans, grants, benefits, and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comments are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared, 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.

7. Executive Order 12866 - It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

8. Delinquent Tax Liability – 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.

9. Please note that on December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance titled Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements (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. 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/.

C. Reporting

1. Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. Financial Status Reports (Form SF-425) are required to be submitted to the Grants Officer semi-annually, or as outlined in the award conditions. Financial Status Reports should be entered directly into the Grants Online system.

2. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) - This FFATA includes a requirement for awardees of Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All grant recipients awarded a new Federal grant greater than or equal to $25,000, are subject to FFATA subaward reporting requirements. All awardees of applicable NOAA 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.

3. Performance Progress Reports: - Basic information that should be in all report submissions includes the project title, award number, dates of the award period, dates of the reporting period, and the name(s) of the grantee and the principal investigator. Inclusion of media such as photography and statistics (tables, graphs, etc.) to help document programmatic activities in report submissions is also encouraged. Pertinent, captioned photographs of project activities are requested, and may be included within the progress report document submitted via Grants Online.

Semi-annual progress reports should describe the tasks scheduled for the reporting period (from the proposal and amendments) and the tasks that were actually accomplished in the period. The report should also explain any special problems or differences between the scheduled and accomplished work.

The final, comprehensive report should include an "Executive Summary" of the project accomplishments which briefly and succinctly summarizes the final report for website or publication use. Limit this summary to no more than one page. The suggested format for the final report is:

a. Report title, author, organization, grant number, date

b. Executive Summary: a brief and succinct summary of the final report

c. Purpose:

- Detailed description of problem or impediment of fishing industry that was addressed by the project.

- Objectives of the project.

d. Approach - Detailed description of the work that was performed.

e. Project Management - List individuals and/or organizations actually performing the work and how it was done.

f. Findings:

- Actual accomplishments and findings.

- If significant problems developed which resulted in less than satisfactory or negative results, these should be discussed.

- Description of need for additional work, if any.

g. Evaluation:

- Describe the extent to which the project goals and objectives were attained. This description should address the following: Were the goals and objectives attained? How? If not, why? Were modifications made to the goals and objectives? If so, explain.

- Dissemination of project results: Explain, in detail, how the project's results have been and will be disseminated.

4. Publications, Videos and Acknowledgement of Sponsorship: Publication of the results or findings of the funded award activities in appropriate professional journals, outreach materials, or press releases, and production of video or other media is encouraged as an important method of recording and reporting scientific information. These are also constructive means to expand access to federally funded research. The recipient is required to submit a copy of any publication to the funding agency, and when releasing information related to a funded project, include a statement that the project or effort undertaken was or is sponsored by NOAA Fisheries Service. The recipient is also responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including Internet sites and videos) based on or developed under an award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following acknowledgement and disclaimer: "This project received funding under award [number] from NOAA Fisheries Service, in cooperation with the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA Fisheries."

The final report is a public document and may be posted, partially or in its entirety, on the NOAA Fisheries website.

VII. Agency Contacts

Regional S-K Program point of contacts:

Headquarters - Program Manager – Daniel Namur, telephone (301) 427-8730 email: Dan.Namur@noaa.gov, Alaska Region: Shawn Carey, telephone: (907) 586-7845; email:

Shawn.Carey@noaa.gov; West Coast Region: Kim Raneses, telephone: (206) 526-6131; email: Kim.Raneses@noaa.gov, Pacific Islands Region: Scott Bloom, telephone: (808) 944-2218; email: Scott.Bloom@noaa.gov, Greater Atlantic Region: Susan Olsen, telephone (978) 281-9330; email: Susan.Olsen@noaa.gov; Southeast Region: Robert Sadler, telephone: (727) 824-5324; email: Robert.Sadler@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - 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. Applications submitted in response to this FFO 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.