FY 2020-2021 Coral Reef Conservation Program Non-Governmental Organization Partnership Cooperative Agreements

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2020-2021 Coral Reef Conservation Program Non-Governmental Organization Partnership Cooperative Agreements

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCM-2020-2006329

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

Dates: LETTERS OF INTENT (LOIs) ARE REQUIRED AND MUST BE RECEIVED by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Friday, January 3, 2020 by email <coral.grants@noaa.gov>. Full applications must be submitted electronically via www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time by Friday, February 21, 2020 to be considered for funding.

Funding Opportunity Description: LETTERS OF INTENT (LOIs) ARE REQUIRED AND MUST BE RECEIVED by 11:59 PM Eastern Time by Friday, January 3, 2020 by email <coral.grants@noaa.gov>.

The purpose of this notice is to invite Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with demonstrated expertise and experience in supporting coral reef management in the United States to submit proposals to establish partnerships with the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) to further the conservation of U.S. coral reefs. This funding announcement describes the coral reef conservation partnership(s) that the NOAA CRCP envisions, identifies the qualities that NOAA desires in a partner, and describes criteria against which applications will be evaluated for funding consideration. Partnerships selected through this notice will be implemented through a cooperative agreement of up to 24-months (2 years) in duration.

Pursuant to Section 6403 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act (CRCA), 16 U.S.C. 6401-6409, and pending Congressional appropriations, CRCP funding of approximately $900,000 is expected to be available for initiating partnership(s) with up to ten non-governmental organizations in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. CRCP will consider funding a single proposal that includes support for all seven coral reef states and territories and/or several proposals in the Pacific Islands (benefitting Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and/or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) and in the Atlantic/Caribbean region (benefitting Florida, Puerto

Rico, and/or the U.S. Virgin Islands). Some international work may be proposed using non-federal matching funds provided the scope is similar to domestic activities, but will not be prioritized. It is expected that a minimum of one project, but not more than two projects, will be selected to benefit each jurisdiction in any combination of proposals. Applications may propose work plans of up to 24 months, in conformance with the requirements of Section IV of this announcement, and may at most request between $100,000 and $700,000 per year (approximately $100,000 per state or territory), depending on how many of the seven coral states and territories will benefit from the proposed project(s). As required by the CRCA, recipients are required to match NOAA's Federal contributions with non-federal matching contributions at a minimum ratio of 1:1, unless the applicant requests and is granted a waiver to the matching requirement by the agency. Funding after the first year generally depends on future Congressional appropriations, NOAA/CRCP priorities, and recipient performance in the first year(s) of the award.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Coral reefs and associated seagrass and mangrove communities are among the most complex and diverse ecosystems on earth. They support important fishing and tourism industries, protect coasts from wave and storm damage, contain an array of potential pharmaceuticals, and provide local communities with a source of food, materials and traditional activities.

As shallow-water, near shore communities, coral reef ecosystems are ecologically linked to adjacent watersheds and are highly vulnerable to human activity. Stresses in the coral reef environment include poor water quality from runoff and inadequate sewage treatment, sedimentation, destructive fishing practices, recreational overuse and misuse, and impacts from climate change, including changes in ocean chemistry.

To address these and other threats, Congress passed the Coral Reef Conservation Act (CRCA or the Act), codified at 16 U.S.C. 6401-6409, which established the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) and provided guidance for allocation of Federal funding toward efforts to conserve coral reef ecosystems in the U.S. and internationally. As described in the Act, one of the primary functions of the CRCP is to provide financial assistance to external partners for coral reef conservation projects consistent with the Act and CRCP priorities. CRCP implements several financial assistance programs under the Act's authority, including the partnership projects announced in this notice. More information about CRCP is available at http://coralreef.noaa.gov/.

In 2018, the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program established the new NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan-2018; available at https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/strategic_plan2018/) which uses a resilience-based management approach focused on conservation that supports the ability of corals to withstand and recover from stress. This announcement will not award funding for construction projects. A construction project is defined as an award in which the major purpose of the project or program is construction.

NOAA also issued Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program Implementation Guidelines, most recently published at 75 Fed. Reg. 48934 (Aug. 12, 2010) and available at http://go.usa.gov/3FT7z. The most recent Guidelines cover 2010-2015, but their approach remains generally in effect until further notice unless otherwise stated in a NOAA CRCP

funding announcement posted on Grants.gov. Please note that CRCP funding announcements are issued only on Grants.gov, not in the Federal Register as stated in the Guidelines, and the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notice referenced in the Guidelines is updated as described in Section VI.B. of this announcement.

All of the following information in this funding opportunity pertains only to the FY 2020-2021 Coral Reef Conservation Program Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Partnership Cooperative Agreements funding category.

B. Program Priorities

CRCP's efforts focus on strategic goals, objectives, regions, and specific coral reef conservation activities where the CRCP can have the greatest impact while building on NOAA strengths, partnerships, resources, and expertise. In FY 2020, the CRCP will accept applications for cooperative agreements and grants up to a two-year project period focused on building domestic capacity to assist state and territorial agencies with coral reef conservation and management responsibilities. Priority will be given to proposals that support the objectives from the Strategic Plan-2018 (https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/strategic_plan2018) and the following specific jurisdictional priorities (use URLs below or see attachment in the grants.gov grant opportunity's Related Documents section):

American Samoa: https://ocmcoralreef.blob.core.windows.net/coralreef-prod/media/docs/FY20-21NGOPriorities_AS.pdf

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: https://ocmcoralreef.blob.core.windows.net/coralreef-prod/media/docs/FY20-21NGOPriorities_CNMI.pdf

Florida: https://ocmcoralreef.blob.core.windows.net/coralreef-prod/media/docs/FY20-21NGOPriorities_FL.pdf

Guam: https://ocmcoralreef.blob.core.windows.net/coralreef-prod/media/docs/FY20-21NGOPriorities_GU.pdf

Hawaii: https://ocmcoralreef.blob.core.windows.net/coralreef-prod/media/docs/FY20-21NGOPriorities_HI.pdf

Puerto Rico: https://ocmcoralreef.blob.core.windows.net/coralreef-prod/media/docs/FY20-21NGOPriorities_PR.pdf

U.S. Virgin Islands: https://ocmcoralreef.blob.core.windows.net/coralreef-prod/media/docs/FY20-21NGOPriorities_USVI.pdf

These jurisdictional priorities will be used to direct support toward the specific priority conservation needs identified by the CRCP and jurisdictional partners where the priorities of both overlap. As such, CRCP expects the majority of projects proposed under this competition will involve the development and implementation of projects that address both the CRCP Strategic Plan and jurisdictional priorities, and will focus effort primarily in domestic jurisdictions identified for coral reef management. Projects that do not specifically address these priorities or jurisdictions may be proposed, but are not likely to be competitive.

Through this funding announcement, the CRCP seeks to better support the needs of U.S. coral reef managers working within State and Territorial agencies by funding a single proposal that includes support for all seven coral reef states and territories and/or several proposals in the Pacific Islands (benefitting Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and/or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) and in the Atlantic/Caribbean region (benefitting Florida, Puerto Rico, and/or the U.S. Virgin Islands) with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that have demonstrated expertise and experience in implementing local coral reef conservation projects. It is expected that a minimum of one project, but not more than two projects, will be selected to benefit each jurisdiction in any combination of proposals. Some international work may be proposed using non-federal matching funds provided the scope is similar to domestic activities, but will not be prioritized.

Cooperative agreements between the CRCP and NGO partner(s) are expected to augment the technical support provided to the governor-appointed natural resource management agencies in the seven U.S. States, Territories, and Commonwealths that have primary management authority and responsibility for conserving U.S. coral reef ecosystems in Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam.

Applicants should document their previous involvement in coral conservation efforts in each jurisdiction in which they are proposing to work. If the applicant does not have previous experience or existing staff in a particular jurisdiction, they should provide specific information about how the applicant intends to fill such gaps through reassignment of existing staff or through the establishment of agreements and/or subawards with other partner organizations that have successfully worked in that location.

C. Program Authority

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

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Under 16 U.S.C. 6401-6409 and pending Congressional appropriations in FY 2020 and 2021, CRCP funding of approximately $900,000 per year is expected to be available for initiating partnership(s) with up to ten non-governmental organizations in FY 2020. CRCP will consider funding a single proposal that includes support for all seven coral reef states and territories and/or several proposals in the Pacific Islands (benefitting Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and/or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) and in the Atlantic/Caribbean region (benefitting Florida, Puerto Rico, and/or the U.S. Virgin Islands). It is expected that a minimum of one project, but not more than two projects, will be selected to benefit each jurisdiction in any combination of proposals. Applications may propose work plans of up to 24 months, in conformance with the requirements of Section IV of this announcement, and may at most request between $100,000 and $700,000 per year (approximately $100,000 per state or territory), depending on how many of the seven coral states and territories will benefit from the proposed project(s). As required by the CRCA, recipients are required to match NOAA's Federal contributions with non-federal matching contributions at a minimum ratio of 1:1 unless the applicant requests and is granted a waiver to the matching requirement by the agency. Funding after the first year generally depends on future Congressional appropriations, NOAA/CRCP priorities, and recipient performance in the first year(s) of the award.

The lead applicant on any proposal will be responsible for ensuring that allocated funds are used for the purposes of, and in a manner consistent with, this program, including any funds awarded to an eligible sub-awardee. There is no guarantee that funds will be available for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, the applicant does so at their own risk of not being selected and these costs not being included in a subsequent award. Proposal preparation costs shall not be included within the project application budget. In addition, NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for project costs if this program fails to receive funding. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards. Applicants must comply with all existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements terms and conditions and otherwise be eligible to receive federal

awards in order to be considered for or receive funding under this competition.

Proposals not funded in the current fiscal period, or if no proposal is selected for funding under this announcement in the current fiscal period, may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement. Funding in subsequent fiscal years encompassing the proposed period of performance is subject to the availability of appropriations.

B. Project/Award Period

CRCP expects to initiate between one and ten cooperative agreement award(s) with successful applicant(s) beginning on October 1, 2020, and extending for a period of up to 24-months.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Successful applicants will enter into a cooperative agreement with NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program as described under the terms of this document. Federal cooperative agreements are different from traditional grants in that they allow for 'substantial federal involvement' in the planning and implementation of funded projects. Substantial involvement on the part of NOAA may include the collaboration and participation of NOAA Federal Program Officers, local Coral Reef Management Liaisons, Coral Reef Fisheries Liaisons, and other CRCP staff in project development, planning and implementation; technical monitoring of award activities beyond ordinary stewardship; and coordination of funded projects with other CRCP-funded efforts as needed. See Section 5.C. of the Department of Commerce Grants Manual at https://go.usa.gov/xpjk8 for more information about substantial involvement. Applications should be written with the understanding the project will be a cooperative agreement. As the federal government will be substantially involved in the project, applicants may suggest anticipated federal roles and responsibilities in their proposals. Applicants tentatively selected for potential funding are expected to discuss how the CRCP might be involved in the project during project negotiations. NOAA will include an award condition describing its substantial involvement if a project is selected for funding.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are limited to non-profit non-governmental organizations that have demonstrated expertise and experience in supporting coral reef management in U.S. States and Territories.

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

Federal agencies and employees cannot receive funds under this announcement but may serve as collaborative project partners. If Federal agencies are collaborators, applicants are expected to provide detail on the planned level of Federal engagement in the application. Examples might include, but are not limited to partnership services; serving in a review capacity; or participating in priority task teams, working groups, or leadership teams.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program awards are subject to statutory and regulatory matching fund policies. Federal funds for any coral conservation award funded under 16 U.S.C. 6403(b) may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the award. Therefore, any coral conservation project under this Grant Program requires a 1:1 contribution of non-federal matching funds. “Cost sharing or matching” is defined by 2 CFR 200.29 as “the portion of project costs not paid by federal funds (unless otherwise authorized by federal statute).”

NOAA will accept any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third party in-kind contributions of goods and services, will be accepted as part of an applications cost sharing or matching when they meet all of the following criteria listed in 2 CFR 200.306(b): 1)Are verifiable from the non-federal entity's records; 2) Are not included as contributions for any other federal award; 3) Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives; 4) Are allowable under Subpart E—Cost Principles of this part; 5) Are not paid by the federal Government under another federal award, except where the federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other federal programs; 6) Are provided for in the approved budget when required by the federal awarding agency; and 7) Conform to other provisions of this part, as applicable.

Matching funds may come from a variety of public and private sources and may include

third party in-kind goods and services such as private boat use and volunteer labor. Goods and services provided by the recipient have the valuation described in 2 CFR 200.306. Federal agencies and employees' in-kind services cannot be considered as part of an applicant's matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage. Applicants are permitted to combine contributions from multiple non-federal partners in order to meet the 1:1 match requirement, consistent with the standards described in 2 CFR 200.306, and if funds are available within the project period stated in the application. Applicants should specify the source(s) of match in their proposal and detailed budget narrative and may provide or be asked to provide letters of commitment to confirm stated match contributions.

Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the number of volunteer or community participation hours devoted to specific projects, and all other cash or third party in-kind contributions. If the applicant plans to use any federal funds as match, the applicant should identify the federal statute authorizing the program to use federal funds to meet the match or cost sharing requirements (note that this would be unusual). Applicants may choose to designate part or all of their federally-negotiated indirect costs as match. This may be convenient because the valuation of such costs has already been federally-approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to the "Indirect Costs" policies in Section IV.B.5.h. and Section IV.E of this announcement. In addition, any Program Income that may arise in the project may be applied toward cost sharing or added to the project, consistent with 2 CFR 200.307.

The NOAA Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets the following two requirements identified in 16 U.S.C. 6403(b)(2): 1. No reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement, and 2. The probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement. In the case of a waiver request, the applicant must provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver including attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other extenuating circumstances preventing the availability of match. Match waiver requests, including the appropriate justification, must be submitted as part of the final application. Please address the waiver request as described in Section IV.B.5.g. of this announcement.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard SF-424 application package is available online at http://www.grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should submit a full standard NOAA financial assistance application package in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Applications that do not follow the Letter of Intent (LOI) and proposal application requirements stated in this announcement will not be considered for review. All application materials should use a legible 11- or 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides. Electronic applications must be submitted as Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) or Microsoft Word files.

For this funding competition, a LOI is REQUIRED before submitting a proposal. The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to program objectives and jurisdiction priorities. LOIs will not be scored and all applicants who submit on time are allowed to submit a full application. LOIs will be shared with relevant local state and territorial agencies, who may contact applicants to clarify priority intent or suggest revisions. As a relevant agency might not contact the applicant, and NOAA is not evaluating the LOIs, applicants should not wait to be contacted by NOAA (other than confirmation that an LOI was received) or by another agency before proceeding with full applications.

The LOI should include the following information on a cover page:
(a) Identification of the NOAA Office for Coastal Management as the target of the LOI
(b) Project title
(c) Names and affiliation of the lead principal investigators (PI) with contact information. NOAA will communicate with the lead PI on the status of their LOI.
(d) Names and affiliation for the principal investigator and all co-PIs
(e) Identify the following aspects of the project, including 1) the region and specific communities where the project will take place, 2) the professional or technical network that will be leveraged or created, and 3) identification of the programmatic priority(ies) applicable to the project
(f) Proposed project start and end dates
(h) Estimated funding request by year (as appropriate)

The body of the LOI should be no more than 2 pages, single-spaced, 11 or 12-point font, and must include the following components:
(a) Statement of Purpose: state the intent, goal, and outcome of proposed work
(b) Briefly describe the proposed project and activities, ensuring to highlight and describe

the (1) professional or technical network that will be leveraged or created, (2) partnerships and existing federal, state, territorial and/or local activities or programs that will be leveraged or integrated (3) public engagement and outreach activities and project outcomes and (4) the intended benefits to the region and local community
(c) Budget summary. Provide an overview of funding requested and brief details on how funds will be used.

The complete full application package should include the following forms and documents:

(a) A project description (proposal), as described in the application component section below (components 2-4), should be limited to no more than 40 pages for applicants proposing work in one (1) to four (4) domestic jurisdictions and no more than 60 pages for applicants proposing work in five (5) to seven (7) domestic jurisdictions. The project description should also include a title page and table of contents, but these pages (title and table of contents) will not count towards the page limit.
Project descriptions that exceed the 40-page or 60-page limit will be shortened by removing pages at the end of the proposal narrative (see element 3 of the component section below) before it is forwarded to merit reviewers for evaluation. Pages removed from lengthy applications will not be reviewed or considered. Applications that are incomplete, unclear, or contain numerous typographical errors may not be understood effectively by reviewers, resulting in lower evaluation scores, so applicants are advised to review their application materials closely before they are submitted to the agency for consideration.

(b) The following Federal forms from the SF-424 Form Family should be included in the application package, as applicable (no page limit with forms and related mandatory federal form information):
i. Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424
ii. Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A (prior to award, a Form SF-424A for each year of funding will be required)
iii. Assurances for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
iv. Certification Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
v. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable) Federal forms and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) information, as well as information provided to complete the federal forms (e.g. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement), can be submitted separately or combined and submitted as one PDF document.
Please keep in mind that Grants Online has a 5-minute time limit for downloading and uploading files, and so we recommend applicants do not exceed five megabytes for the total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices combined. Files that cannot be

opened or downloaded will not be reviewed.

All applications should contain the following five (5) components:

1. Title Page (Proposal Cover Sheet). Include proposal title; complete contact information for the Principal Investigator and the organization's Authorized Representative; the DUNS number of the applicant, which must match the applicant's registered organization name to receive funds; requested start date (October 1, 2020); duration of proposed project (up to 24-months); the Federal funding amount requested broken out by jurisdiction and task; and the amount and source of non-Federal matching contributions to the project.

2. Proposal Summary. Provide a 2 page summary of the proposed cooperative agreement. The summary should provide a description of the applicant's capabilities, overall project goals and objectives, brief summaries of the projects that the applicant intends to complete over the award period in each geographic area, and a brief summary of the anticipated products and desired outcomes from the proposed activities. Please note that this information may be utilized during Congressional notification and shared with the public.

3. Proposal Narrative. The proposal narrative description (25-40 pages) should describe each of the discrete projects or tasks proposed in the application. Each task should be titled and assigned a separate project or task number. Sufficient detail should be provided to enable reviewers to evaluate the relevance and applicability of proposed work to program priorities described in Section I.B. of this announcement; to determine the technical/scientific merit of the proposed work; to adequately review the qualifications of the applicants; and to assess whether the proposed scope of work raises any concerns with regard to Federal policy considerations, such as those related to the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Historic Preservation Act, etc. Applicants should clearly describe how each activity or project will directly benefit the coral reef management priorities of State and Territorial Coral Reef Management agencies. Each task description in the proposal narrative should include:
(a) Introduction - Provide a brief summary of relevant background information that justifies the need for the proposed project or task. Clearly describe or explain: the relationship of the proposed project to previous efforts; how the project fits into the jurisdictions' strategies for addressing the issue; how the project would complement coral reef conservation activities of local governmental agencies, and, if applicable, other relevant CRCP-sponsored coral conservation activities.
(b) Task Description and Methodology - Provide a project description that describes the scope and detail of the project and the work to be accomplished. Clearly describe or explain: project goals and objectives, proposed activities, methods, procedures, any special

equipment that will be used in support of the project goals, and how project outcomes will directly result in improved management of coral reef resources.
(c) Task Outcomes or Products - Identify and describe the anticipated project products or outcomes, explain how they will benefit local management of coral reef resources, and describe performance measures that will be used to evaluate project success. The narrative should include information on dissemination of the findings/results to resource managers, local communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate. The project narrative also needs to include information on how the project will be evaluated for success. If the goal of the project is to build capacity for improved conservation, describe proposed plans to ensure the activities continue into the future.
(d) Schedule - Indicate when each task or project is expected to begin (month and year) and include a timeline for completing tasks in narrative or table format.
(e) Project Management/Personnel - Identify the project manager or Principal Investigator. Identify other individual(s) responsible for completing the projects and tasks proposed in the application. Describe how the project will be organized and managed, and include the qualifications of the principal investigator(s) by providing curricula vitae or resumes. The Principal Investigator may or may not be the applicant organization. However, if the applicant is not the principal investigator, there should be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and principal investigator (e.g., the applicant may be responsible for managing the grant funds and the Principal Investigator will be responsible for completing the work). Please also include information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including the technical and administrative points of contact as appropriate.

4. Budget Narrative and Justification (10-20 pages)
In order to allow reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of all costs, applications should include a detailed budget narrative and a budget justification broken out by individual task. The budget narrative submitted with the final application should match the dollar amounts included on all required forms and clearly link to the project narrative. Please explain each calculation and provide a narrative justification to explain expenditures for each budget category. The budget narrative should describe, by category of expenditure, the total funding needed to accomplish the objectives described in the project narrative for the entire award period. Please explain how categorical costs are derived in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to determine if costs are 'allowable and reasonable' according to the cost principles referenced in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E. Budget narrative categories should correspond to the standard object class categories listed in Section B of the SF-424A. For additional details, please review the budget guidance provided at:
https://coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/forms/budget-narrative-guidance-for-NOAA-grants.pdf.
Applicants should include detailed budget information regarding all known contracts and

subawards, and indicate the basis for the cost and price estimates in the narrative. Applicants should describe activities to occur or products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Each subaward should include form SF-424A. Detailed budget information includes:
(a) Name of identified qualified sub recipient or contractor, affiliation, contact information, and method of selection. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection. Information must include the name and location (city, state, and Congressional district) of the entity receiving the funds and the location of the primary place of performance under the contract or subaward.).
(b) Period of Performance. Include the dates for the performance period. If it involves a number of tasks, include the performance period for each task.
(c) Scope of Work. List and describe the specific activities or tasks to be performed.
(d) Criteria for Measuring Accountability: Include an itemized line item breakdown as well as total contract/award amount. If applicable, include any indirect costs paid under the contract/award and the indirect cost rate used.
(e) Itemized Budget. Include categories used in program budget for subrecipients or cost-based contractors. If applicable, include any direct cost paid under the subaward or contract and the indirect cost rate used. All subawards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.330-200.332 for subawards, and 200.317-200.326 for procurements. For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs or price is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. Note that equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-federal entity for financial statement purposes, or $5,000. See 2 CFR 200.33 Equipment, 2 CFR 200.313, and 2 CFR 200.317-326. Non-federal applicants should identify, if this information is known when submitting the grant application, who they plan to request that NOAA transfer equipment or property ownership titles to after the project ends. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process. The cost or price, purpose, and method of selection for identified and planned acquisition contracts should be thoroughly justified in the Budget Narrative. Describe products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Procurements are subject to policies described in 2 CFR 200.317-.326. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection. The budget narrative should also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, the number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If actual trip details are unknown, applicants should state the basis for the proposed travel charges. Applicants should allocate travel funds for any coordination meetings at regional or national levels. If a foreign air carrier is anticipated to be used for

any portion of travel, prior approval is required under the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section G.05.d., http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20Conditions%2030%20April%202019.pdf, and therefore, such travel should be included in the proposal to avoid having to request prior approval after the project starts. Applicants may factor in travel costs for participation in an annual NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) workshop for recipients. Refer to item 8 below in this Section regarding treatment of Indirect Costs in the Budget Narrative.

5. Appendices
Appendices should be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (e.g. resumes, references, lists of relevant work products or reports, detailed methodologies, data sources, detailed budget narrative, letters of collaboration, letters of support, lists of data sources, and maps). Applicants should number the pages in their proposal and any appendices as a standard practice, NOAA requires that resumes for Principal Investigators (PIs) of competitive awards be on file and maintained in the grants processing system used by the Department of Commerce, Grants Online. Recipients of any award (competitive or non-competitive) are required to designate PIs in Grants Online within 30 days of receiving award offers.

The following appendix documents should be included in the application package:

(a) Mandatory detailed budget information.
i. Standard Form 424 (SF-424): Application for Federal Assistance (7/2003 version or newer). Applicants requesting Federal funding under this program must submit a copy of SF-424, 'Application for Federal Assistance'. If the applicant submits a hard copy of the final application, the SF-424 must be signed and dated by the organization's authorized representative and used as the cover page for the final application. An electronic signature and date stamp will automatically be included on SF-424 forms submitted via Grants.gov.
ii. Standard Form 424A (SF-424A): Budget Information for Non-construction Programs (includes a separate form for each year of funding and for each proposed sub-award. Applicants are required to submit a SF-424A Budget Form to summarize the budget for the proposed scope of work. The first column of Sections A and B shows the federal funds requested, while the second column of Sections A and B shows the non-federal matching funds provided for the project. Total award funding is shown in the final column of Section B. Non-federal funding is broken out by source in Section C. Forecasted cash needs in Section D should be inclusive of all funding for multiyear projects. Federal and non-federal funds should be expended at a similar rate throughout the course of the project. Section E may be left blank. Section F summarizes the direct charges in line 21 and lists the indirect

charges requested; please show the rate used in line 22. Multi-year awards will have out year funds shown in Section E. Please note that completion of the SF-424A form as described above represents NOAA's preference and may not be consistent with the instructions that accompany the SF-424A form. All budget figures should match the funding requested on the application cover sheet and correspond with the descriptions contained in the project and budget narratives. Each proposed sub-award of $25,000 or more should be accompanied by a separate SF-424A form to fully document the proposed subaward budget.
iii. Standard Form 424B (SF-424B): Assurances for Non-Construction Programs Applicants are required to submit a signed SF-424B, 'Assurances for Non-Construction Programs'.
iv. Form CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying Applicants are required to submit a Form CD-511, 'Certifications Regarding Lobbying.
v. Standard Form LLL (SF-LLL): Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).

(b) Letters of Collaboration. All supporting letters from partner organizations that are instrumental to the project should be included in the application package. Letters must clearly indicate the level of commitment and/or collaboration. Letters of collaboration do not need original signatures.

(c) Resumes. Provide resumes of the Principal Investigator for the project and other key personnel critical to the success of the project. Ensure that resumes address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work. Please limit resumes to a maximum of two pages for each key investigator.
Standard Form 424: Application for Federal Assistance (7/2003 version or newer)
Applicants requesting Federal funding in this program must submit a copy of Standard Form SF-424, 'Application for Federal Assistance'. If a hard copy final application is submitted, it must be signed and dated by the organization's authorized representative, and used as the cover page for the final application. An electronic signature and date stamp will automatically be included on SF-424 forms submitted via Grants.gov.

(d) Data Sharing Plan. If the proposal is expected to generate environmental data, a Data Management Plan is required. The Data Management Plan should address the requirements in this section of the Announcement.
i. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely used or open-standard format, and should be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.

ii. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement (component viii. of this section). The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget. 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. The NOAA Program is not offering specific data management technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open standard formats and methods is encouraged. For more information about data sharing in this program, contact the agency official listed in Section VII. of this funding announcement.
iii. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.
iv. 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.
v. NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available under:
http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.html
vi. Principal Investigators should indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.
vii. More information about the NOAA Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA’s Environmental Data Management Committee website at:
www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php. If no environmental data is expected and the applicant is not providing a data management plan, please state this in the proposal and describe the reason.

viii. Data Management Guidance to Proposal Writers. Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Craig Reid, Federal Program Officer, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, craig.a.reid@noaa.gov, 240-533-0783.
Data Accessibility: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program requires that public access to grant/contract-produced data be enabled. Funding recipients are expected to submit data to NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI), which will provide public access and permanent archiving. The NOAA Program has held preliminary consultation with NCEI regarding these pending data. Technical Recommendations: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program is not offering specific technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.
Resources: NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program resources for data sharing or archiving have already been identified; proposals should not include such costs (unless data volume is expected to exceed 20GB). NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.

(e) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental Compliance -- Under (NEPA), NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of projects or proposals seeking funding from NOAA.
After the application is submitted, NOAA may require additional information to fulfill NEPA and other compliance requirements. If NOAA determines that an environmental assessment is required, applicants may also be requested to assist in drafting the assessment. Applicants may also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.
The applicants selected for funding must complete questions 1-13 of the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Financial Assistance Applicants accessible at https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (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).Questions 14-53

are not required with the initial application because NOAA anticipates that most projects funded through this competition would not have impacts related to damage assessment and restoration or fisheries sampling and analysis.

(f) Permits and Approvals. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all necessary federal, state, and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work. Applicants must provide a list of all known 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. Applicants should include this required element even if permits are not required.
Failure to apply for and/or obtain federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA and environmental assessment) will delay or prevent the award of funds for projects that have been preliminarily selected for funding. For work proposed within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Seashores, and other federally designated managed areas, it is the responsibility of the applicant to request and obtain any necessary permits or letters of agreement from the appropriate government agencies prior to commencement of an award. For applicants who propose to conduct research or monitoring activities that may affect any coral species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act, you will likely need an Endangered Species Act Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit.

(g) Match waiver request (if applicable). Refer to Section III.B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement for more details.
Preference under this competition will be given to applicants who provide a 1:1 or greater ratio of matching funds to federal funds in accordance with the provisions of the Coral Reef Conservation Act. If the proposal lacks sufficient matching funds, the applicant may include a separate document in which the applicant requests a waiver to the matching funds requirement as described in Section 6403(b)(2) of the Act. Although the CRCP will consider these requests, in most cases, waivers of matching funds will not be provided for applicants to this competition. Please address all waiver requests to Jennifer Koss, CRCP Director, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East West Highway, 10th Floor, SSMC4, N/ORM, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver, the total amount of matching funds requested to be waived, attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other circumstances preventing the availability of match.

(h) Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable). The proposed budget may include an amount for indirect or “Facilities and Administrative” costs if the applicant has an

established indirect cost rate with the federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., utilities, rent, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. See 2 CFR 200.56 -57 and 200.412-415.
A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the federal Government should be included with the application package. If an award recipient has never established an indirect cost rate with any federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimis rate (10% of modified total direct costs) described at 2 CFR 200.414. Alternatively, the negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the DOC. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions require that recipients within 90 days of the award start date, submit to the address listed below documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review.

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

The de minimis indirect cost rate should be used for all federal awards. Non-federal entities may use this rate indefinitely, but may choose to negotiate an indirect (F&A) cost rate at any time. This de minimis rate option is not available to state and local governments, and Indian tribes.

In addition to the five (5) standard elements described above, applicants may upload additional supporting documentation, such as the resumes and qualifications of applicants, and letters of support or statements of collaboration, by using the 'Optional Form' box under 'Other Attachments' in Grants.gov during the application submission process.

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and enhance the quality of information available to the public, as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 Note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS), as identified

in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25 at http://go.usa.gov/x9PYd. Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated tollfree DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.

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

Applicants should allow a minimum of seven days to complete the SAM registration, although complete registration for SAM may take several weeks if problems arise. Registration is required only once but must be renewed once a year. In addition, it may take two days until the applicant is notified as to whether NOAA received the application, so allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date. Note: Your organization’s Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form. Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through www.grants.gov.

D. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for receipt of LOIs is 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Friday, January 3, 2020. LOIs must be RECEIVED by email <coral.grants@noaa.gov> by the date and time indicated or it will not be considered and the applicant will not be allowed to submit a full application. Insert "FY 2020-2021 CRCP NGO Partnership Letter of Intent" as the subject line of the email. Note that receipt may be delayed if email servers are not functioning efficiently so it is recommended that LOIs are submitted in advance of the due date. Applicants submitting multiple LOIs must use a unique project title for each LOI and may send all LOIs in one email or in multiple emails. Applicants will receive a notification of receipt within 5 business days. If you do not receive acknowledgment from NOAA that your LOI was received, contact the agency official listed in Section VII.

Full applications must be received by and validated by Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Friday, February 21, 2020 to be considered for funding.

Paper LOIs and applications will not be accepted.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Funding applications submitted under this competition are subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." It is the state agency's responsibility to contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the state's process under EO 12372. To assist the applicant, the names and addresses of the SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's website < https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Intergovernmental_-Review-_SPOC_01_2018_OFFM.pdf >.

F. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Costs

Applicants are permitted to request indirect costs if their organization has an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a Federal agency that covers the period of the award. Applicants requesting indirect costs should submit a copy of their current and signed indirect cost rate agreement with their application package.

If an award recipient has not previously established an indirect cost rate with any Federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimus rate described at 2 CFR 200.414, as described in Section IV.B.5.h. of this Announcement. Alternatively, the negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section B.06., require that recipients within 90 days of the award start date, submit to the address listed below documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review.

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

2. Ineligible projects:

The following projects will not be eligible for funding: (1) Activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by state or Federal law; (2) Activities that constitute mitigation for natural resource damages

under Federal or state law; and (3) Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation.

3. Cost Principles:
Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are limited to costs necessary and reasonable to achieve the approved goals and objectives and are determined by reference to relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, adopted by the Department of Commerce at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as the costs are determined to be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the award.

G. Other Submission Requirements
Letters of intent (LOI) shall be sent via email to <coral.grants@noaa.gov>. Insert "FY 2020-2021 CRCP NGO Partnership Letter of Intent" as the subject line of the email.
The standard full NOAA funding application package is available at www.grants.gov (Grants.gov) by searching the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.482). Application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the "Apply" function on Grants.gov. The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (www.dnb.com) and be registered in the SAM.gov, which requires periodic renewals. Refer to Section IV.C. for details on receiving a DUNS number and registering with SAM.gov
After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive two email messages from Grants.gov within the next 24 to 48 hours updating them on the progress of their application. The first email provides a tracking number and confirms receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system. The second email indicates that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive a third email when the application has been downloaded by the federal agency.
If an applicant submits multiple electronic versions of the proposal, the applicant should advise the federal agency of the tracking number that should be withdrawn. Applicants shall not electronically submit packages with files embedded within files as any such files may not be reviewed or factored into the merit review process.

The federal program office has a process to review for completeness. Administrative reviews

generally take place after deadlines because the majority of applicants apply just before deadlines. If there are no time constraints and available resources, the federal agency may reach back to applicants who have submitted incomplete packages.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Letters of intent (LOI) shall be sent via email to <coral.grants@noaa.gov>. Insert "FY 2020-2021 CRCP NGO Partnership Letter of Intent" as the subject line of the email.

The standard full NOAA funding application package is available at www.grants.gov (Grants.gov) by searching the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.482). Application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the “Apply” function on Grants.gov. The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (www.dnb.com) and be registered in the SAM.gov, which requires periodic renewals. Refer to Section IV.C. for details on receiving a DUNS number and registering with SAM.gov.

After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive two email messages from Grants.gov within the next 24 to 48 hours updating them on the progress of their application. The first email provides a tracking number and confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system. The second email indicates that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive a third email when the application has been downloaded by the federal agency.

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

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

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Letter of Intent Evaluation Criteria:

The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to program objectives and jurisdiction priorities. LOIs will not be scored and all applicants who submit on time are allowed to submit a full application. LOIs will be shared with relevant local state and territorial agencies, who may contact applicants to clarify priority intent or suggest revisions.

The evaluation criteria in this program and weights for each criterion are below:

1) Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the CRCP goals (30 points): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.
Proposals will be evaluated based on the potential of the project(s) to meet goals and objectives stated the NOAA CRCP Strategic Plan and/or established jurisdictional goals and priorities, and whether the proposed work will result in direct benefit to coral reef resources and ecosystems. In addition, the proposal should demonstrate that the proposed coral reef management activities are part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to address established coral reef conservation goals of the jurisdiction and/or national program.
21-30 points: The proposal meets one or more of each of the jurisdictional priorities and is in line with the NOAA CRCP Strategic Plan. The proposal demonstrates that the activities are part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to address the coral reef conservation goals of the jurisdiction and the national program.
11-20 points: The proposal meets one or more of each of the jurisdictional priorities and is in line with the NOAA CRCP Strategic Plan. The activities are NOT part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to address the coral reef conservation goals of the jurisdiction and the national program.
1-10 points: The proposal provides increased capacity for the jurisdiction but does not address any local priorities and is not in line with the CRCP Strategic Plan.
0 points: The proposal does not provide increased capacity for the jurisdiction and neither addresses any local priorities nor is it in line with the CRCP Strategic Plan.

2) Technical and scientific merit (30 points): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

Project proposals should: (a) Incorporate an assessment of project success in terms of meeting the proposed objectives; (b) Demonstrate that the conservation activity will be sustainable and long-lasting; and (c) Provide assurances that implementation of the project will meet state and local environmental laws and Federal consistency requirements by obtaining all necessary permits and consultations.
21-30 points: The proposal meets all three of the elements listed above (a-c).
11-20 points: The proposal meets two of the three elements listed above (a-c).
1-10 points: The proposal meets one of the three elements listed above (a-c).
0 points: The proposal meets none of the three elements listed above (a-c).

3) Overall qualifications of the funding applicants (20 points): This criterion ascertains whether the funding applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
Based on the information contained in the application, reviewers will be asked to evaluate whether the applicant possesses the resources necessary to accomplish the project and administer the award. For this competition, the proposal should also demonstrate knowledge of and coordination with applicable ongoing coral reef management activities.
16-20 points: The applicant has shown it possesses the resources necessary to accomplish the project and administer the award through previous grants and/or work within the jurisdiction(s) proposed. The applicant demonstrates knowledge and coordination with applicable ongoing coral reef management activities. Key personnel have been identified who possess the necessary education, experience and training to complete the project and the applicant has the appropriate facilities and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
11-15 points: The applicant has shown it possesses the resources necessary to accomplish the project and administer the award although has NOT presented previous grant experience and/or work within the jurisdiction(s) proposed. Key personnel have been identified who possess the necessary education, experience and training to complete the project and the applicant has the appropriate facilities and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
0-10 points: Points will be awarded based on any combination of the following at the reviewer’s discretion: The applicant has NOT shown it possesses all of the resources necessary to accomplish the project and administer the award and has NOT presented previous grant experience and/or work within the jurisdiction(s) proposed. Key personnel have NOT been identified who possess the necessary education, experience and training to complete the project and the applicant does NOT have the appropriate facilities and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

4) Project costs (15%): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and

commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.
The budget should reflect the applicant's ability to complete the work within the constraints of the funding and time period proposed in the application. Proposals will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate that significant benefit to U.S. coral reefs will be generated for a reasonable cost, and on their ability to precipitate partnerships and leverage other sources of funding in an effort to achieve the priority coral reef conservation objectives referenced in Section I.B. of this announcement.
11-15 points: The budget is reasonable and work proposed can reasonably be expected to be completed within the time period proposed in the application. The costs associated with the project demonstrate a value to the federal government and local jurisdiction through the project's ability to provide a significant benefit to U.S. coral reefs for a reasonable cost.
6-10 points: The budget is reasonable and work proposed can reasonably be expected to be completed within the time period proposed in the application. However, there are areas where the project could be reduced or project streamlined to increase the value of federal funding.
0-5 points: The budget is higher than necessary for the work proposed and/or the timeline is not reasonable. The value demonstrated is minimal for the requested federal funding level.

5) Outreach and education (5%): This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to understand and protect the Nation's natural resources.
Reviewers will assess whether this project provides an effective education and outreach component that supports established national and jurisdictional coral reef conservation efforts. Because awards made under this competition are intended to benefit the state and territorial government agencies with primary responsibility for managing U.S. coral reef ecosystems, applicants should describe how proposed activities and project results will be disseminated to the local coral reef management community and how data and information will be transmitted in accordance with the application's Data and Information Sharing Plan, which is described in Section IV.B.5.d.
4-5 points: An effective education and outreach component is included that supports national and jurisdictional coral reef conservation efforts. Dissemination of results to local coral reef managers (and Data and Information Sharing Plan, if applicable) is described.
1-3 points: An education and outreach component is included but could better support national and jurisdictional coral reef conservation efforts. Dissemination of results to local coral reef managers is lacking and/or the Data and Information Sharing Plan (if applicable) does not meet CRCP's standards provided in the Data Management Guidance provided in the Announcement.
0 points: No education or outreach plan was incorporated into the proposal OR the proposal is expected to generate environmental data but a Data and Information Sharing Plan was not

included.

B. Review and Selection Process

Only applicants that submitted the required LOI will be reviewed for technical merit. An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to assure that it is timely, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Applications that meet the minimum requirements will be reviewed by at least three independent peer reviewers with coral reef and/or coastal management experience during a merit-based review and ranking process. Appropriate mechanisms will be implemented to avoid potential conflicts of interest during the proposal review process. Each reviewer will be asked to individually evaluate and rank proposals using the weighted evaluation criteria above. Reviewers may discuss proposals with one another, but if more than one non-Federal reviewer is used, scoring will not be consensus. Proposal evaluations will be based exclusively on information included in the application. Merit reviewer ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

Once the peer review process has been completed, a committee of CRCP representatives will meet to discuss the applications, pursuant to the criteria described above. The committee will consider the proposal rankings, the comments of the merit reviewers, the program's objectives, and selection factors described below. Based on this process, the committee will assign a preliminary funding recommendation for each application and forward the top ranked proposal(s) to the Selecting Official or their designee, for final recommendation. The Selecting Official or their designee may negotiate the funding level or other major aspects of the proposal, and the Selecting Official will make the final recommendation for award based on the rank order and selection factors below to the Grants Officer, who is authorized to obligate Federal funding and execute the award.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. If no proposal is funded in the current fiscal period, a proposal may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be

asked to modify objectives and activities, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in submission of a revised application before final funding decisions are made. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, NOAA GMD, and CRCP staff. Applicants should also note that modifications to projects may be necessary as a result of NOAA's efforts to comply with NEPA and other legislation.

The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.205. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive Federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be timely addressed in order to receive a new award. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.207. 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. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final.

When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), anonymous copies of mail merit review comments or summaries of panel deliberations, can be made available to the applicant upon request.

C. Selection Factors

The review and selection process shall provide a rank order of proposals that will be presented to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The CRCP

competition manager may make recommendations to the Selecting Official applying the selection factors below. The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless there is justification for selecting a proposal out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:
1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
a. Geographically;
b. By type of institutions;
c. By type of partners;
d. By research areas;
e. By project types;
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
4. Program priorities and policy factors as stated in Section I of this funding opportunity;
5. Applicant's prior award performance;
6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA Grants Officer.

The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Successful applicants will be notified in approximately August 2020. The anticipated start date for cooperative agreement awards made under this competition is October 1, 2020, dependent on funding availability, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA and environmental compliance analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail that their application was not recommended for funding after the final section package has been approved by the NOAA Grants Management Division, which is expected to be approximately June 2020. Unsuccessful applications submitted to this competition will be retained for a period of up to 12 months and then destroyed.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by email that their application was recommended for funding and remains under consideration. The applicant should be aware that the notification by the program office is not the official award notice and funding is not assured. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically.
The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer Electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online. The CD-450 award cover page is available at http://go.usa.gov/SNMR. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at http://go.usa.gov/hKbj. These terms will be provided in the award package in Grants Online at http://www.ago.noaa.gov.
In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements and may lead to modification of the project's scope of work. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award to ensure they are fully aware of the relevant terms that have been placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Pre-Award Notice

Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.
2. Uniform Administrative Requirements
The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, applies to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/cXCJQ.
3. Limitation of Liability
There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for the competition 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. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award funding for specific projects or obligate available funds.
If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by the NOAA, Grants Management Division, Grants Officer, it does so at its own risk of not receiving an award or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for direct costs of proposal preparation.
Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.
Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project, obligate any available funds, or provide special fishing privileges.
Funded awards are subject to enforcement and termination provisions under 2 C.F.R. 200.338-.342.
4. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
See the NEPA information in Section IV.B. of this announcement.
5. Unpaid or delinquent tax liability
In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representative making a certification regarding whether the corporation has any Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.
6. Confidentiality and Access to Information
The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. §200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.
In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These

regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.
The CRCP reserves the right to share application materials with relevant individuals and organizations as authorized for the purposes of improved coordination and collaboration. However, the Office for Coastal Management will not ordinarily release the names of applicants submitting proposals unless ordered by a court or requested to do so by an appropriate NOAA official and administrative protocol. Applicants can use a NOAA public search feature to find out information about NOAA awards < https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/publicSearch/begin.do > or go through the Freedom of Information Act process to request more information about grant competitions. More information about the NOAA FOI process is online at http://www.noaa.gov/foia/.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports consistent with 2 C.F.R. 200.327-.329 and Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online. Performance reports must be submitted on a semi-annual schedule no later than 30 days following the end of each 6- month period from the start date of the award. Financial reports must be submitted every 6 months by the end of April and October during the period of the award in accordance with the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. NOAA will provide instructions for submitting financial and progress reports upon request.

A comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration date along with copies of all products developed under the award. Copies of all materials (including but not limited to brochures, posters, videos, DVDs, publications, reports, management plans, public service announcements, workshop proceedings, etc.) produced through the award, along with copies of any reports submitted by subcontractors as part of the award, must be provided to the program office within 90 days of the end of the award. All products must be of publishable quality, and include a citation and appropriate acknowledgement of the support provided by NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program as described at:

http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/whoweare/graphic/. Because products may be made available to the public via the Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS, http://coris.noaa.gov), it is the recipient's responsibility to ensure that products are professionally written and edited; they do not contain sensitive financial information; and that media products are 508 compliant (http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?fuseAction=stdsSum). Except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security, recipients are requested to include a statement on the front page of all products to indicate the material is "Approved for pubilc release; distribution is unlimited." If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publications must be made available to the public free of charge.

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

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall submit an inventory in accordance with relevant OMB requirements. The program office recommends that if the equipment is no longer needed, recipients are encouraged to request disposition instructions for equipment approximately 150 days before the project period ends to allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests addressed before a project ends. Equipment disposition instructions typically require that recipients complete an "other" award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

As applicable, the recipient must report on real property annually and at award closeout, by completing Form SF-429 (Real Property Status Report).

VII. Agency Contacts

The Federal Program Officer and technical point of contact for this competition is Craig Reid. He can be reached by phone at 240-533-0783 or by email at craig.a.reid@noaa.gov. His mailing address is: Craig Reid, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC4, 10th floor, Silver Spring, MD, 20910.

VIII. Other Information

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this Federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for direct costs of any proposal preparation. In addition, NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for proposal or project costs if this program fails to receive funding. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards. Applicants must be in compliance with requirements of any existing NOAA grants and/or cooperative funding agreements or make arrangements satisfactory to the NOAA Grants Officer in order to receive funds under this announcement.

The NOAA program office reserves the right to halt activity under an award consistent with enforcement procedures in 2 C.F.R. 200.338-342, Remedies for Noncompliance, if an award recipient fails to fulfill the requirements of the project as described in the final negotiated application submitted to the agency. Non-compliance may result in termination of the award as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.338-.342.