FY 22-24 Fishery Management Council Coral Reef Conservation Cooperative Agreements

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 22-24 Fishery Management Council Coral Reef Conservation Cooperative Agreements

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2022-2007086

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.441, Regional Fishery Management Councils

Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday January 20, 2022. Due to the COVID-19 situation and NOAA staff telework status, paper format applications delivered at our physical address will NOT be accepted for this fiscal year (FY) 22-24 application cycle.

Funding Opportunity Description: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program, 16 U.S.C. §§ 6401-6409, provides financial assistance through the Fishery Management Council Coral Reef Conservation Cooperative Agreements (FMCCRCCA) to the Regional Fishery Management Councils for projects to conserve and manage coral reef fisheries, as authorized under the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000. Projects funded through the FMCCRCCA are for activities that: 1) Provide better scientific information to improve the management of shallow coral reef fisheries and associated essential fish habitat; 2) Work collaboratively with state and territorial fishery management agencies, fishers, local communities, and other key stakeholders to build capacity and support for coral reef fishery management; and 3) Advance ecosystem-based fisheries management though the incorporation of existing data into fisheries management tools. Proposals selected for funding through this solicitation will be implemented through a three-year cooperative agreement. The role of NOAA in the FMCCRCCA is to help identify potential projects to improve sustainable management of shallow coral reef fisheries and ecosystems, strengthen the development and implementation of the projects, and assist in coordination of these efforts with federal, state, territory or commonwealth management authorities and various coral reef user groups. Approximately $1,250,000 is expected to be available for FMCCRCCA in FY 2022. The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program anticipates that awards will range from $125,000-$500,000/year. Continued funding depends on future appropriations, NOAA/CRCP priorities, and successful recipient performance in the first year(s) of the award.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

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

To address these and other threats, Congress passed the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (Act), which established the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) and provided guidance for allocation of Federal funding toward efforts to conserve coral reef ecosystems in the United States (U.S.) and internationally. As described in the Act, one of the primary functions of the CRCP is to provide financial assistance to external partners for coral reef conservation projects consistent with the Act and the CRCP priorities.

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

NOAA also issued Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program Implementation Guidelines, most recently published at 75 Fed. Reg. 48934 (Aug. 12, 2010) and available at http://go.usa.gov/3FT7z. The most recent Guidelines cover 2010-2015, but their approach remains generally in effect until further notice unless otherwise stated in a NOAA CRCP funding announcement posted on Grants.gov. Please note that CRCP funding announcements are issued only on Grants.gov, not in the Federal Register as stated in the Guidelines, and the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notice referenced in the Guidelines is updated as described in Section VI.B. of this announcement.

B. Program Priorities

The primary focus of this funding announcement is to support activities that improve fisheries sustainability within the shallow (<30 m [<90 ft] depth) and mesophotic (30–150 m [90–500 ft] depth) coral reef ecosystems found within the U.S. waters. All applications must be consistent with the CRCP Strategic Plan-2018 and primarily align with the Improve Fisheries Sustainability pillar. Under the Improve Fisheries Sustainability, there are two strategies: 1) Provide data essential for coral reef fisheries management and 2) Build capacity for fisheries management. Where there are overlapping priorities with the U.S. coral jurisdictions (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), the Councils are strongly encouraged to work collaboratively with the fishery management agencies within these jurisdictions to meet common fishery management objectives, to support improved management coral reef fisheries in jurisdictional waters, and/or to improve communication and data sharing. The Councils should obtain letters from jurisdictional partners or other partners, who intend to collaborate on any proposed task, as a way to verify their commitment and willingness to participate in the proposed task/project.

Projects should fall within the following categories.

1) Council specific priority: Development of communication products related to federally managed coral reef fish stocks (management unit species) and/or essential fish habitat to increase compliance with federal fisheries regulations to improve the understanding of important coral reef resources.

2) Priorities that support the joint needs of Council and state and territory fishery management agencies:
a) Obtain life history and ecological data related to key fishery taxa that are ecologically important for reef conditions and particularly vulnerable to overfishing. Examples of activities:
i) Conducting cooperative research with fishers, communities, or other stakeholders to obtain information on fishery species abundance, habitat utilization, and condition (including essential fish habitat, habitat areas of particular concern, and spawning aggregation sites), and/or to determine the spatial extent of fishing activities affecting coral reef resources;
ii) Conducting baseline/performance biological or socioeconomic assessments of marine protected areas to understand fisheries and/or ecological benefits; and
iii) Filling priority data gaps to improve coral reef fishery stock assessments.
b) Increase the comparability and utility of monitoring data to support fisheries and ecosystem-based management. Examples of activities:

i) Calibration studies for long term monitoring datasets;
ii) Using existing datasets to develop coral reef ecosystem indicators;
iii) Modeling effects of coral cover (habitat), increases and losses, on coral reef fishery production; and
iv) Developing and/or providing technical assistance on fishery management decision-support tools to improve coral reef fishery management.

The CRCP expects approximately 60% of the available funding ($700,000) will directly support Council-specific coral reef fishery management tasks and the remaining funding is available to support activities conducted in conjunction with the state and territory fishery management agencies. The Councils may request salary, fringe, and travel costs for a maximum of one full-time equivalent (not exceeding $125,000/year) to work exclusively on coral reef conservation activities. Travel supported through this cooperative agreement must be related to the implementation of activities described in the project narrative. Expenditures on large equipment, real property, capital expenditures, and/or infrastructure are not a priority for funding under this program.

C. Program Authority

Authority for NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program is provided by Section 6403 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 6401-6409.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 6403, and pending appropriations in fiscal year 2022 and subsequent years, CRCP expects to provide up to $1,250,000 in funding. Annual funding is anticipated to maintain the cooperative agreements for up to 3 years duration, but this is dependent upon the level of funding made available by federal law, continued CRCP support for the program, and successful recipient performance in the first year(s) of the award. The CRCP anticipates that typical awards will range from about $125,000 to $500,000 for each year; NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal request over $500,000 for any single year under this solicitation. Each Council may request support for one full time staff member working exclusively on coral reef conservation for no more than $125,000/year. Additionally, the CRCP is expecting that at least $700,000 of these allocated funds will directly support the Council’s shallow water coral reef fishery management needs and the remaining $550,000 will support cross-jurisdictional activities in conjunction with the state and territory fishery management agencies.

Councils may request that NOAA collaboration on their projects allow for directed internal funding within NOAA to support Council designated coral reef fisheries research and monitoring conducted by the NMFS Science Centers or other parts of NOAA. Applications selected for funding by NOAA will be awarded as new cooperative agreements through the NMFS Office of Habitat Conservation (HC). The amount of funding for each award will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for each project, the merit and ranking of the proposals and individual tasks/projects, and the amount of funds made available to the CRCP by Congress.

Federal funds have not yet been appropriated for this program, and there is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications should use an anticipated start date of October 1, 2022. The period of performance for projects in this program should be 36 months. These multi-year cooperative agreements are expected to be funded incrementally on an annual basis. Once awarded in FY 2022, recipients of the multi-year cooperative agreements will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years. The earliest start date for projects will be October 1, 2022.

NOAA has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award. Continuation of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the sole discretion of NOAA. Continued funding is contingent upon satisfactory performance, continued relevance to the CRCP mission and priorities, and funding availability

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements, as described in 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.1, meaning that NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the award. Substantial involvement on the part of NOAA may include, but not limited to collaboration scope of work; providing assistance on technical aspects of the project; technical monitoring of award activities beyond ordinary stewardship (e.g., tracking the progress of activities through site visits and progress report evaluation); assistance with permitting; coordination with other state, territorial, or federal activities; involvement in public meetings and workshops; developing protocols to evaluate the success of specific activities; and review of procurement materials to the extent authorized by 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.325. As the federal government will be substantially involved in the project for cooperative agreements, applicants may suggest anticipated federal roles and responsibilities in their proposals.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are limited to the Caribbean Fishery Management Council, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

NOAA employees are not permitted to assist in the preparation of applications. NOAA CRCP staff are available to provide general information on programmatic goals and objectives, ongoing coral reef conservation programs/activities, and regional funding priorities. For proposals that involve collaboration with current NOAA projects or staff, NOAA employees may provide a limited statement verifying the nature and extent of the collaboration and confirming prior coordination activities. Letters of support from NOAA employees are not allowable and will not be included among the application materials considered by merit reviewers.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

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

As per section 6403(b)(2) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, the NOAA Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets the following two requirements:
a) No reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement, and b) The probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement.

The CRCP recognizes that the Fishery Management Councils cannot meet the matching requirement of the 6403(b)(1) as the Council’s entire budget is federally funded. The CRCP will waive the matching requirement as per section 6403(b)(2).

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Full applications submitted through Grants.gov must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section IV.D. Late applications will not be considered for funding.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, can be found on www.Grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the application forms from www.Grants.gov, contact www.Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. Instructions for these forms are available at https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html. Information about the recommended format for full applications is contained in Section IV.B.

B. Content and Form of Application

The application process for this competition requires submission of a complete application on or before the submission date and time listed above. All application materials should use a legible 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides. For each application, the information provided in elements 1-5 (described below) may not exceed 60 pages total; the 60-page limit does not apply to required federal forms and other documentation (elements 6-11 below). Applications that exceed the 60-page limit will be shortened by removing pages before it is forwarded to merit reviewers. Pages excised from lengthy applications will not be reviewed and any activities described therein will not be eligible for funding consideration. Applications that are incomplete, unclear, or contain numerous typographical errors, may not be understood effectively by the reviewers, leading to lower evaluation scores; so, applicants are advised to review their application materials closely before they are submitted to the agency for consideration. Application submitted through www.Grants.gov should have no more than three attachments in addition to the federal forms: 1) Cover page and project narrative (elements 1-4 below), 2) Budget table and budget narrative (element 5), and 3) all additional information (elements 6-8) combined into one file. Applications submitted in electronic format should be either Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) or Microsoft Word files; however, PDF is the preferred format. The total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices combined shall not exceed 5 megabytes in storage space. Files that are larger than five megabytes may not be properly downloaded, uploaded, or received by the agency or the reviewers. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed.

Each application should include the following information:
1. A one-page cover sheet that includes:
a. Short title of the proposed project and requested start date;
b. Applicant organization name, address, phone number;
c. Principal investigator responsible for conducting the project and their contact information;
d. Geographic locations of the project and the site names;
4. Amount of grant funds requested per year (FY2022, FY2023, and FY2024);

5. Requested award start date and end date; and
6. One or two paragraph project summary emphasizing the project objectives and activities.

2. Project Description (Proposal Narrative)

a. Tile of project/task: The title should express what the task is going to do.
Introduction of proposed project/task(s): Provide a brief summary of relevant background information that justifies the need for the proposed project or task. Identify the problem/issue the project intends to address and describe its significance to the conservation of U.S. coral reef ecosystems. Identify the specific objective, listed under Section I.B. Program Priorities, to which the project's objective(s) corresponds. Objectives should be simple and understandable, as specific and quantitative as possible, and attainable within the proposed timeframe, the described budget, and the human resources available. Projects should be accomplishment-oriented and identify obtainable goals, outcomes, and products.

b. Project/task objectives: This section is the scientific or technical plan to be accomplished to meet the project objectives, and should be written with sufficient detail to allow a review of suitability of the proposed work and the likelihood of successful completion in the stated timeframe. Please ensure your project narrative includes detailed descriptions of each activity, including the rationale for the activity, how it will be accomplished, specific milestones, and expected products. The narrative should include information on dissemination of the findings/results, outreach materials, and/or data to resource managers, local communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate. The project narrative also needs to include information on how the project will be evaluated for success. If the work is one component of a larger project (or the activity is a pilot project for a larger initiative), and proposed activities will continue after the end of the grant period, describe future activities and potential future funding sources (and other mechanisms) to continue the work. If the goal of the project is to build capacity for improved conservation, describe proposed plans to ensure the activities continue into the future and how success will be evaluated.

The applications in-water tasks should note the use of Endangered Species Act listed corals; anticipated impacts to other Endangered Species Act listed species or critical habitat; any National Historic Preservation Act resources in the action area, as well as a commitment to quickly provide information needed by NOAA to analyze project impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, see Section IV.B.5. Supporting Documents, below).

c. Timeline: A description of specific activities and associated timelines necessary to meet them. Describe the time lines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2, etc. or 1st quarter, 2nd quarter, etc.), rather than by specific dates.

d. Project Management/Personnel: Describe how the project will be organized and managed, and include the qualifications of the principal investigator(s) through a summary of professional backgrounds, which may be supplemented by short biographies, curricula vitae, or resumes in Element 6 below, Supporting Documents. The principal investigator may or may not be the applicant. However, if the applicant is not the principal investigator, there should 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). Please also include information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including the technical and administrative points of contact as appropriate.

e. Partner justification and roles: For projects that are done collaboratively or in support of the needs of the U.S. coral jurisdictions' fishery management agencies, the project narrative should indicate the key jurisdictional contacts and their roles in supporting the implementation of the proposed task. For activities where the Council would like to have NOAA substantially involved, the narrative should include the NOAA contact and a description of NOAA's involvement.

3. Table of Products/Outputs and Outcomes:

Please provide a table to summarize the specific products/outputs and outcomes that will be produced for each task under the award. All products resulting from federally-funded awards should be provided to NOAA within 120 days of the end of the award period and should be of publishable quality. All products need to comply with Section 508 standards (See Section VI.C., Reporting, below). NOAA may make award products available to the public, so recipients are encouraged to omit sensitive information (i.e., budget or salary information) from products submitted to NOAA. All products should explicitly acknowledge the support of NOAA's CRCP. For each entry, please provide a description of the product, the type or format of the product (e.g., journal publication, white paper, public service announcement, presentation, newsletter, metadata record, annual monitoring summary), and the expected date(s) when the product will be submitted to NOAA. NOAA will use this information to ensure that products are submitted to the agency in a timely manner and made available to the public whenever possible.

4. Budget table and narrative for tasks

Reviewers will evaluate project costs by reviewing your budget justification. The budget justification narrative must include a detailed breakdown by category of applicable costs

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

The NOAA Habitat Conservation and Grants Management Division staff will review budget information in recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic. The narrative budget justification should be sufficiently detailed to enable a clear understanding of the cost breakdown and calculations used to derive the line item subtotals in each object class of the SF-424A budget form. An SF-424A for each year of requested funding will be required prior to an award offer, but not as part of the initial application. Additional budget development guidance is available at (https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2019/Jun/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf).

Applicants should include detailed budget information regarding all known cost-based contracts and sub awards, and indicate the basis for the cost and price estimates for contracts in the narrative. Applicants should describe activities to occur or products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Each sub award should include form SF-424A. Detailed budget information includes:
a. Name of identified qualified sub recipient or contractor, affiliation, contact information, and method of selection. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection.
b. Period of Performance. Include the dates for the performance period. If it involves a number of tasks, include the performance period for each task.
c. Scope of Work. List and describe the specific activities or tasks to be performed.
d. Criteria for Measuring Accountability: Include an itemized line item breakdown as well as total contract/award amount. If applicable, include any indirect costs paid under the cost-based contract/award and the indirect cost rate used.
e. Itemized Budget. Include categories used in program budget for subrecipients or cost-based contractors. If applicable, include any direct cost paid under the subaward or contract and the indirect cost rate used.

All sub awards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.331-200.333 for sub awards, and 200.317-200.327 for procurements.

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs or price is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. Note that equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-federal entity for financial statement purposes, or $5,000; see 2 CFR 200.1. Non-federal applicants should identify, if this information is known when submitting the grant application, who they plan to request that NOAA transfer equipment or property ownership titles to after the project ends. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process.

The budget narrative should also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, the number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If actual trip details are unknown, applicants should state the basis for the proposed travel charges.

The CRCP will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, or profit. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Applicants will not be reimbursed for direct costs of 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, regardless of whether or not an award is received. Such expenditures will not be considered as part of the applicant's cost share or matching funds.

5. Supporting documents:

This section includes the qualifications of the primary project personnel; letters of support received from the relevant jurisdictional representatives, partners, or communities involved in the project; permits; and additional environmental compliance information.

The applicant may provide short biographies or resumes of key personnel. The applicant should provide evidence of support for the project by the fishery management agencies within U.S. coral jurisdictions or a letter acknowledging the utility of the work from a National Marine Sanctuary in which the project will be conducted. Letters of collaboration from partners and any letters of support should be included in the application to confirm their participation. Additional letters of support are not required, but are encouraged.

A list or copy of all applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work. For work within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Seashores, and other federally-designated protected areas, it is the responsibility of the applicant to request and obtain any necessary permits or letters of agreement from the appropriate government agencies prior to commencement of an award. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize potential adverse impact on the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of environmental permits should be included in the proposal package.

Failure to apply for and/or obtain federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA environmental impact assessment) will delay or prevent the award of funds for projects that have been preliminarily selected for funding.

As part of the application package, applicants should provide detailed information in the project narrative or in the supplementary materials about the location and state of the environment in which the activities are to be conducted and any environmental concerns. This information should include locations and/or maps showing project sites, species and habitats that may be affected, in-situ activities, and all other environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, effects on human health and safety, level of controversy of the proposed work, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, impacts to historical or cultural sites).

Under NEPA, NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of projects or proposals seeking funding from NOAA. After the application is submitted, NOAA may require additional information to fulfill NEPA and other compliance requirements. The applicants selected for funding may be required to complete a subset of questions (based on activities outlined your application as identified by the federal program officer) of the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance applicants accessible at http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf. If NOAA determines that an environmental assessment is required, applicants may also be requested to assist in drafting the assessment. Applicants may also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. This may include implementing best management practices identified in the Coral Reef Conservation Program’s Environmental Impact Statement (https://coralreef.noaa.gov/about/enviro-compliance.html), mitigation measures from Endangered Species Act consultations, conservation recommendations from Essential

Fish Habitat consultations, and/or required actions from other environmental consultations (e.g., National Historic Preservation Act). The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application. In cases where 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.

Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA websites: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/ including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A for NEPA, https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-216-6a.

6. Data/Information Sharing Directive (2 page limit)
a. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.

b. Proposals submitted in response to this announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The 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 is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets (see Data management guidance for proposals writers, below). NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available under: https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-212-15-management-of-environmental-data-and-information.

c. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.

d. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

e. Data management guidance for proposal writers:
Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Liz Fairey, Federal Program Officer, NOAA OHC, Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov, 301-427-8632.
i. Data Accessibility: The NOAA CRCP requires that public access to grant/contract-produced data be enabled. Funding recipients are expected to submit data to NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information , which will provide public access and permanent archiving. The NOAA Program has held preliminary consultation with NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information regarding these pending data.
ii. Technical Recommendations: The NOAA CRCP is not offering specific technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.
iii. Resources: NOAA CRCP resources for data sharing or archiving have already been identified; proposals should not include such costs (unless data volume is expected to exceed 20GB).

7. Standard Form 424 (SF-424)
At the time of application submission, all applicants must submit a signed and dated copy of Standard Form SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance," to indicate the total amount of Federal funds and non-Federal matching funds proposed for the project period. An electronic signature is applied automatically when an application is successfully submitted via www.grants.gov.

8. Standard Form 424A (SF-424A)
At time of application submission, all applicants are required to submit a SF-424A Budget Form. The first column of Sections A and B shows the Federal funds requested. In the second and third column in Section B, the funding for the two additional years can be added; the total three year funding is shown in the final column of section B. Provide the forecasted

cash needs for year one in Section D. In Section E add the second and third year funding request. Section F summarizes the direct charges in line 21 and lists the indirect charges requested; please show the rate used in line 22. Please note that completion of the SF-424A as described above represents NOAA's preference and may not be consistent with the instructions that accompany the SF424A. All budget figures should match the funding requested on the application cover sheet and correspond with the descriptions contained in the project and budget narratives. Each proposed sub-award of $25,000 or more should be accompanied by a separate SF-424A form to fully document the proposed sub award budget.

9. Standard Form 424B
All applicants are required to submit a signed SF- 424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.

10. Standard Form CD-511
All applicants are required to submit a completed form CD-511, Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters, Drug-Free Workplace Requirements, and Lobbying.

11. Other Federal Forms (if applicable)
Applicants may be required to disclose certain lobbying activities by filling out form SF-LLL, regarding any payment or agreement to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with a covered federal action under 31 U.S.C. § 1352.

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

Unless exempted under 2 CFR 25.110, applicants is required to: (1) Be registered in the federal SAM before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid DUNS number on an application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. The federal awarding agency may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

Applicants should allow a minimum of two weeks to complete the SAM registration; registration is required only once but must be periodically renewed. Applicants can receive a

DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. The DUNS number remains the official identifier until April 04, 2022. After April 04 2022, there will be a new Unique Entity Identifier number in place. More info here: https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/organization/federal-acquisition-service/office-of-systemsmanagement/integrated-award-environment-iae/iae-systems-information-kit/unique-entityidentifier-update. Your organization's Employer Identification Number will be needed on the application form.

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through www.grants.gov.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Full applications in electronic form must be received and validated through www.grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on January 20, 2022.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

The budget may include indirect (facilities & administrative [F&A]) costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.1, indirect (F&A) costs are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance). A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect (F&A) cost agreement with the federal government should be included with the application. In addition, an eligible applicant under 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). An applicant may also describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative, or establish a new rate through the Department of Commerce by contacting Lamar Revis, Grants Officer at NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East-West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov. Applicants may elect to propose the reduction of part, or all, of allowable indirect costs as a component of cost sharing.

The following projects will not be eligible for funding: (1) Activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by state or federal law; (2) Activities that constitute mitigation for natural resource damages under federal or state law; (3) Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation; (4) Construction projects; and (5) Large equipment and/or infrastructure acquisitions; and (6) Real property acquisitions.

G. Other Submission Requirements

The standard NOAA funding application package is available at www.grants.gov (Grants.gov) by searching the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.441). Application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the "Apply" function on Grants.gov. The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (www.dnb.com) and be registered in the SAM.gov, which requires periodic renewals. Refer to Section IV.C. for details on receiving a DUNS number and registering with SAM.gov.

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

If an applicant submits multiple electronic versions of the proposal, the applicant should advise the federal agency of the tracking number that should be withdrawn. Applicants shall not electronically submit packages with files embedded within files as any such files may not be reviewed or factored into the merit review process.

The federal program office has a process to review for completeness. Administrative reviews generally take place after deadlines because the majority of applicants apply just before deadlines. If there are no time constraints and resources are available, the federal agency

may reach back to applicants who have submitted incomplete packages.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores ranging from 0 to 100 points to each of the tasks within the project narrative based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria and respective weights specified below. The considerations within the criterion will be considered holistically, rather than having individual weights.

1. Importance and Applicability of Proposal (Score = 0-35): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. Applications will be evaluated on how well the proposal aligns with CRCP's goals and objectives and fishery management needs. For each task/project within the application reviewers will consider:
a) Will the proposed task contribute to improved understanding, conservation, management, or protection of shallow coral reef fisheries and/or habitat within the Council's region?
b) Does the proposed task directly address the CRCP Strategic Plan–2018 objective to Improve Fisheries Sustainability?
c) For tasks that are conducted in collaboration with local resource agencies, what is the need for the proposed task in the jurisdiction that it will be implemented; what is the likelihood that any outcomes, results, or products will contribute to coral reef fisheries conservation and management in that jurisdiction; and is the level of collaboration between the Council and local, state, or territorial governments clearly described and are appropriate for the aims of the project? For tasks that solely support Council specific needs, what is the likelihood that the outcomes, results, or products will contribute to specific Council coral reef fisheries conservation and management actions or enhance compliance with fishery regulations?
d) Does the application demonstrate partner support for the work, such as the inclusion of letters from partners and relevant government agencies?

Reviewers will use the following scale score item 1 (the lowest possible score is 0): Poor =0, Fair =7.0, Good =14.0, Commendable =28.0, and Excellent =35.0.

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (Score = 0-35): 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. Applications will be scored based on their clear identification of performance evaluation methods and the suitability of those methods for evaluating the success or failure of the project in terms of meeting its original goals and objectives. For each task within the application, reviewers will consider:

a) Does the applicant demonstrate familiarity with previously developed studies or assessments and describe how their project builds upon or incorporates previous work?
b) Are the task objectives in the proposal clearly defined, focused, and realistic; and can they be reached within the proposed project period?
c) Is the task technical feasibility; is the proposed approach technically sound; are the methods appropriate; and are the proposed methods likely to achieve the task goals and objectives?
d) Are there effective mechanisms to evaluate project success; are there well described milestones and a planned timeline?

Reviewers will use the following scale score item 2 (the lowest possible score is 0): Poor =0, Fair = 7.0, Good =14.0, Commendable =28.0, and Excellent =35.0.

3. Overall Qualification of Applications (Score = 0-10): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For each task/project within the application, reviewers will consider:
a) Does the applicant and associated project personnel (council staff and/or contractors) 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 in designing, implementing and effectively managing and overseeing the project?
b) Are the facilities; administrative resources and capabilities; and equipment and other physical resources available to the applicant to support and successfully manage the work, including the availability of NOAA or other technical expertise to guide the project to a successful completion?

Reviewers will use the following scale score item 3 (the lowest possible score is 0): Poor =0, Fair =3.5, Good = 5.0, Commendable =7.5, and Excellent = 10.0.

4. Project Costs (Score = 0-10): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For each task/project within the application, reviewers will consider:
a) 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?
b) Is the proposed budget sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of costs by object class?

Reviewers will use the following scale score item (the lowest possible score is 0): Poor =0,

Fair =2.5, Good =5.0, Commendable =7.5, and Excellent =10.0.

5. Outreach and Education (Score = 0-10): 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. For each task/project within the application, reviewers will consider:
a) Is the level outreach appropriate for the proposed task/project including the dissemination of information, data, findings to the state or territory management agencies or appropriate user groups?
b) Are the proposed products suitable for the task and if data are collected did the applicant provide a detailed data management plan?

Reviewers will use the following scale score item 5 (the lowest possible score is 0): Poor =0, Fair =2.5, Good =5.0, Commendable =7.5 and Excellent =10.0.

B. Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 4 steps, including: (1) an initial administrative review by the competition manager; (2) technical merit review; (3) internal HC and CRCP review and recommendation; (4) selection by the Selecting Official; and (5) obligation of funding by the Grants Officer.

1. Initial Administrative of the Applications: Application packages will be screened to ensure that they are timely, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that can easily be rectified or cured.

2. Technical Merit Review: Technical merit review is conducted by a minimum of three technical reviewers with expertise regarding the type of work or subject matter proposed in the application. Each reviewer will individually evaluate each project/task (0-100 points) using the evaluation criteria provided in Section V.A. above and the scores across projects will be averaged for an overall proposal score. This review may involve experts from both NOAA and non-NOAA organizations. The technical reviewers' ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals. No consensus advice will be given by the technical reviewers. NOAA may also request and consider written comments on proposed projects from each state, territorial, or federal agency with jurisdiction over coral reef ecosystems in the area where the project is to be conducted.

3. Internal HC/CRCP review: The Federal Program Officer, HC, and CRCP staff will evaluate comments and scores provided by the technical-merit review process, and conduct a

further analysis to identify any major issues or shortcomings with the application. (e.g., additional information needed to conduct NEPA/environmental compliance analysis, overlap in ongoing work, lack of key partners). The Federal Program Officer will summarize comments received on each proposal and identify modifications that may be needed prior to final selection.

4. Selection: The reviewer comments, composite project scores, rank order, and a summary of the concerns (if any) identified through the technical review process and internal review will be presented to the Selecting Official. The Selecting Official, in consultation with CRCP staff, will identify proposals to be recommended for funding, as described in Section V.C. below. The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal. NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, or ask applicants to work together. NOAA may defer applications to the future or reallocate funds to different funding categories to the extent authorized. The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal.

5. Grants Management Division Review. The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.206. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive Federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be timely addressed in order to receive a new award. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.208. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official, an official within the Office for Coastal Management (or their designee) anticipates recommending applications for funding in rank order unless an

application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following selection factors:

1. Availability of funding;
2. Balance/distribution of funds: a) by geographic area, b) by type of institutions, c) by type of partners, d) by research areas, or e) by project types;
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
4. Program priorities and policy factors set out in Sections I.A. and I.B.;
5. An applicant's prior award performance;
6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
7.Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA Grants Management Division.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NOAA anticipates that the cooperative agreements will have a start date of October 1, 2022 dependent on funding availability, the completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, NEPA analysis, and documentation supporting any grant activities. Recipients should receive award notices one month before award start dates.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by the Selecting Official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by email that their application was recommended for funding and remains under consideration. The applicant should be aware that the notification by the program office is not the official award notice and funding is not assured. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically. The official notice of award is the Commerce Form 450 (CD-450), Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer Electronically through NOAA’s electronic grants management system, Grants Online.

Award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements and may lead to modification of the project’s scope of work. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award and will be applied on a case-by-

case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award to ensure they are fully aware of the relevant terms that have been placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Pre-Award Notice- The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation. Refer to https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy.

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

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

4. Access to Information - The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and

timely manner, and by cooperating with the Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, 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 Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

5. Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of continuing appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not yet have been appropriated for the programs listed in this notice. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for direct costs of proposal preparation except as allowed by the indirect cost agreement. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

NOAA reserves the right to halt activity under the award through enforcement procedures under 2 C.F.R. 200.339-.343, Remedies for Non-compliance, if the recipient is not fulfilling the requirements of the project as outlined in the grant award. Non-compliance with a federally approved project may result in termination of the award as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.340.

6. NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards - If NOAA-operated, leased, or owned facilities are involved in any awards funded under this announcement, such awards are subject to the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving NOAA Operated Facilities (May 2018) found at: https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/noaa-workplace-harassment-training-for-contractors-and-financial. See also Article X. of the NOAA Administrative Terms

(https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2021/Mar/Administrative%20Standard%20Award%20Conditions%20for%20NOAA%20Financial%20Assistance%20Awards%2002.18.2021.pdf) referenced above.

7. Review of Risk - After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.206. 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.

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

9. NEPA Requirements - See Section IV.B.5, above.

10. NOAA's Data Sharing Policy - See Section IV.B.6., above.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports consistent with 2 CFR 200.328 - .330 and DOC Standard Terms and Conditions electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online. Performance reports must be submitted on a semi-annual schedule no later than 30 days following the end of each 6- month period from the start date of the award. Financial reports must be submitted every 6 months by the end of April and October during the period of the award in accordance with the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. NOAA will provide instructions for submitting financial and progress reports upon request.

A comprehensive final report is due 120 days after the award expiration date along with copies of all products developed under the award. Copies of all materials (including but not limited to brochures, posters, videos, DVDs, publications, reports, management plans, public service announcements, workshop proceedings) produced through the award, along with copies of any reports submitted by subcontractors as part of the award, must be provided to

the program office within 120 days of the end of the award. Except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security, recipients are requested to include a statement on the front page of all products to indicate the material is "Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited." If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publications must be made available to the public free of charge.

Successful applicants will be requested to ensure that all interim progress reports indicate whether financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and are up-to-date. In their final progress report, applicants will be asked to (a) clearly state the resulting overall impact of their project with respect to coral reef conservation or within the coastal management community; and (b) certify that "Final financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and a final funding draw-down has been made through the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP)."

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

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall submit an inventory in accordance with Office of Management and Budget guidance that Commerce adopted by regulation at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, which shall be incorporated under the award. The equipment requirements of the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance are set out at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.313.

Recipients must inventory tangible property at least once every two years and at award closeout. As necessary, SF-428 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

Recipients must submit reports at least annually and at award closeout on the status of real property in which the federal government retains an interest, unless the federal interest in the real property extends 15 years or more. As necessary, SF-429 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

The program office recommends that if the equipment is no longer needed, recipients are encouraged to request disposition instructions for equipment approximately 150 days before the project period ends to allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests

addressed before a project ends. Equipment disposition instructions typically require that recipients “Submit Additional Closeout Documents" as an award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with Office of Management and Budget requirements.

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. 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 $30,000. See 2 CFR 170 at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-I/part-170.

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative or technical questions regarding this announcement, contact the competition manager: Liz Fairey. She can be reached by phone at 301-427- 8632 or by email at Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

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