FY18 Deep-Sea Exploration, Characterization, and Education in National Marine Sanctuaries Using Telepresence

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: FY18 Deep-Sea Exploration, Characterization, and Education in National Marine Sanctuaries Using Telepresence

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-ONMS-2018-2005606

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.429, Marine Sanctuary Program

Dates: Completed applications must be received by Grants.gov by July 23, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, or postmarked no later than July 23, 2018 and sent to the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Applications received after the due date will not be reviewed or considered and will be disqualified. See Section IV.D. of this announcement for additional details.

PLEASE NOTE: We encourage all Grants.gov applicants to begin the application process at least several days before the July 23, 2018 deadline. All applicants should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicant schedules for delivery of the application. It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind when developing your submission timeline. Electronic applicants are advised that volume on Grants.gov can be extremely heavy resulting in further delays. If Grants.gov is unable to accept applications electronically in a timely fashion, applicants are encouraged to exercise their option to submit their application in paper format by the due date outlined in this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO).

In addition, applicants must register and update registration annually in the System for Award Management (SAM), as described in Section IV.C. of this announcement, which may take several weeks if problems arise. Applicants are encouraged to register in SAM as soon as possible upon considering submission of an application.

Funding Opportunity Description: FY18 Deep-Sea Exploration, Characterization, and Education in National Marine Sanctuaries funding opportunity is being offered to explore and document the deep-sea oceanography, marine habitats, cultural sites, and living and non-living resources in and around national marine sanctuaries to better understand their biology, ecology, geology, and cultural resources. The research should use deep-sea technology and telepresence

communication systems to create high-end 4K imagery, collect critical data and information, and create derived products with that data, including maps of deep-water regions in the National Marine Sanctuary System. In addition, the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) strives to engage broad audiences to enhance America's environmental literacy through the excitement of ocean discovery. This deep-sea research should utilize telepresence technology from the research platform to beam high resolution images and video to distributed land-based locations to engaged distributed science parties, as well as to locations accessible to the general public and formal and informal educators and their associated facilities. ONMS regularly forms such collaborations to reach out to the public in innovative ways to improve the literacy of learners with respect to ocean issues.

Additional information about the program can be obtained in the full announcement text of the Federal Funding Opportunity.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) is seeking applications for deep-sea exploration and education in national marine sanctuaries using telepresence from organizations and institutions that can orchestrate state-of-the-art ocean research with Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) in real-time, via telepresence (real-time communications and video feeds from onsite field locations to distributed science, education, community based venues to U.S. and international locations) technology. Emphasis will be placed on education and outreach to inspire the next generation of innovators and engage the broader science community. The world's deep-sea remains largely unexplored, leaving significant gaps in basic environmental knowledge needed to manage and protect ocean resources and forecast future environmental changes. ONMS is interested in conducting exploration, characterization, and research of these deep-sea areas, and delivering information essential to addressing current and emerging science and management issues.

B. Program Priorities

The FY18 Deep-Sea Exploration, Characterization, and Education in National Marine Sanctuaries Using Telepresence funding opportunity is being offered to explore and document deep-sea oceanography, marine habitats, cultural sites, and living and non-living resources in national marine sanctuaries to better understand their biology, ecology, geology, and cultural resources. Planned projects should use deep-sea technology to create high-end 4K imagery, document sanctuary resources and processes, and produce derived outcomes, e.g. maps of deep-water regions in the National Marine Sanctuary System. In addition, ONMS strives to engage broad audiences to enhance America's environmental literacy through the excitement of ocean discovery. This deep-sea research should utilize telepresence technology from the research platform to beam high-resolution images and real-time video to land-based locations. The images and video can be received by distributed science parties, as well as by the general public and formal and informal educators and their associated facilities. ONMS regularly forms such collaborations to reach out to the public in new ways to improve the literacy of learners with respect to ocean issues.

Priority will be given to those organizations that:

1. Sponsor interdisciplinary exploration and baseline characterizations of deep-sea ocean areas, processes, and resources;

2. Advance undersea technical capabilities through support for design/development, testing and implementation of new or improved deep-sea technologies (e.g., platforms, sensors etc.), and innovative applications of existing technologies;

3. Foster partnerships to accomplish the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries goals;

4. Engage and educate audiences by sharing information about national marine sanctuaries, deep-sea research and the technology needed through innovative means;

5. Align with NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' research needs. Site-specific needs are identified in the Science Needs Assessment available at: http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/assessment/. Contact information for Conservation Science Program staff is available at the Science Needs Assessment website; and

6. Strive to inspire the next generation of innovators and engage the broader science community.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to:

- Collaborate with NOAA partners;
- Engage with scientists from around the world through telepresence technology;
- Conduct deep-sea exploration, characterization, and research within the National Marine Sanctuary System—which currently includes a site in the Great Lakes;
- Provide high-resolution 4K video and high-resolution stills of all findings;
- Create high-resolution multi-beam maps of these deep-sea regions; and
- Engage diverse audiences in the science, education, and technology opportunities through telepresence outreach, with an emphasis on connecting to National Marine Sanctuary System virtual classrooms and distance learning platforms.

ONMS conducts, sponsors, and facilitates research to better understand ecosystems and cultural resources in national marine sanctuaries, their changing condition, and the significance of threats. The National Marine Sanctuary System uses conservation science to support policy decisions, develop effective response capabilities, evaluate management practices, and support broader, NOAA-wide responsibilities for marine conservation and management. Science priorities are identified within national marine sanctuary management plans and are necessary to protect and conserve sanctuary resources, manage risks, reduce threats, and respond to unexpected events. Strong partnerships, expert scientific content and judgment, and peer review enhance the accuracy and credibility of monitoring and research.

In addition, science, education, outreach, and policy development work together to raise awareness and prompt effective action that will address ocean problems. More information on the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries can be found at http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov.

C. Program Authority

The National Marine Sanctuaries Act, 16 USC 1440, 1442.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Subject to appropriations, approximately $3,000,000 will be available for Fiscal Year 2018. The Deep-Sea Research in National Marine Sanctuaries Using Telepresence program anticipates that one (1) to three (3) grant(s) will be awarded in Fiscal Year 2018. The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries anticipates that typical project awards for the identified priority area will range from $500,000 to $2,000,000 per year for up to three years.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so at their own risk of not receiving an award.

B. Project/Award Period

The award period is up to three (3) years for an organization or institution that can meet the approach described in this FFO. The anticipated start date is November 1, 2018. If an applicant is selected and provided partial funding, generally for the first year, NOAA has no obligation to provide additional funding increments for that award in subsequent years. Funding for each year's activity is contingent upon the availability of funds, satisfactory performance, and is at the sole discretion of NOAA.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument will be a cooperative agreement to the organization or institution that is selected. The substantial involvement of the federal government may include, but is not limited to, activities such as specifying direction and redirection of the scope of work due to interrelationships with other projects, or stipulating that the recipient must meet or adhere to specific procedural requirements before subsequent stages of a project may continue. The

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' staff also intends to collaborate with the organization(s) or institution(s) on the planning and implementation that best supports science, education, and outreach objectives consistent with the purpose of the National Marine Sanctuary System.

By receiving funding from ONMS, all applicants agree to collaborate with NOAA on sample collection (including video and still photography), education and outreach, data management, and website development. To facilitate this collaboration, one or more ONMS staff or ONMS designee(s) may become members of an at-sea science team, serving roles as expedition coordinators, data managers, web coordinators, or education coordinators.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education; non-profit institutions; for-profit organizations; or state, local, and tribal governments based in the United States or U.S. territories.

Applicants should carefully review the requirements in Section IV.B. to assure that they will be able to submit a responsive application.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There are no matching requirements for this award.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

1. The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries encourages partnerships between academia, government agencies, foundations, and private-sector companies and recommends these partnerships be presented as part of the submitted proposal.

2. Permits and Approvals - It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary international, federal, state, and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize potential adverse environmental impacts. If applicable, documentation of requests for or approvals of cultural resource or environmental permits must be included in the proposal package. Applications will also be reviewed to assess whether the applicant will need to complete the NOAA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questionnaire (http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf; http://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/0/Documents/funding_fellowship/forms_templates/NEPA/N

EPA_questionnaire.pdf) after the application is submitted and prior to potential funding, i.e., to ensure there is sufficient information about the project to allow NOAA to analyze the project's potential environmental impacts, pursuant to NEPA.

Archaeological work requires consultation with the appropriate State Historic Preservation Office and adhering to any regulations or guidelines that may apply. The applicant must have these associated permits. Sample collection must not only adhere to federal and state law, but the applicant must also make accommodation for conservation and curating as described in the Annex Rules of the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system prior to submitting an application. This registration process can take several weeks and involves multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, applicants should register as soon as they decide they intend to apply, even if they are not yet ready to submit their applications. ONMS will not accept applications that are submitted late due to an applicant's error during the time of submission to Grants.gov. ONMS may allow more time for application submission due to a "systems issue" with Grants.gov that takes place at the time of application submission and is beyond the control of the applicant. In these limited circumstances where there is a systems issue, the applicant must contact the help desk for the relevant system (e.g. Grants.gov) and obtain a help desk ticket number. The applicant must contact ONMS immediately upon discovering the issues and must still submit the required application documents in order for his/her application to be considered for review. Required information for the application, such as financial documentation, may require extra time to obtain, so please plan accordingly. Applications will not be considered if any materials are received later than the deadline.

Adobe Acrobat is continuously making updates to their software. We recommend applicants check the compatibility of Adobe products with the application's required forms well in advance.

Information in hard copy may be requested from:

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East-West Highway 11th Floor Rm. 11622

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Information contact: Send requests for information to the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries at the address shown above or via email to sanctuary.education@noaa.gov. Please allow adequate time for inquiry responses, do not expect an immediate response to email messages.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals must adhere to the following provisions and requirements:

1. OMB Standard Federal Forms

- Standard Form 424 - Application for Federal Assistance
- Standard Form 424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs - When applying for a multiple year award (2 to 5 years), the non-federal entity must submit a line item budget (SF-424A) and corresponding budget narrative for each of the funding periods anticipated
- Standard Form 424B- Assurances - Non-Construction Programs
- Standard Form LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)
- Form CD-511 - Certification Regarding Lobbying

2. Proposals applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Required elements for all submissions:

- Components of the proposal outlined in Section IV. B. 2.a-h. should be submitted as a single PDF document and uploaded into the Grants.gov system as a single PDF document. The order of the documents should reflect the order outlined below in Section IV. B. 2.a-h;
- Proposal format must be in a 12-point font with 1-inch margins;
- Applicants must number each page and label it with the Principal Investigator’s last name in the bottom right-hand corner. The digital file that is uploaded into Grants.gov should be named with the applicant’s last name, e.g., “Johnson Proposal 2018.”

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the application not being reviewed. Proposals submitted after the due date will not be considered. No separate appendices are permitted.

All proposals must include:

(a) Maximum One-Page Executive Summary: Describe the essential elements of the project being proposed. Include:
1) title;
2) list of names, contact details, and affiliations of each investigator who will significantly contribute to the project;
3) a concise statement of the compelling objectives and benefits of the project and the rationale for the work proposed; and
4) funding request for each year of the project and the total funding requested.

(b) Project Description: The project description is not to exceed 15 pages, including all text and any tables and visual materials (e.g., charts, graphs, maps, photographs). This is a firm requirement. Any project description pages beyond the 15-page limit will not be reviewed. The 15-page limit does not include: Required Federal Forms, Executive Summary, Summary of Significant Results, Summary of Current and Pending Federal Funding, Letters of Support, Resumes, Budget Justification and Table, Literature Citation (if needed), Data Information and Sharing Plan, Indirect Cost Rate, or Copies of Permits.

Contents of the Project Description:
i. Scientific and Technical Merit - Description of the project's scientific, technical, historical, cultural, or socioeconomic importance and merit. Describe the proposed locations of deep-sea research and how the work aligns with ONMS mission goals and science needs.

ii. Importance and Relevance to ONMS Mission and Goals - Description of the project's goals and objectives and the proposed methodology. Successful proposals will demonstrate relevance to the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' mission, goals, and science priorities (as described in Sections I.A & I.B).

- The value to NOAA and the nation and how this project's anticipated outcomes will benefit our understanding of the deep-sea, the science community, and society; and
- A timeline of events that provides ONMS dates of anticipated field operations and any operational constraints, especially with regard to field operations and consideration to environmental impacts in the project planning. The timeline should also represent the applicant's ability to acquire all necessary permits; and explain the applicants' plan for making data and results publicly available to advance scientific knowledge, outreach, education, and inform environmental management decisions.

iii. Vessels and Other Technologies - The description should include information on the vessels, ROVs, platforms, or other critical assets required to technically achieve the goals.

- Applicants must have access to a vessel large enough to run operations that can accommodate the necessary crew, scientists, educators, and outreach professionals to explore, document, and create derived products, e.g. maps of deep-sea regions in the National Marine Sanctuary System using remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) in real-time, via telepresence technology, as well as include wet lab/dry space for processing collected samples. A description of ownership, lease or renting access (via leasing or renting agreements), or letters of support through partners must be included;
- Applicants must have access to high-resolution multibeam bathymetric mapping system(s) that can efficiently map the seafloor bathymetry and associated backscatter in ranges 100 to 5,000 meters water depth. A description of ownership, lease or renting access (via leasing or renting agreements), or letters of support through partners must be included;
- Applicants must have capability for sample/specimen collection, documentation, and preservation (e.g. corals, sponges, sediments). A description of this capability must be included;
- Applicants must have telepresence technology to allow for real-time participation by landbased scientists and effective outreach to diverse audiences to inspire the next generation of innovators. A description of ownership, lease or renting access (via leasing or renting agreements), or letters of support through partners must be included;and
- The ROVs also need high-definition cameras with pan and tilt capabilities, high-quality lighting, and hardware/software capacity for image and video storage.

iv. Overall Qualifications of Applicant(s)

- Provision of brief descriptions of the contributions of participating personnel. Resumes should be included. This must include a description of familiarity and experience in the collection of underwater research and monitoring data, as well as in situ biologic, geologic, samples, and/or historical artifacts. The description must provide the applicants' experience with sub-bottom profilers to collect significant geologic data. In addition, describe any applicable academic training and experience in the construction, modification, maintenance, repair, and operations of deep-water ROVs with a manipulator arm with multiple functions, including the capability to collect water samples, soft tissue samples, including sampling tool skid, etc; and
- Education and outreach: Please include a description of any experience with and capacity to build education programs aboard the vessel that engage diverse audiences, such as science and engineering internships, ambassador programs, and fellowships for formal and informal educators.
- Also, outline any strong social media presence for outreach. Describe how telepresence technology will be used to support education and outreach efforts. Also state a willingness to participate as a collaborator in NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' education and

outreach activities, such as the virtual classroom that will increase the accessibility of science-based learning for sanctuary communities, social media, and web postings.

v. Anticipated Outputs
Highlight clips (still images and video provided during missions, e.g. daily, and/or education and outreach materials) will be made available in real time. In the short term, raw images, and video, navigation files, unprocessed mapping data, and biological data shall be provided within one month or sooner. In the long term, potential discoveries, knowledge and impact assessments, published papers, reports, processed video and still imagery, meetings, processed mapping data, and final reports should be provided within six months of cruise.

(c) Summary of Significant Results: This summary should include publications and outputs, and data/information sharing experience from any prior, or ongoing, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries funding.

(d) A Summary of Current and Pending Federal Funding: Applicants must provide information on all of their current and pending federal support for ongoing projects and proposals, including potential subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. The proposed project and all other projects or activities using federal assistance or that requires a portion of times of the Principal Investigator or other senior personnel should be included.

(e) Letters of Support- Please include any letters of support from partners or collaborators.

(f) Resumes: A maximum of two pages for each Principal and Co-Principal Investigator(s) and Lead Education and Outreach staff.

(g) Budget Justification and Table: These must reflect the guidance provided in the NOAA Grants Management Division’s Budget Narratives Guidance, which can be found at: http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/docs/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-242017_final.pdf. Note the example provided. This document provides a comprehensive description of what is required for the Budget Justification and how to prepare a document that will facilitate a clear understanding of the funds being requested in support of the project.

The budget must include, and justify, sufficient resources to analyze, interpret, publish, and archive data (in accordance with the Data Information and Sharing Plan) and results of the project. Applicants must describe the scope of work and budget for each year of support being sought (not to exceed three years), and a summary budget table for entire award period. The budget should include information on the vessels, platforms, or other critical

assets and their costs and auxiliary funding sources for the proposed project.

The summary budget table must reflect the object classes contained in the SF-424A form included with the submission. If requesting indirect costs, a copy of the institution's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement is to be included. See also Section VI.B.4. regarding indirect costs. If proposed, cost sharing or third party in-kind contributions must be clearly identified. A separate SF-424 should be submitted for subaward budgets.

(h) Data/information Sharing Plan: Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan (up to two (2) pages). See Section VI.B., Administrative and National Policy Requirements, below for additional information on what the plan should contain.

(i) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Applicants are expected to design their projects so that they minimize the potential adverse impact on the environment. NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the NEPA, for projects proposed to receive NOAA federal funding. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_216/2166A.html and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/nepapub/nepa_documents/RedDont/GCEQGuidanceRegulations.pdf. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact will be asked to furnish sufficient information to assist NOAA in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project. NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by NEPA, for each project, which seeks NOAA funding. If needed by NOAA for NEPA assessment, applicants will be asked 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). 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 an environmental assessment if NOAA determines an assessment is required.

When applicable, applicants to be recommended for funding will be required to answer relevant questions from the “Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance Applicants" (OMB Control No. 0648-0538; http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf). After applications are submitted and prior to funding, the Federal Program Officer will determine which questions are relevant to each specific application. Answers must be provided before the application can be submitted for final funding approval.

Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying 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. 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.

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, which may be accessed at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgibin/textidx?SID=2dae4a7dcd5848a6364bb94d2d7786dd&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02 /2subtitleA.tpl.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Completed applications must be received by Grants.gov by July 23, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time or postmarked by July 23, 2018 and sent to the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Applications submitted by email will not be accepted. The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries mailing address is located in section IV.G. “Other Submission Requirements,” below.

Applications received after the due date will not be reviewed or considered and will be disqualified. Applicants may submit applications via Grants.gov or in paper hard copies.

Date and time of receipt of each application sent via Grants.gov is electronically recorded. For hard copy submission, each envelope is time and date stamped when received. In order for an application to be considered "Complete," all items required in subsection IV.B. "Content and Form of Application" must be received by Grants.gov or postmarked by the submission date. If you choose to mail your full application, we suggest using a service that can guarantee confirmation of delivery.

If an applicant is unable to use the preferred submission method (Grants.gov) or is unsure about the success of their submission to Grants.gov, a signed hard copy application must be postmarked, or provided to a delivery service and documented with a receipt, by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on July 23, 2018, the deadline under "Submission Dates and Times" in Section IV.D and sent to:

Deep-Sea Research in National Marine Sanctuaries Using Telepresence
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East-West Highway 11th Floor Rm. 11622
Silver Spring, MD 20910

NOAA must receive the time-documented paper copies within five business days. Contact an official listed in Section VII. to notify NOAA the application is forthcoming.

PLEASE NOTE: For detailed information about registering as an individual and applying in the Grants.gov system, please review the following document: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/individual-registration.html. All applicants, both those using electronic and paper, should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicant submission timelines for delivery of the application. It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. You will receive an official notice from Grants.gov if you have uploaded your application correctly and NOAA has received it.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt; the second confirms that the submission is acceptable and timely; and the third validates 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 Restoration Center to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission. It is not the responsibility of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to verify receipt of any application. If you experience submission problems that may result in your application being late, send an email to support@grants.gov and call the Grants.gov help desk (800-518-4726). The federal program officer for this

Announcement will use programmatic discretion in accepting applications due to documented electronic submission problems.The federal program officer for this Announcement will use programmatic discretion in accepting applications due to documented electronic submission problems.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

F. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Please refer to important information in submission dates and times above to help ensure your application is received on time. Applications should be submitted via Grants.gov. If an applicant does not have internet access to complete the application through Grants.gov or prefers to apply using a hard copy, hard copy applications may be submitted in one envelope to:

Deep-Sea Research in National Marine Sanctuaries Using Telepresence
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East West Highway 11th Floor, Rm. 11622
Silver Spring, MD 20910

PLEASE NOTE: For paper submissions, all application items must include a signed, completed SF-424 and be submitted in one envelope. The application materials should be in the order listed in this announcement to assure full review.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The following are the criteria and corresponding weight values to be used to evaluate the full proposals:

1. Scientific and Technical Merit (25%): 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. For ONMS, this includes: 1) proposed approach is scientifically and technically sound and/or innovative, including feasibility of high risk advanced technology; 2) there are clear project goals and objectives; 3) the project is interdisciplinary; 4) the methods commensurate with the goals and objectives; and 5) describe plans for documentation, archival, and sharing of data, multimedia, and specimen collections adequately outlined.

2. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal to the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' Mission and Goals (20%): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For ONMS, this includes: 1) applicant demonstrates NOAA partnerships; 2) proposed work occurs in national marine sanctuaries; 3) proposal is germane to ONMS mission goals for science, education, and public engagement; 4) proposal aligns with science needs of national marine sanctuaries; and 5) proposed timeline suits ONMS needs.

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicant(s) (20%): This criterion asks the reviewers to ascertain whether the applicant(s) possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the ONMS review process, half of this criterion involves judging: 1) the qualifications of the applicant(s); 2) the strength, diversity, and depth of any partnership to accomplish the work proposed; and 3) evaluation of past significant accomplishments and results, particularly as they are related to ONMS.

The other half of this criterion involves judging the proposed vessel and other technologies for the project. Reviewers will consider whether the proposal includes an adequate description of vessel(s) that can accommodate necessary crew, scientists, educators and others, ROVs, and other necessary technology to conduct deep-sea research using telepresence technology.

4. Project Costs (15%): This criterion ask the reviewers to evaluate the proposal budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the proposed project needs and timeframe. They will also assess the value of any additional funding and third party in-kind contributions, if proposed.

5. Outreach and Education (20%): This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy using Telepresence technology. For ONMS, this includes the evaluation of the proposal budget to determine if the proposal includes an outreach and education plan that will target future generation of explorers.

B. Review and Selection Process

Once NOAA receives an application, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with the minimum requirements, including completeness of the application and inclusion of all elements required in each of the FFO sections. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that can be easily rectified or cured. Ineligible, incomplete, duplicate, or non-responsive applications may be eliminated from further review.

All applications that pass the administrative review will be evaluated and scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by a review panel. The panel will be comprised of three or more individuals, having expertise in NOAA-related science and knowledge of the program priorities of the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. The reviewers will rate the proposals using the evaluation criteria and weighting provided above. The panel will then meet to discuss proposals. If more than one non-Federal reviewer is used, the review panel will not come to a consensus regarding applicants' scores. The individual panelists may revise their scores after the discussion, and the scores will be averaged for each application and placed in a ranking order of all applications. The Program Officer will transmit the review information to the Selection Official and may make a recommendation to the Selection Official about applying the selection factors below. The Selection Official will award in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the selection factors below.

C. Selection Factors

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.

The Selecting Official shall select awards in rank order unless a selection out of rank order is justified based upon any of the following factors:

- Availability of funding
- Balance/distribution of funds
- Geographically

- By type of institutions
- By type of partners
- By research area
- By project types
- Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies
- Program priorities and policy factors
- Applicant’s prior award performance
- Partnerships with/participation of targeted group
- Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer

The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for awards to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of applications and subsequent notification to applicants will be completed by August 31, 2018. Funds are expected to be awarded by November 1, 2018, which is the start date that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) for successful applications.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive electronic notification that the application has been funded from the NOAA Grants Management Division. Electronic notification will be issued to each successful applicant with instructions on how to access the Grants.gov system and view the terms of the award. The annual reporting requirements are also included in the award package.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not recommended for funding (declined) by September 30, 2018.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Unpaid or 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 representative making a certification about corporate federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony convictions under federal law. For more information,

see http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/.

2. Review of risk – After applications are proposed for funding by the selecting official, the Grants Office will perform administration reviews. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency. See 2 CFR 200.205 and 200.207.

3. Data sharing plan – Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the 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.

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 any Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in this Section and Section IV.B of 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.

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.

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. Data Sharing Guidance to Proposal Writers information is available below. a. Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: • Name: Mitchell Tartt • Title: Conservation Science Division Chief • Affiliation or facility: NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries • E-mail address: Mitchelle.Tartt@noaa.gov • Phone number: 240-533-0689

b. Data Accessibility: The NOAA Program recommends that public access to grant/contractproduced data be enabled as follows:

- Data are to be submitted to a public data repository appropriate to the scientific field of study (describe in the proposal). Options could include Dryad - http://datadryad.org/), Figshare - http://figshare.com/, DataVerse - http://dataverse.org/), Pangaea http://www.pangaea.de/), Acadis (for Arctic data) - https://www.aoncadis.org/, Merritt (for University of California) - https://merritt.cdlib.org/, or others.)

or

-Funding recipients will establish their own data hosting capability (describe in proposal).

c. Technical recommendations: The NOAA Program recommends that Data Management Plans should include the following guidance:

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

- Proposals are permitted to include the costs of data sharing or archiving in their budgets.An applicant selected for funding will be required to discuss its Data Sharing Management Plan with the above referenced NOAA Official to negotiate the best approach to sharing the data for the award.

For more information, refer to the NOAA Data Sharing Directive at:

https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0.pdf.

4. Indirect cost rate – If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Cost (as allowable under 2 C.F.R., section 200.214). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division
1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Lamar.Revis@noaa.gov

5. Paperwork Reduction Act – This notification involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). 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. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements - The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.

7. Limitation of Liability: Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award.

NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for proposal preparation costs. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations,

and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

8. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, you should mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by you, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

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

10. Department of Commerce Terms and Conditions - Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA’s Grants Online system at http://www.ago.noaa.gov and at http://go.usa.gov/hKbj.

11. 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.

C. Reporting

Grant recipients are required to provide semi-annual financial and performance reports consistent with 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Grant recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports.

1. Financial Reports
All financial reports shall be submitted through the NOAA Grants Online system, https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov. Deadlines and financial forms can be found at: http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/finforms.html.

2. Performance Reports
Performance reports should be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer. Electronic submission of performance reports is required through the NOAA Grants Online system, https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov. The semi-annual reports must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. A final comprehensive report is due at the end of the award period. The final comprehensive report shall be submitted through the NOAA Grants Online.

In addition, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. § 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

The Deep-Sea Research in National Marine Sanctuaries Using Telepresence recipient must provide all video and post-processed bathymetry and backscatter and associated data provided to the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries within one year of cruise.

VII. Agency Contacts

Send requests for information via email to sanctuary.education@noaa.gov or mail requests to:

Deep-Sea Research in National Marine Sanctuaries Using Telepresence
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East West Highway
11th Floor, Rm. 11622
Silver Spring, MD 20910

VIII. Other Information

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal

funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for proposal preparation costs. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.