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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2016 Air Quality Research and Forecasting

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-OWAQ-2016-2004717

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.459, Weather and Air Quality Research

Dates: Letters of Intent (LOIs) submitted by Principal Investigators (PIs) must be received electronically no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on 27 November 2015. LOIs received after the deadline will not be reviewed, but in such cases PIs are still permitted to submit a full proposal. Response letters to PIs will be sent from NOAA by 18 December 2015. Complete application packages must be submitted through Grants.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on 29 January 2016. Expected project start date is June 1, 2016.

Funding Opportunity Description: Through the U.S. Weather Research Program (USWRP), OAR's Office of Weather and Air Quality (OWAQ) is soliciting proposals to conduct air quality research and development activities related to advancing air quality forecasting that will improve NOAA's operational predictions of ozone and PM_{2.5} in particular over the coming 5 to 10 years.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Air quality has improved significantly in recent decades following passage of the Clean Air Act in 1970. There are still many areas of the country, however, where the public is exposed to unhealthy levels of air pollutants and sensitive ecosystems are damaged by air pollution. This was especially evident in the West this past summer when wildfires were numerous and also in the East during episodes of Canadian wildfire smoke intrusions. The cost of poor air quality to the U.S. from air pollution related illness alone has been estimated in the billions of dollars per year. Forecasting poor air quality can provide early notice and warning to individuals and communities to help limit exposure and reduce asthma attacks, eye, nose, and throat irritation, other respiratory and cardiovascular problems, and even save lives. To help the nation realize these benefits, NOAA works with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), state and local air quality agencies, and the private sector to provide an end-to-end air quality forecast capability for the Nation.

The National Air Quality Forecasting Capability (NAQFC) provides operational predictions of ozone and wildfire smoke nationwide and operational predictions of airborne dust from dust storms over the contiguous 48 states. Predictions are produced up until midnight of the following day at 12km resolution and 1 hour time intervals and are distributed in numerical format and in graphical format at <http://airquality.weather.gov/>. Ozone predictions combine the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) operational North American Model (NAM) Non-hydrostatic Multiscale Model on an Arakawa B-staggered grid (NMMB) weather predictions with inventory based emissions estimates from the EPA and chemical processes within the EPA Community Multiscale Air Quality (CMAQ) model. The NOAA Hybrid Single Particle Lagrangian Integrated Trajectory (HYSPLIT) model is used to provide standalone predictions of wildfire smoke and dust storm predictions, both of which have highly variable intermittent sources. Smoke sources are based on NOAA/NESDIS analysis of satellite imagery for fire location and strength combined with U.S. Forest Service's BlueSky framework to estimate smoke emissions. Dust source locations are based on satellite climatology of the frequency of dust emissions. Dust is emitted in the model when threshold near-surface velocity is exceeded and modulated by real time soil moisture predictions. Routine verification of ozone relies on the EPA AIRNow network of observations from surface monitors, whereas verification of smoke and dust predictions relies primarily on satellite retrievals of smoke and dust column integrals. Dust predictions were implemented in 2012, followed by an implementation of a longer time step to reduce run time for those predictions under a heavy dust loading. Emissions used in

ozone prediction are updated regularly with important improvements made in 2012 to include projected changes in emissions from mobile sources, reducing NO_x emissions and ozone overestimation, especially in the eastern US. With the transition to a new computing platform in 2013, smoke predictions were updated to include an increase in maximum smoke plume rise (up to 1.25 times the planetary boundary layer depth), a decrease in wet removal of particles, and a modification in daily cycling of smoke emissions. An automated algorithm for detection of locations of wildfire smoke emissions in Canada and Mexico was included in smoke predictions. In January 2015, the CMAQ model that provides operational ozone predictions was upgraded to use a newer CB05 chemical mechanism and includes the AERO4 module and real-time smoke and dust emissions to provide developmental particulate matter (PM) 2.5 predictions from the same system.

The current forecast challenges in testing of PM_{2.5} predictions include improving emission sources such as for wildfire smoke and dust, chemical mechanisms (e.g., representation of secondary organic aerosols), accuracy of meteorological predictions for fields such as planetary boundary layer height, chemical boundary conditions, and trans-boundary influences. These are among the challenges producing seasonal biases in the testing of PM_{2.5} forecast guidance. Therefore bias correction post-processing algorithms are being tested to reduce these biases.

B. Program Priorities

A NOAA-sponsored workshop on the future direction of air quality forecasting research in November 2014 and other related workshops, publications, and operational experience over the past five years have identified the highest priority air quality forecasting science gaps that need to be addressed to improve NOAA air quality forecasting services over the next 5-10 years. These priorities include:

- Improved estimates of anthropogenic and natural pollutant emissions, including wildfire smoke and dust and other potential sources of model biases
- Improved process modeling of boundary layer PM_{2.5} in the CMAQ forecast system, including improvements from lateral boundary conditions and post-processing techniques
- Improved model representation of physical/chemical processes for long range transport and regional/local phenomena for improvement in skill of ozone forecast guidance near the new National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) threshold of 70 ppb
- Develop and evaluate new high-resolution (2-4 km) ozone and PM_{2.5} forecast model capabilities that are consistent with weather forecast models at these resolutions, including

two-way coupled models, for representation of local phenomena such as fine-scale processes in coastal region, over complex terrain, or in urban areas.

-Explore and quantify the potential value of ensemble model approaches to air quality forecasting of PM2.5

It is expected that projects receiving highest ranking will be those that are aligned with the above priorities and could be implemented in NOAA's NAQFC operational environment upon project completion and within the next 5 years. However additional consideration will also be given to those projects that have greatest potential to provide longer-term forecasting benefits beyond 5 years.

C. Program Authority

49 U.S.C. 44720(b)

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

In FY 2016, approximately \$700,000 will be available to fund 4-6 new projects. The anticipated range of funding per proposal per year is approximately \$50,000 to \$150,000. Funding of any proposals is contingent upon availability of these funds. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs.

B. Project/Award Period

The period of award is up to three years. Funding for second or third years will be contingent upon a favorable performance review near the end of the each prior year and the availability of funds. All funded PIs will be required to submit written semiannual reports during the project to describe the progress made toward the goals and deliverables established in the original proposal and agreed-upon timeline. A final report must also be submitted at the conclusion of the project.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards to non-federal applicants will be a grant. If, however, it is anticipated that NOAA will be substantially involved in the implementation of the project, the grant may be administered as a cooperative agreement. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, applications for collaboration between NOAA scientists and a recipient scientist or contemplation by NOAA of detailing Federal personnel to work on proposed projects. NOAA will make decisions regarding the

use of a cooperative agreement on a case-by-case basis. For selected projects involving investigators from multiple institutions, a separate grant or cooperative agreement will be issued to each institution that submits a proposal.

Funding for selected proposals from NOAA scientists shall be affected by an intra-agency fund transfer. Proposals from a non-NOAA Federal agency selected for funding will be funded through an inter-agency transfer. PLEASE NOTE: Before non-NOAA Federal applicants may be funded, they must demonstrate that they have legal authority to receive funds from another Federal agency in excess of their appropriation. The only exception to this is governmental research facilities for awards issued under the authority of 49 USC 44720(b). Because this announcement is not proposing to procure goods or services from applicants, the Economy Act (31 USC 1535) is not an appropriate legal basis.

If the applicant is at an institution that has a NOAA Cooperative Institute (CO), the applicant is encouraged to submit a proposal that references the CI by attaching a cover letter to the proposal stating the desire to have the grant associated with the CI. This letter should specify the name of the CI, the CI cooperative agreement number, and the NOAA-approved research theme and task that applies to the proposal. The proposal will use the Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rate associated with the main CI agreement.

If the proposal is selected for funding, NOAA will notify the university that a separate award will be issued with its own award number. However, the award will include two Special Award Conditions (SAC): (1) the existing University/NOAA Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) would be incorporated by reference into the terms of the competitive award, and (2) any performance reports for this competitive project must follow the timetable of the OWAQ funding program and be submitted directly to it. Reports will be copied to the CI's administrator when due, to be attached to the main cooperative agreement progress report as an appendix. This will allow the CI to coordinate all the projects submitted through the CI, since the terms of these awards will specify that this is a CI project via the MOA.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education; other nonprofits; commercial organizations; Federal government agencies; foreign governments; organizations under the jurisdiction of foreign governments; international organizations; state, local and Indian tribal governments. Applications from non-Federal and Federal applicants will be competed against each other.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages for full proposals for all applicants are available at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>. The instructions for application packages from both non-Federal and Federal principal investigators is described below in section IV.B.2. There is no application package for Letters of Intent (LOIs).

B. Content and Form of Application

The guidelines for preparation of LOIs and full proposals provided below are mandatory (except where otherwise noted). Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in LOIs and/or full proposals being returned without review.

1. Letter of Intent (LOI)

Prior to submitting a full proposal, PIs are strongly encouraged to submit a LOI for each planned proposal. The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and a brief budget. The purpose of the LOI process is to provide information to potential applicants on the relevance of their proposed project to the competition in advance of preparing a full application. Full applications will be encouraged only for LOIs deemed relevant to this announcement's top priorities. However, PIs who do not submit a LOI or who are not encouraged to submit a proposal will not be precluded from submitting a full proposal.

(a) The LOI must be no more than two pages in length, using a 12-point font and one inch margins, and it must include a project title, the name(s) of the PI(s), their home institution(s) or federal agency, and the name of the NOAA competition to which they are applying.

(b) The LOI must contain a brief description of the intended project, methodology, and deliverables and its relevance to the specified program priorities.

(c) The LOI must include a brief budget which summarizes how resources will be allocated [e.g., salaries, computing and communications, equipment (provide justification), indirect charges, and travel]. Note that funding is not available for secretarial support.

(d) Each LOI will be reviewed, following the criteria specified below, by a team of reviewers.

(e) All PIs will be notified whether a full proposal is encouraged or discouraged based on the review of their LOI. Even though a full proposal may be discouraged, a PI is not precluded from submitting a full proposal. All PIs will receive a short synthesis of the factors that led to the recommendation regarding their own reviewed LOI(s).

2. Full Proposals

(a) The application must include a title page that identifies each PI and institutional representative by full name, title, organization, telephone number, mailing address, and e-mail address; and the total requested Federal funds for each period for each institution. If there are several institutions submitting separate applications for the same project, the names of all institutions along with their lead PI information and requested funding must appear there for each period.

(b) A one-page abstract must be included and must contain a brief summary of the proposed work to be completed. The abstract must appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title and the name(s) of the PI(s) and their home institution(s).

(c) All proposals must provide a Statement of Work that includes:

(1) The proposed duration of the project, from one to three years;

(2) A proposed work plan for the project that includes: scientific hypotheses, methodology, project deliverables, relevant results from prior research, and references;

(3) A timeline for conducting the research and delivering the scientific and technical results over the course of the project, with key milestones identified;

(4) A description of appropriate travel associated with data collection, project meetings, and/or the presentation of results at scientific conferences;

The above Statement of Work items in 2.(c).1-4 must be fully contained within no more than TEN PAGES using a 12-point font and one-inch margins.

- (d) An abbreviated Curriculum Vitae for PI(s) with a reference list of all publications within at least the last three years must be included.
- (e) Current and pending financial assistance support: Each investigator must submit a list that includes project title, supporting agency, investigator months, total dollar value and duration. Requested amounts should be listed for pending support.
- (f) The full proposal package includes the information described above as well as the required federal forms: (1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), (2) Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A), (3) Certifications (CD-511), (4) Assurances - Non-Construction Program (SF-424B), and (5) Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL). Federal applicants do not need to submit the above federal forms, but equivalent detailed budget information must still be included in the proposal package (see below).
- (g) All applicants must submit a detailed itemized Budget Table broken out by year and a Budget Justification that includes the PIs scientific and technical support staff salaries and fringe benefits, facility requirements, computing and communications, supplies and travel. For multiple applications associated with the same project, the Lead PI should include a budget table that displays the total budget for all partners. All partners, including the Lead PI and any co-PIs from Federal institutions, should include a separate budget for their portion of the project. Non-federal applicants must use the Standard Form SF 424A Budget Information-Non Construction Programs that is contained in the standard NOAA Grants and Cooperative Agreement Package. If indirect charges are included in the budget, applicant must have an approved negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division

1325 East West Highway
9th Floor
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
lamar.revis@noaa.gov

The information on the SF-424A should only include the amount of funding that will be provided to the institution submitting the proposal, not co-PI's at other institutions who must submit a separate budget for their portion of the joint project's funding.

(h) Data/information Sharing Plan: See section VIII.1 below for required submission of this information.

(i) Additional proposal requirements include:

(1) Each proposal must be dated, signed by the PIs and their institutional representative, and contain page numbers.

C. Submission Dates and Times

LOIs must be received by e-mail to oar.owaq.competition@noaa.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on 27 November 2015. NOAA determines whether an LOI has been submitted before the deadline by the date and time indication on the e-mail. LOIs received after the deadline will not be reviewed, but in such cases PIs are still permitted to submit a full proposal. It is expected that response letters to all PIs who submitted LOIs will be sent via e-mail from NOAA by 18 December 2015.

Complete application packages must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on 29 January 2016. Any applications received after that time based on the relevant Grants.gov receipt date-time stamp or the e-mail receipt date-time stamp will not be accepted.

D. Intergovernmental Review

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

E. Funding Restrictions

None.

F. Other Submission Requirements

If there are co-PIs from different institutions, the statement of work must describe the

contributions by each PI and include a budget that clearly describes the exact amount being requested by each institution. The same proposal must be submitted separately by each institution, but the SF-424A budget forms should only list the amount being requested by the specific institution.

Complete application packages from non-federal government applicants must be submitted through and received by Grants.gov. Federal government applicants must e-mail their complete applications to oar.owaq.competition@noaa.gov.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the NEPA, of each applicant's project that is seeking NOAA federal funds. Detailed information on NOAA's compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf, and the Council of Environmental Quality implementation regulations http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm. No NEPA information is required with the initial application. However, after review of the application, NEPA information may be requested of the PIs if NOAA determines that such information is required to do an environmental assessment (see section VI.B).

N/A

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

At least three reviewers will evaluate each application on the following NOAA standardized evaluation criteria that are used for all competitive assistance announcements (listed with assigned weights summing to 100). Applicants are required to adhere to all the noted submission requirements and address the criterion described in this section.

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (30 points)?

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and relevance to NOAA's program priorities listed in section I.B. The reviewers will consider the following questions in their assessment of this criterion:

How does the proposed activity have relevance to NOAA's program priorities listed in section I.B?

Could the proposed work be implemented in NOAA's NAQFC operational environment upon project completion and within the next 5 years?

Does the study address an important priority problem?

How will scientific knowledge be advanced?

Does this activity serve to identify gaps in current understanding and provide a foundation for future focused investigations?

Will this activity improve concepts or methods that drive the field of study?

Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches or methods?

Does the project expect to provide significant new knowledge through a single award with no assumptions regarding follow-on support?

2. Technical merit (45 points)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. The reviewers will consider the following questions in their assessment of this criterion:

Is the conceptual framework, design, methodology, and proposed analysis adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate for the goal of the project?

Is the scope of the proposal appropriate for a short-duration grant and limited new observations?

Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternatives?

Does the proposal include metrics that measure and evaluate the success or failure of the project?

Does the proposal include appropriate milestones for this project?

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (15 points)

This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. The reviewers will consider the following questions in their assessment of this criterion:

Does the environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success?

Do the proposed activities take advantage of unique features of the intended environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements?

4. Project costs (10 points)

The project's budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. The reviewers will consider the following questions in their assessment of this criterion:

Are the requested costs realistic, reasonable, allowable, allocable, necessary and commensurate with the project needs and time period?

Has the applicant proposed cost-efficient ways of accomplishing the project?

5. Outreach and education (0 points)

This assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. This criterion does not apply for the technical transition projects considered here.

B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full application has been received, an administrative review will first be conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. All compliant and full proposals will then receive an independent, objective review in accordance with the criteria specified above. Such review will be conducted by designated

reviewers, consisting of at least three experts (who can be federal and/or non-federal). NOAA selects evaluators on the basis of their professional qualifications and expertise as related to the unique characteristics of the application. The members' scores will be used to produce a rank ordering of the projects by overall total scores. The OWAQ Director is the selecting official and will assess the evaluations and make a fund or do-not-fund recommendation to the NOAA Grants Officer. Any application considered for funding may be required to address the issues raised in the evaluation of the application by the reviewers, program officer, selecting official, and/or grants officer before an award is issued. Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the selection recommendations upon completion of the review and selection process. All applicants will receive their average scores for their application.

C. Selection Factors

The OWAQ Director shall recommend awards in the rank order unless the applications are justified to be selected 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 (see section I. B.).
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups.
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Final funding award decisions are expected in May 2016 with an expected start date of June 1, 2016.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been approved for funding by the NOAA Grants Management Division with the issuance of an award signed by a NOAA Grants Officer. This is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin.

Applicants will receive notification from OWAQ that their application has either been recommended or not recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division after completion of the review process. Notices of recommendation for funding are not an authorization to initiate the project. Official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010) at:

http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl

and

http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>

Limitation of Liability. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige

NOAA to award any specific project.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the NEPA, for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Consequently, applicants may be required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants may also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives certifying that the corporation has no Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

C. Reporting

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier sub-awards 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 Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over \$25,000.

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports via NOAA's electronic Grants Online system. All reports will be submitted on a semi-annual schedule and must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. The comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration. Copies of all submitted reports will become the property of the U.S. Government.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement contact Richard Fulton at Richard.Fulton@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

1. Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

a. Unless otherwise noted in this federal funding announcement, a Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as part of the Project Narrative. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information 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; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The Data/Information Sharing Plan will be reviewed as part of the NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria, Item 1 -- Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Mission Goals.

b. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data.

c. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

2. Freedom of Information Act - U.S. Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, "Public Information." These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Federal 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 which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information." Based on these markings, the

confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.