ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: FY18 Saltonstall-Kennedy Competition

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-FHQ-2018-2005332

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

Dates: Pre-proposals must be received at http://www.Grants.gov under the competition link named "PRE PROPOSALS FY18 Saltonstall-Kennedy", postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Standard Time, October 10, 2017, 60 days after the posting date of the FFO. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Within 30 days of the pre-proposal due date, NOAA will inform applicants, based upon their pre-proposal, if the S-K Program encourages or discourages submission of a full proposal.

Full Applications must be received by http://www.Grants.gov under the competition link named "FULL Proposals FY18 Saltonstall-Kennedy", postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Standard Time, January 8, 2018, 150 days after the posting date of the FFO. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

When developing your full application submission timeline, please keep in mind that you are encouraged to apply through the www.grants.gov website. This electronic submission system is relatively complex for first time users and involves several preliminary registrations to be completed before your application can be submitted. If you have already used the grants.gov website, the required registrations may have already been completed. Please allow sufficient

time for the application to be submitted electronically and for possible computer delays. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline.

Applications not adhering to postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected and returned to the sender without further consideration.

NOTE: Under this one Full Funding Opportunity there are two (2) competition links. Please be sure to submit your pre-proposals to the "PRE PROPOSALS FY18 Saltonstall-Kennedy" link within the dates specified in this FFO. Please be sure to submit your FULL Proposals to the "FULL Proposals FY18 Saltonstall-Kennedy" prior to the date specified in this FFO.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Saltonstall-Kennedy Act established a fund (known as the S-K fund) used by the Secretary of Commerce to provide grants or cooperative agreements for fisheries research and development projects addressing aspects of U.S. fisheries, including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing, marketing, and associated business infrastructures. Under this authority, grants and cooperative agreements are made on a competitive basis (subject to availability of funding) to assist in carrying out projects related to U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries. The term "fisheries" encompasses wild capture, marine aquaculture and recreational fishing. The objective of the S-K Grant Program is to address the needs of the fisheries and fishing communities in optimizing economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries and practices, dealing with the impacts of conservation and management measures, and increasing other opportunities to use existing infrastructure to support keeping working waterfronts viable. U.S. fisheries include any fishery, commercial or recreational, that is, or may be, engaged in by citizens or nationals of the United States. Proposals submitted to this competition must address at least one of the following priorities: Marine Aquaculture; Adapting to Environmental Change and Other Long Term Ecosystem Change; Promotion, Development and Marketing; or Territorial Science. This Federal Funding Opportunity includes information on application and criteria for research proposals requesting a maximum of $300,000 in Federal funding for up to a two-year period. Matching funds are not required, nor will they be considered during the evaluation process. Awards are anticipated to start no earlier than September 1, 2018.

Grant awards are dependent on the availability of Federal funding as provided in enacted Appropriations Acts. This FFO is being released prior to final appropriations due to award process time frames. While the FY 2018 President's budget proposed $0 for this program, final Congressional direction has not been determined. Applicants are not guaranteed any level of

funding. Should funds not be available in FY2018 submitted applications may be carried over to subsequent fiscal year for review and obligation should funds be available and the Agency deems this the most appropriate administrative process.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

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

The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires us to undertake efforts to prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished fisheries, insure conservation, minimize by-catch, protect essential fish habitats, and realize the full potential of U.S. fishery resources. It further requires that we take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities; provide for the sustained participation of such communities; and, to the extent possible, minimize the adverse economic impacts of conservation and management measures on such communities.

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

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

B. Program Priorities

Applications may address one or more of the four priorities listed below. However, a singular research priority that most closely reflects the objectives of your proposal must be identified. These priorities are aimed at rebuilding fish stocks, maintaining and restoring healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems, and promoting the economic vitality of fishery working waterfront communities for the long-term benefit of the public. In addition to the four specific priorities, an overarching evaluation criterion for all applications will be fishing community resilience, as described below. While fishing community resiliency is not a stand-alone priority, no less than 10% of funds will be awarded to applications that support community resiliency.

Solicitation Priorities:

Priority #1 – Marine Aquaculture

Develop environmentally responsible marine aquaculture to create jobs in coastal communities, produce healthful local seafood, revitalize working waterfronts, and support traditional fishing communities. Projects should include, where feasible, participation of the fishing communities, aquaculture communities, and the seafood industry. Projects that provide training for fishermen and others in coastal communities in aquaculture production methods are encouraged.

Projects sought should address at least one of the three topics below:

Technology development and transfer: Develop, refine, or apply aquaculture technologies that improve economic performance of aquaculture, while simultaneously improving regulatory, social, or environmental performance. Projects that demonstrate aquaculture technologies in operational settings, such as through a pilot or commercial-scale project, are strongly encouraged.

Tools for management: Develop tools to improve analysis and the understanding needed to make complex regulatory or management (industry or farm level) decisions. Tools should result in actionable advice addressing regulatory or business decision-making to facilitate informed permitting and industry or business management decisions.

Tools that lead to regulatory efficiency: Develop tools, which facilitate developing permit proposal packages and supplementary documents, for marine aquaculture that are complete and structured to have a high likelihood of successfully addressing legally required issues.

Project examples could include, but are not limited to:

- Demonstration of the feasibility of culturing marine species identified as potential or suitable candidates for aquaculture including fish, molluscs, and macroalgae;
- Development of hatchery capacity and technologies;
- Investigation of ways to minimize negative interactions and maximize positive interactions with living marine resources, especially protected and Federally managed species, including marine mammals, sea turtles, and listed fish species that are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act, and their habitats;
- Development or validation of genetics/escapes, disease transfer, habitat equivalency, nutritional security, socio-economic, enterprise budgets, or other models or tools for management of marine aquaculture.
- Development of tools to advise on potential (environmental, practical, economic, production, etc.) and feasible locations for marine aquaculture operations in US waters;
- Development of web-based automated permit applications and support documents such as maps and charts, best management practices, and other checklist items.

Priority #2 - Adapting to Environmental Changes and Other Long Term Impacts in Marine Ecosystems;

Projects sought should:

Assess short- and long-term biological and socio-economic impacts of ecosystem changes such as ocean acidification, long-term fluctuations in water temperature and weather

patterns, and other stressors on living marine resources and the communities sustained by these resources.

Conduct research that better informs fishery managers on the predator-prey dynamic and the role that density dependence plays on the short-term health of managed stocks and/or protected species.

Aid in the understanding and integration of all the interactions that marine and diadromous fish have with: predators, competitors, and prey species; other ocean uses (e.g. energy projects that can impact fishing, biological communities, and ecosystems); the complex interactions between fisheries and their habitat; and the effects of fishing on fish stocks and their habitat.

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

- Identifying strategies for assisting fishing communities to identify and assess vulnerabilities, monitor changes, and adapt to potential effects of ecosystem change on fisheries.
- Assessing how fishing communities have been impacted, including socio-economic impacts, and have adapted to direct effects of environmental change, such as increased storms, and other natural events resulting in long-term trends, and the applicability of adaptation strategies for other communities.
- Developing stock assessment models that consider potential changes in fishery performance and management effectiveness due to ecosystem change including ocean chemistry, changes in water temperature, and other parameters.
- Investigating ecosystem impacts (e.g., changes in distribution, changes in prey availability, etc.,) on protected and federally managed species, including marine mammals, sea turtles, and listed fish species that are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act.
- Producing long-term environmental change, ocean chemistry, and other forecasting models that incorporate fishery production scenarios important to fishery managers and/or fishing operations.

- Developing models assessing economic trade-offs in living marine resource management alternatives under long term environmental changes.

- Researching cumulative impacts in marine ecosystems that include long-term changes in water temperature and weather patterns.

- Conducting vulnerability assessments to a changing climate at the fishing or aquaculture community level.

- Conducting research for the seafood industry to better understand, adapt and become more resilient to a change in marine ecosystems.

- Developing tools, models, or methods that quantify fishery productivity based on habitat type or quality.

- Conducting research that aids in the understanding of emerging fish diseases and fish parasites, and their current and/or future impact of fish stocks, fishing behaviors, and markets.

Priority #3 – Promotion, Development and Marketing

Projects sought should:

Include, where feasible, participation of the fishing industry, fish dealers and processors, retail and foodservice sectors, and other related industries. Projects that promote access to underutilized stocks while maintaining conservation goals for depleted stocks and/or other sensitive ecosystem components are encouraged.

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

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

Develop projects that support the creation of new marketing opportunities that increase revenue to fishers and drive greater efficiency in the seafood supply chain.

Develop projects that evaluate consumer preferences and willingness to pay higher prices for seafood. The scope of projects may include consumer demand for improved seafood quality; traceability; locally produced seafood; and new products.

Develop usable, value added, fishery products from underutilized, under harvested and/or undervalued economic discards, byproducts of processing, and introduced, nuisance or invasive species.

Collect data on population dynamics, life histories, etc., of fish, including shellfish and marine plants, not currently under Federal or Interstate fishery management, for the Regional Fishery Management Councils/Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions to determine the feasibility of developing a new managed fishery that could provide additional fishing opportunity.

Provide business development and direct marketing training to fishing industry participations to facilitate greater diversity of species throughout the market production chain from vessel to table. Provide consumer and public outreach on the ecological and/or environmental impact, including climate change related impacts such as production of greenhouse gasses, of imported seafood products versus locally landed seafood products.

Develop projects that advocate the elimination of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported

(IUU) fishing activities, support research and development of methods to rapidly detect IUU products in the marketplace, develop traceability projects/programs to protect against IUU products.

Develop projects that support monitoring efforts of imports to prevent IUU fish from entering the U.S. market, allowing consumers to have confidence that the seafood they purchase was harvested legally and responsibly.

Improve the understanding of the socioeconomic impacts and aspects of fisheries with regards to promotion, development and marketing to increase information on current and future consequences of management choices for use by decision makers and stakeholders. The range of scope includes commercial, recreational, and subsistence fishing and fishing -related businesses and fishing communities.

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

- Qualitative and quantitative baseline research on specific fishing or aquaculture communities.
- Cost income data.
- Market analyses to determine factors that influence and trace the demand and supply of specific seafood products, including imports.
- Factors limiting fishing community sustainability and potential adaptation strategies to overcome limitations or negative impacts.
- Research into fishing or aquaculture community innovations in organization/governance, cooperatives, marketing, risk pooling, access to capital/permits/catch allocations, and other improvements to promote sustainability.

Priority #4 – Territorial Science

Projects sought should:

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

Project examples could include, but are not limited to:

- Improving harvest accountability by enhancing fishery statistics in each territory through a variety of techniques, including expanded creel surveys, fish dealer sampling, ethnographic studies, and other mechanisms.
- Expanding fishery bio-sampling and analysis of bio-sampling data, including activities that would include sampling shoreside, and at fish dealers, the species of fish most relevant for management;
- Conducting fishery independent reef fish and bottomfish surveys.
- Enhancing data from aquaculture and fisheries surveys and projects to facilitate resource management decision making.
- Assessing the impacts of ecosystem changes on fisheries in the U.S. Territories.
- Building technical capabilities to conduct data collection and analysis in terms of analyzing data for annual catch limits.

Overarching Solicitation Evaluation Criteria

Fishing Community Resiliency

While fishing community resiliency is not a stand-alone priority, no less than 10% of funds will be awarded to applications that develop and support community-based bridge plans. Community-based bridge plans are scopes of work in a proposal with specific

components that enhance fishing community resiliency, from the perspectives of both fishery working waterfront and living marine resource communities. These can be projects that provide new opportunities or technologies for fishing fleets, onshore fishery businesses, both commercial and recreational, as well projects that advance value added marine recreational activities for these communities.

Community-based bridge plans work towards advancing the vitality of these communities. Projects are encouraged to help coastal fishing industries adapt to constraints limiting sustainable fisheries development by retooling their fishing fleets, shore services, and port facilities into sustainable and innovative businesses. Many shoreside support services upon which the fishing industry relies are constrained or in decline due to less fish being landed. These include ice, fuel, haulout, auction, and processing companies. Projects that include creative opportunities that would enhance the short- and long-term vitality of commercial and recreational fishing or aquaculture related businesses are encouraged.

C. Program Authority

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

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Grant awards are dependent on the availability of Federal funding as provided in enacted Appropriations Acts. This Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) is being released prior to final appropriations due to award process timeframes. While the FY 2018 President's budget proposed $0 for this program, final Congressional direction has not been determined. Applicants are not guaranteed any level of funding.

Project proposals requesting less than $25,000 or greater than $300,000 in federal funding, will not be accepted or reviewed. The number of awards made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for each project, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and the amount of funds made available to the S-K Program. There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by the same applicant during this competitive solicitation; however,

multiple applications submitted by the same applicant must clearly identify different projects, and each application will be rated individually in the competitive review process. If you have several projects that you are seeking funding for, submit a separate application for each project; do not consolidate several projects into one application.

B. Project/Award Period

We will award grants or cooperative agreements for a maximum period of two years (24 months), but shorter term project proposals are welcomed.

Applications beyond this 24 month duration will not be considered. The requested award start date must begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month. The earliest start date for projects will be September 1, 2018, dependent upon availability of Federal funding as provided by Congress, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including National Environmental Policy Act analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument (grant or cooperative agreement) will be determined by the NOAA Grants Office. A cooperative agreement will be used if the proposed project involves substantial Federal scientific or programmatic involvement. Substantial involvement means that, after award, NOAA scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role; it is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities. The dominant role and prime responsibility resides with the awardee for the project as a whole, although specific tasks and activities may be shared among the awardees and NOAA. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations, between you and NOAA/NMFS representatives.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

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

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

2. You represent an entity that is a corporation, partnership, association, or other non-Federal entity, non-profit or otherwise (including Indian tribes), if such entity is a citizen of the United States within the meaning of section 2 of the Shipping Act, 1916, as amended (46 U.S.C. app. 802); or

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

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

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

Eligible Applicants must submit a pre-proposal that meets the submission requirements listing in this FFO by the established due date. Full proposals will not be reviewed or evaluated if a pre-proposal was not received on time and ranked.

Non Eligible Applicants

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

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

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

The funds you provide as cost-sharing may include funds from private sources or from state or local governments, or the value of in-kind contributions. Federal funds or funds used to match other Federal aid cannot be used as match. In-kind contributions may include, but are not limited to, personal services volunteered to perform tasks in the project, and permission to use, at no cost, real or personal property owned by others. We will determine the appropriateness of all cost-sharing proposals, including the valuation of in-kind contributions, on the basis of guidance provided in 2 CFR 200.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

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

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Pre-proposals should be submitted through Grants.gov. Though a full application package is not required for pre-proposals, a SF-424 must be filled out and signed.

For the full application, the standard application package, consisting of the standard forms, i.e., SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at http://www.grants.gov. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. If you do not have Internet access, an application package may be received by contacting Daniel Namur, S-K Program Manager, NOAA/NMFS (F/MB); 1315 East-West Highway, Room 14358, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282, Phone: (301) 427-8730, or e-mail: Dan.Namur@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Format requirements for both pre-proposals and full proposals: All application materials should be submitted in Adobe PDF or a common word processing format, and when printed out should meet all format requirements. All pages must be no less than single-spaced printed or typed, printed or typed in at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins.

Pre-proposal Format

The pre-proposal process is intended to provide an indication to potential applicants of the technical merit and the relevancy of the proposed project to the S-K program before preparing a full proposal. The intent is to reduce the burden of preparing full proposals that do not have a high probability for being funded. When drafting a pre-proposal, applicants should clearly convey the management impact and applicability of their proposed research for the priority area to which they are applying. Late or incomplete pre-proposals, as well as those that deviate from content or format requirements, will not be reviewed by NOAA.

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

The SF-424 form will serve as the cover page for the pre-proposal. Each pre-proposal may not exceed two pages, single-spaced, using the format described above and must provide:

a. Title of project;

b. Priority (Applicants must identify the single priority that is most addressed by the pre-proposal. If more than one priority is addressed by the proposal, one priority must be identified as the primary. The single priority identified as the one that is most directly addressed by the proposal will dictate the type of subject matter expert used to evaluate your pre-proposal and full proposal should one be submitted.);

c. Background section that sets the stage for the work and identifies which one of the priorities in Section I.B the pre-proposal addresses directly;

d. Rationale of why the work should be conducted and how it is relevant to the S-K Program;

e. Clear statement of objectives and general methodology to be used;

f. Identification of required permits (i.e. ESA, MMPA) and permit numbers, if applicable; and

g. Estimated budget amount.

Full Application Format

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

Each application must include:

- An identified singular research priority that most closely reflects the objectives of your proposal. If more than one priority is addressed by the proposal, one priority must be identified as the primary. The single priority identified as the one that is most directly addressed by the proposal will dictate the type of subject matter expert used to evaluate your proposal. If one is not identified, a priority will be identified for you.

- Federal application forms, including:

o SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. Applicants must enter the NOAA assigned pre-proposal number in box 5b.

o SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-construction Programs must be completed. Indicate any matching funds, if applicable.

o SF-424B, Assurances - Non-construction Programs must be completed for each submitted non-construction application.

o CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.

o SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).

- NOAA NEPA Questionnaire (http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf.). It is recommended that you pay attention to responding to Questions 1-19 and 20-37, the latter of which are specific to NMFS project submissions.

- Data Sharing Plan (A data sharing plan is a minimum requirement and evaluation criteria. If a data sharing plan is not submitted with the full application, the proposal will undergo no further review and will be returned to the applicant with no further consideration).

- A Project Summary (described below, limit 2 pages).

- A Narrative Project Description (described below, limit 20 pages).

- A detailed Budget Narrative (described below). Provide justifications for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget narrative should be broken out and detailed using the same budget categories as noted on the SF-424A budget form. For reference, additional budget narrative guidance is available at http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/training.html.

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

All pages must be no less than single-spaced printed or typed, in at least a 12–point font with one-inch margins on letter sized (8.5" x 11") paper. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out. Failure to follow these requirements will result in the rejection/return of the application.

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

If the applicant has completed the entire application in Grants.gov but is unable to submit it via Grants.gov, then this application package should be provided via CD along with printed and signed versions of forms SF-424, SF-424B, and CD-511. The Authorized Representative MUST sign and date these forms in the space reserved for electronic signature. Signatures (electronic or ink) must match the name printed in the "Authorized Representative" section of the SF-424 Block 21. Another Authorized Representative may not sign on behalf of the individual noted in Block 21. Paper applications should not be bound in any manner.

Content Requirements:

A. Project Summary

It is critical that the project summary accurately describe the project being proposed and convey all essential elements of the project for public dissemination.

Provide a summary of the proposed project (two page maximum). The summary must include:

Applicant Information: Applicant organization, and name, title, and contact information of the Principal Investigator.

Project Information: Project title, location, requested project period (start and end dates), Federal funding requested, and identification of the singular S-K research priority that most closely reflects the objectives of your proposal. If more than one priority is addressed by the proposal, one priority must be identified as the primary. The single priority identified as the one that is most directly addressed by the proposal will dictate the type of subject matter expert used to evaluate your proposal. If one is not identified, a priority will be identified for you.

Partners: Identification of collaborating partners.

Summary: Clear description of proposed activities and anticipated benefits/outcomes. This should also include the species/resources to be addressed. It is critical the project summary accurately describe the project being proposed and convey all essential elements of the project for public dissemination.

B. Project Description

The project narrative comprises the research plan for the project. The narrative must be detailed enough for reviewers to make a clear connection between the proposed activities and the proposed project costs. The major part of the narrative should be devoted to a description and justification for the proposed project, including details of the method to be

used. It should include a timeline for major activities of the proposed project, and should indicate who will be responsible for which activities. There should be no ambiguity about who will perform particular parts of the project, and the time at which these activities take place. You must provide a narrative description of your project that includes the information listed below. The project description may not exceed 20 pages. The tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations that you submit to document the project and the problem/opportunity you seek to address are included in the 20-page limit. The following do not count towards the 20-page limit: standard application forms, project summary, budget and justification, letters of support, curriculum vitae (CV) or resumes, lists of permits, NEPA questionnaire, and data sharing plan.

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

1. Project goals and objectives - Identify the one specific S-K Program priority (described in Section I. B. Program Priorities) to which the proposed project responds. If more than one priority is addressed by the proposal, one priority must be identified as the primary. The single priority identified as the one that is most directly addressed by the proposal will dictate the type of subject matter expert used to evaluate your proposal. If one is not identified, a priority will be identified for you. Identify the problem/opportunity you intend to address and describe its significance to the fisheries resource and fishing community. Objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible; clear as to the “what and when,” but should avoid the “how and why”; and attainable within the time, money and human resources available. Projects should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific performance measurements. If you are applying to continue a project previously funded under the S-K Program, describe in detail your progress to date and explain why you need additional funding. If the proposal is for renewed support, include a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work. We will consider this information in evaluating your current application.

2. Project impacts - Describe the anticipated impacts of the project on the fisheries resource and the fishing community in terms of reduced by-catch, increased product yield, or other measurable benefits. Identify the benefits that will be achieved as a result of this effort, both to the recipient and the general public as a whole. Describe how you/your organization (or others) will monitor progress and measure the project's impacts.

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

4. Need for government financial assistance - Explain why you need NOAA financial assistance for the proposed work, and why other funding sources, if applicable, cannot fund all the proposed work. List all other sources of funding you have or are seeking for the project.

5. Federal, state, and local government activities and permits - It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. You must note whether or not permits are required. If no permits are required, this section must indicate "no permits are required". If permits are required, provide a list of all applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work and an indication of the status of any permits needed (e.g., not yet applied, permit application submitted/pending, permit granted, etc.) or a statement indicating that no permits are necessary. List any existing Federal, state, or local government programs or activities that this project would affect, including activities requiring: certification under state Coastal Zone Management Plans; Section 404 or Section 10 permits issued by the Corps of Engineers; exempted fishing permits, letters of authorization or other permits under Federal Fishery Management Plans (FMP); environmental impact statements to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act; scientific permits under the Endangered Species Act and/or the Marine Mammal Protection Act; or Magnuson-Stevens Act Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation if the project may adversely affect areas identified as EFH. Describe the relationship between the project and these FMPs or activities, and list names and addresses of persons providing this information. You may obtain information on these activities from the NMFS Regions (see Section VII- Agency Contacts). This section does not count towards the 20-page limitation.

6. Statement of Work

a) What is the project design? What specific work, activities, procedures, statistical design, or analytical methods will you undertake? Describe methodologies or technical plans for activities to be conducted under the project. You should provide sufficiently detailed information on the proposed activities and potential environmental effects so that NOAA can analyze the impacts of the project as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (see Section VI. B.2). In addition, NOAA has developed a NEPA questionnaire to assist in the evaluation of the possible environmental impact of your application. As part of this application process, questions from the questionnaire must be answered. The NEPA Questionnaire is located at http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf. The NEPA questionnaire does not count towards the 20 page limitation.

b) Who will be responsible for carrying out the various activities? Provide information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including the technical and administrative points of contact as appropriate.

c) How will project results be disseminated? Describe any expected products of the project, such as a training manual, management plan, brochures, number of people trained, video, technique, or piece of equipment. Detail if/how products will be distributed to potential users (resource managers, researchers, other interested parties).

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

7. Project management - Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Describe how the necessary experience, facilities, and administrative resources are in place to successfully meet the responsibilities associated with managing a federal financial assistance award. Proposals should demonstrate the applicant organization’s knowledge

and experience in delivering the project requested in this application. The principal investigator may or may not be the applicant; however, if the applicant is not the principal investigator, there must be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and principal investigator (e.g., the applicant may be responsible for managing the grant funds and the principal investigator will be responsible for completing the work).

Include the resume or curriculum vitae of the principal investigator(s) and any consultants and/or subcontractors, and indicate their level of involvement in the project. Include copies of any agreements between you and the participants describing the specific tasks to be performed. Agreement documents and resumes/curriculum vitae (2 page maximum) should be included in the "Supporting Documentation." This information does not count toward the project narrative's 20 page limitation.

8. Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant - Describe how Federal, state and non-government entities, particularly members of fishing communities, will participate in the project, and the nature (sub-award, sub-contract, volunteer, etc.) of their participation.

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

10. Data Sharing Plan up to 2 pages (not included in the 20-page limitation; can be submitted as an appendix).

(1.) 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.

(2.) Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Sharing Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Sharing Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Sharing 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.

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

(4.) 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.

C. Budget Narrative

Each application must include clear and concise budget information, both on the required Federal forms and as described here. In order to allow reviewers to fully evaluate the appropriateness of proposed costs, a budget narrative must explain and justify all Federal and non-Federal costs by object class category, as listed on the SF-424A under Section B, Budget Categories. Provide detailed narrative descriptions of all costs, and explain each calculation for all budget categories. You are encouraged to include a budget table to further clarify the cost breakdown. If applicable, briefly describe the basis for estimating the value of the cost sharing derived from in-kind contributions. All proposed costs must be reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary to the supported activity.

The budget narrative must include:

a) Personnel costs, including salary and wages, should be broken out by named principal investigator (PI) and number of months requested per year, per PI, as a percentage of their normal salary rate. Support for each PI should be commensurate with their stated involvement, which may or may not correspond to their current position. Any unnamed personnel (graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, technicians) should be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to PI personnel costs above. Fringe benefits should be identified separately from salary and wages; fringe benefit rates should be applied consistently, and should apply equally to both Federal and non-Federal (matching) funds, if applicable. Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. All funds must be estimated to the nearest dollar; do not submit budgets containing cents.

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

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

d) Supplies should be itemized to the level of detail known or may be based on established historical costs. Whenever possible, you should include the quantity/number of units and cost per unit to justify expenses listed in the supplies category.

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

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

g) The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an approved indirect cost rate agreement with the Federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect costs agreement with the Federal government must be included with the application.

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 MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The

negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. 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, Maryland 20910

lamar.revis@noaa.gov

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

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

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award, 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 unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. Applicants should allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration; registration is required only once, but must be renewed periodically.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Pre-proposals must be received at http://www.Grants.gov under the competition link named “PRE PROPOSALS FY18 Saltonstall-Kennedy”, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Standard Time, October 10, 2017, 60 days after the posting date of the FFO. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Within 30 days of the pre-proposal due date, NOAA will inform applicants, based upon their pre-proposal, if the S-K Program encourages or discourages submission of a full proposal.

Eligible Applicants must submit a pre-proposal by the date specified in the DATES section. Full proposals will not be reviewed or evaluated if a pre-proposal was not received and ranked.

Areas impacted by recent hurricane activity are exempt from the eligibility requirement of a pre-proposal submission and may submit a full proposal submission by the January 8, 2018 deadline without having submitted a pre-proposal. NOAA reserves the right to request further documentation, as needed, for any proposal submitted under these special conditions.

Full Applications must be received by http://www.Grants.gov under the competition link named “FULL Proposals FY18 Saltonstall-Kennedy”, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Standard Time, January 8, 2018, 150 days after the posting date of the FFO. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

NOTE: Under this one Full Funding Opportunity there are two (2) competition links. Please be sure to submit your pre-proposals to the “PRE PROPOSALS FY18 Saltonstall-Kennedy” link within the dates specified in this FFO. Please be sure to submit your FULL Proposals to the “FULL Proposals FY18 Saltonstall-Kennedy” prior to the date

specified in this FFO.

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, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC's are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

F. Funding Restrictions

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

The S-K Program will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, travel or salaries for Federal employees, or profit as allowable costs in the proposed budget. NOAA funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Project costs can only include support for activities conducted between the effective start date and end date of the award, and cannot include activities undertaken either before or after the agreed upon dates. Applicants will not be reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award. Such expenditures may not be considered as part of the applicant's cost-share or matching contribution.

G. Other Submission Requirements

All pre-proposals should be submitted through www.grants.gov. If you do not have Internet access, an application package may be submitted to Daniel Namur, S-K Program

Manager, NOAA/NMFS (F/MB); 1315 East-West Highway, Room 14358, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282.

The Pre-proposal package includes an SF-424 and the 2 page pre-proposal.

Full Applications should be submitted through www.grants.gov. If you do not have internet access, an application package may be submitted to Daniel Namur, S-K Program Manager, NOAA/NMFS (F/MB); 1315 East-West Highway, Room 14358, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282.

Registration Process

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

(a) Grants.Gov: The first step in submitting an application online is to complete a one-time registration process. Individuals wishing to submit a grant application, using Grants.gov, are required to complete this one-time registration process. Neither a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number nor the System for Award Management (SAM) registration is necessary for Individual Registration.

(b) Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) - All Applicant

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

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

You must renew and revalidate your entity's registration at least every 12 months from the date you last certified to and submitted the registration in SAM - and sooner, if your entity's information changes. The primary point of contact email address will receive a message alerting them to the entity's/entities' renewal requirements at 60 days, 30 days and 15 days prior to expiration. If you do not renew your registration, it will expire. You must have an active SAM registration in order to be eligible to receive contract awards or payments, submit assistance award applications via Grants.gov, or receive certain payments from some federal government agencies.

2. Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days to establish. Please plan your time accordingly to avoid late submissions, as such submissions will be rejected. The Grants.gov validation process for a submitted application can take up to two business days to complete (following submission through Grants.gov). Only validated applications are sent to NOAA to review. To ensure successful submission of an application, it is strongly recommended that a final and complete application be submitted at least two business days prior to the submission deadline.

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

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Pre-Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to pre-proposals ranging from 0-40 points based on the following four evaluation criteria.

1) How well the proposal addresses the needs of the fishing communities,

2) Technical merit (realistic and timely objectives and appropriate design),

3) Relevance to Program Goals, and

4) Involvement/ Collaboration with the Fishing Community, Industry or Stakeholders

The maximum score for each criterion is 10 points.

Scoring will be determined by subject matter experts in a process similar to that used at

the full proposal stage, providing scores based upon receiving up to ten points for meeting each of the provided criteria. The S-K Program will review the complete set of pre-proposals and consider the merit ranking and relevance to determine whether to 'encourage' or 'not encourage' full proposals.

Full Application Evaluation Criteria:

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors the reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets the criterion. We encourage applicants to make explicit connections to the evaluation criterion and factors in their applications. Written comments are required to justify provided scores in each section of the review. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive. Score ranges are identified for each evaluation criteria below. Top range scores indicate the application fully addressed the criterion, a score of 0 indicates the criterion was not addressed at all.

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals (30 points - 0 points). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities.

Does the proposal describe its relevance to a S-K Program Priority in Section B, and how information gathered will contribute to NOAA mission to enhance the understanding of the fishery resource and contribute to the body of information on which management decisions are made? Does this study address an important problem, providing a clear definition of the problem, need, issue or research need to be addressed? Can the research question be answered using existing data? If not, is this the best method to obtain the data? Where applicable, is the participation of U.S. fishermen meaningfully incorporated into the project design? Will the project(s) yield environmentally compatible socioeconomic benefits, such as increased business opportunities, recreational opportunities, or decreased safety hazards? The appropriateness of the data sharing plan: Has the proposal included a Data Information Sharing Plan including description of the types of environmental data and information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, sharing and security;

and prior experience in publishing such.

2. Technical and/or scientific merit (35 points - 0 points). This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

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

3. Overall qualifications of the applicants (10 points - 0 points). This criterion assesses whether the applicant, and team members, possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project and meet the responsibilities associated with managing a federal financial assistance award.

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

4. Project costs (15 points - 0 points). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. Cost effectiveness of the project is considered.

Is the proposed budget cost-effective and realistic based on the applicant's stated objectives, time frame, and amount of overall project budget already secured from other sources? Is the proposed budget sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of costs by object class? Does the project demonstrate that a significant benefit will be generated at a reasonable cost.

5. Outreach and education (10 points - 0 points). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.

Does the proposal identify anticipated benefits, potential users, indicators of success, and methods of disseminating results? Is an effective method proposed for dissemination of project results given the nature of the work? Depending upon the project, outreach and education may include peer reviewed publications, presentations at professional meetings, brochure development, public meetings, or distribution of project results to appropriate managers or management agencies. Is the outreach/education component appropriate for the type and nature of the proposal, and it is expected to be effective? Are the various target audiences, such as the fishing community or the general public, identified? Will the outreach methods acknowledge NOAA Fisheries' support of the project?

B. Review and Selection Process

This will be a two-stage competition with pre-proposals and full proposals. At both stages, an administrative review is conducted by NOAA to determine compliance with requirements, completeness of the application, and responsiveness to this FFO and programmatic priorities.

Encouragement of pre-proposals is based primarily on how well the proposal addresses the four evaluation criteria located in section "A. Evaluation Criteria."

Scoring will be determined by subject matter experts in a process similar to that used at the full proposal stage, providing scores based upon receiving up to ten points for meeting each of the provided criteria. The S-K Program will review the complete set of pre-proposals and consider the merit ranking and relevance to determine whether to 'encourage' or 'not encourage' full proposals.

A summary statement will be provided to each applicant of a pre-proposal, stating whether their pre-proposal was complete and timely and whether a full proposal is 'encouraged' or 'not encouraged' for the full proposal stage. Regardless of encouragement or discouragement based on the pre-proposal, all those who submit complete and timely pre-proposals and meet all requirements are eligible to submit full proposals.

Full Proposal Review and Selection

1. Initial Screening - An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to determine compliance with application requirements and completeness of application materials, and to ensure a pre-proposal was submitted by the due date. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete or non-responsive will be eliminated from further review.

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

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

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

Each panelist will evaluate, in a group setting (meeting or webinar), the applications in terms of the significance of the problem or opportunity being addressed, the degree to which the project involves collaboration with fishing community members and other appropriate collaborators, proposed means to disseminate project results, and benefits (industry, resource, economic) derived from investment in the project. Prior to the panel discussion, each member of the panel will independently assign a numerical rating between 1.0 and 5.0 (poor to excellent) for each application according to the following scale, and provide comments to support their score.

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

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

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

4 – Very Good; application was frequently responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V.A) and satisfactorily addressed program priorities outlined in the FFO.

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

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

During the Panel (in-person or virtually), reviewers can revise their scores and comments. Panelists must individually submit their final score to the S-K Program Manager by the end of the panel meeting. No consensus advice will be given by the Panelists on recommendations or scores. After the panel scores are submitted, a compilation of all proposals in rank order is developed based on the average score from the constituent review panel.

4. Funding Recommendations

Technical Review Only - The S-K Program Manager, in consultation with the NMFS Regional Administrators (RAs) and Office Directors (ODs) and Science Center Directors

(SDs), will develop a recommendation for project funding for those Applications that scored above the cutoff score.

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

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

C. Selection Factors

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

1. Availability of funding;

2. Balance and distribution of funds;

a. By research area;

b. By project type;

c. By type of Applicant;

d. By type of partners;

e. Geographic distribution;

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

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

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

6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups; and

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

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications being considered for funding are expected to be complete by May of 2018. The earliest start date for projects will be September 1, 2018, dependent upon availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive notification from a NMFS Regional representative that the application has been recommended for funding selection to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This

notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project, and is not a guarantee of funding. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. This notification will be issued to the Authorizing Representative of the project either electronically through use of Grants Online or in hard copy. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until the Applicant's Authorized Representative has received official notice of the award from the NOAA Grants Officer and has reviewed and accepted the terms of the award. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified their proposal was not recommended for funding or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in IV.B (Content and Form of Applications). Unselected paper applications will be returned to the applicant.

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

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

Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements.

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 https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

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

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approval for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are

expected to design their proposed activities to minimize the potential for adverse impacts to the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests for, or approval of required environmental permits should be included in the application package. Applications will be reviewed to ensure they contain sufficient information to allow NOAA staff to conduct a NEPA analysis so that appropriate NEPA documentation, required as part of the application package, can be submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division along with the recommendation for funding for selected applications.

Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact must furnish information requested to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

3. Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that amount of funds has not yet been determined for the S-K program described in this notice and are advised that the competition described herein may be subject to cancellation due to unavailability of funding or revision of agency priorities. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award funding for specific projects or obligate available funds. You should not initiate your project in expectation of Federal funding until you receive a grant award document signed by an authorized NOAA official. If you incur any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, you do so solely at your own risk of these costs not being included under the award. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

4. Paperwork Reduction Act - This collection of information contains requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SFLLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0040, 0348-0044, 0348-0043, 0348-0046 and 0605-0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

5. Administrative Procedure Act/Regulatory Flexibility Act - Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required by the Administrative procedure Act or any other law for rules concerning public property, loans, grants, benefits, and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comments are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared, and none has been prepared. It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

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

7. UNPAID TAX LIABILITY. In accordance with Section 523 of Division B and Sections 744 and 745 of Division E of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) or a future public law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) will be required to provide certain pre-award representations regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns. The form must be completed and submitted with grant applications for: (a) all for-profit and non-profit organization applicants (Part I, and if required, Part II); and (b) all non-Federal entity applicants anticipating receipt of $5 million or more in the current Federal Fiscal Year appropriated funding (Part II only). The form can be found at http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/forms.html.

8. 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. 200.205. 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.

C. Reporting

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

2. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 - This Act (FFATA) includes a requirement for awardees of Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All grant recipients awarded a new Federal grant greater than or equal to $25,000, are subject to FFATA subaward reporting requirements. All awardees of applicable NOAA grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

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

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

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

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

c. Purpose:

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

- Objectives of the project;

d. Approach: Detailed description of the work that was performed;

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

f. Findings:

- Actual accomplishments and findings.

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

- Description of need for additional work, if any; and

g. Evaluation:

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

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

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

VII. Agency Contacts

Regional S-K Program point of contacts:

Headquarters - Program Manager – Daniel Namur, telephone (301) 427-8730 email: Dan.Namur@noaa.gov, Alaska Region: Shawn Carey, telephone: (907) 586-7845; email: Shawn.Carey@noaa.gov; West Coast Region: Kim Raneses, telephone: (206) 526-6131; email: Kim.Raneses@noaa.gov, Pacific Islands Region: Scott Bloom, telephone: (808) 725-5055; email: Scott.Bloom@noaa.gov, Greater Atlantic Region: Susan Olsen, telephone (978) 281-9330; email: Susan.Olsen@noaa.gov; Southeast Region: Robert Sadler, telephone: (727) 551-5760; email: Robert.Sadler@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552) generally provides that any person has a right of access to Federal agency records, except to the extent that such records (or portions thereof) are protected from disclosure by exemptions. The DOC regulations implementing the FOIA are found at Subpart A of 15 CFR Part 4 (Disclosure of Government Information) which sets forth rules for DOC and operating units to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. Unless prohibited by law and to the extent permitted under the FOIA, contents of applications and proposals submitted by successful applicants may be released in response to FOIA requests. In addition, 2 CFR § 200.315 (Intangible property) requires that research data relating to published research findings produced under an award that were used by the Federal Government in developing an agency action that has the force and effect of law will be made available to the public through the procedures established under the FOIA.

Funded applications submitted in response to this FFO may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.