Species Recovery Grants to Tribes

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: Species Recovery Grants to Tribes

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-PRPO-2021-2006473

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.472, Unallied Science Program

Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on Thursday, October 29, 2020. Use of a delivery service other than U.S. mail must be documented with a receipt. PLEASE NOTE: When developing your submission timeline, keep in mind that (1) a free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM) may take between three and five business days or as long as several weeks (see Section IV.C. of this NOFO), and (2) if you submit an application via Grants.gov you will receive a series of e-mail notifications for up to two business days before learning via validation or rejection whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received your application.

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) recognizes the unique importance of many protected species to tribes and values ongoing efforts by tribal nations to conserve and protect species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), 16 U.S.C. 1535. NMFS is authorized to provide Federal assistance to tribes to support conservation programs for listed marine and anadromous species under its jurisdiction. This assistance, provided in the form of grants or cooperative agreements, can be used to support conservation of endangered, threatened, and candidate species or species proposed for listing, as well as post-delisting monitoring of recovered species. Proposals that address the recovery of one of the following endangered species are also encouraged as part of the agency's Species in the Spotlight initiative: Gulf of Maine distinct population segment (DPS) of Atlantic salmon, white abalone, Cook Inlet DPS of beluga whales, Hawaiian monk seals, Pacific leatherback sea turtles, North Atlantic right whales, and southern resident DPS of killer whales. Funded activities may include development and implementation of management plans, scientific research, and public education and outreach. Only federally recognized tribes and organizations of federally recognized tribes, such as the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, that have delegated authority to represent a federally recognized tribe on matters relating to ESA listed, candidate, or proposed species, are eligible to apply. Proposals focusing on listed, candidate, or proposed

species of Pacific salmon or steelhead will not be considered for funding under this grant program; such projects may be supported through the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. This document describes how to prepare and submit proposals for funding in fiscal year (FY) 2021 and how NMFS will determine which proposals will be funded. This document should be read in its entirety as some information has changed from previous announcements.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The principal objective of the Species Recovery Grants to Tribes Program is to support recovery efforts that directly benefit threatened or endangered species, species proposed for listing, recently delisted species, or candidate species under the jurisdiction of the NMFS or the joint jurisdiction of NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (see definitions below). Proposed activities may involve management, research, monitoring, and outreach activities or any combination thereof. Proposals should include clear and specific information about how the work proposed would contribute to species recovery. Successful applications will be those that demonstrate a direct conservation benefit to the species or its habitat.

Proposals may address new or ongoing work. If the proposal includes a continuation of previous or ongoing work, a brief discussion of accomplishments to date and a justification for the continuation of the work must be included in the project description in order to receive full consideration.

Threatened and endangered species under the jurisdiction of the NMFS are listed at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species-directory/threatened-endangered.

Candidate species. A candidate species is one that is actively being considered for listing as either threatened or endangered under the ESA and is the subject of a positive 90-day finding but not yet the subject of a proposed rule, or a species for which NMFS has initiated an ESA status review and has announced the review in the Federal Register. Candidate species are listed at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/endangered-species-conservation/candidate-species-under-endangered-species-act.

Proposed species. Proposed species are those that are currently the subject of a proposed rule to list as threatened or endangered under the ESA. A list of proposed species is available at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/endangered-species-conservation/proposed-species-under-endangered-species-act.

Recently delisted species. Recently delisted, for purposes of this solicitation, are those species delisted within the past five years. A list of all delisted species and the year delisted are available at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/endangered-species-conservation/delisting-species-under-endangered-species-act. Under this solicitation, only

species delisted due to recovery may receive funding.

B. Program Priorities

General. Priority will be given to proposals addressing listed species over proposals that address proposed, candidate, or recently delisted species. Among the species currently listed under the ESA, priority will be given to proposals addressing recovery of the following highly endangered species: Gulf of Maine DPS of Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar), Cook Inlet DPS of beluga whales (Delphinapterus leucas), North Atlantic right whales (Eubalaena glacialis), Southern Resident DPS of killer whales (Orcinus orca), Hawaiian monk seal (Neomonachus schauinslandi), white abalone (Haliotis sorenseni), and Pacific leatherback sea turtle (Dermochelys coriacea). These species are part of NOAA's Species in the Spotlight initiative to prevent the extinction of the most at-risk species. For more information on this initiative, please refer to https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/endangered-species-conservation#species-in-the-spotlight. While priority will be given to proposals addressing species in the spotlight, it is not a requirement.

Priority will also be given to proposals that address objectives or actions identified in an ESA Recovery Outline, final or draft ESA Recovery Plan or address a NMFS-identified regional priority or need, if applicable. Proposals should indicate how the project will address one or more of the recovery objectives or actions and the priority level assigned to the action. Greater priority may be given to proposals addressing higher priority recovery actions or objectives as indicated by the particular plan. Recovery Plans are available at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resources/documents?title=&field_category_document_value%5Brecovery_plan%5D=recovery_plan&sort_by=created.

Proposals including measures by which performance or success of the project will be evaluated will receive higher priority over those that do not.

Proposals that present a series of unrelated or seemingly unrelated projects are less likely to compete well. Applicants that propose multiple projects within a proposal must clearly articulate within their proposal how the distinct projects relate to one another and how the results will be synthesized. There is no limit on the number of proposals that can be submitted by an individual tribe.

Management. Highest priority will be given to those projects that are designed to have a direct impact on recovery of listed species through development and implementation of management actions that reduce or eliminate threats. Proposals involving management activities should demonstrate a high probability of contributing to the recovery of the species, especially through mitigation of existing threats or factors inhibiting recovery of the

species.

Proposals addressing habitat restoration can involve the engineering and design of a restoration project, actual implementation of a restoration activity, and/or science-based monitoring of a previously funded or simultaneously proposed NOAA habitat restoration project that will yield information on population benefits accruing to listed species resulting from the restoration action.

Research and Monitoring. Research proposals that are designed to fill critical data gaps and directly contribute to the management and recovery of eligible species are competitive under this solicitation. However, proposals that involve research only will be considered a lower priority for funding relative to "management proposals" described above.

Proposals involving scientific research must articulate how the research will provide information that can be directly used to recover, manage, or improve current management strategies for a given species. Research activities may, for example, focus on defining and characterizing threats to the species, evaluating methods to reduce or mitigate threats to the species, assessing a fishery, improving bycatch estimates (e.g., through observer programs), estimating effective population sizes, synthesizing or analyzing stranding or observer data, identifying and characterizing physical and biological features of important habitats (e.g. foraging habitats, spawning areas), or evaluating the effectiveness of a habitat restoration project.

Research proposals must include a clear question or set of questions to be answered, methods by which experiments or work will be conducted, methods by which data will be analyzed, and plans for sharing or disseminating the results. Generalized statements about research objectives and expected results are insufficient.

Proposals involving scientific research on listed marine mammal species for which NMFS has published a Take Reduction Plan under the Marine Mammal Protection Act should indicate how the project would address one or more of the research recommendations. Greater priority may be given to proposals addressing higher priority research and data collection needs as indicated by the particular plan. Marine mammal take reduction plans are available at: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-take-reduction-plans-and-teams.

Proposals involving scientific research on a listed DPS or a specific, recognized management unit of a taxonomic species or subspecies should demonstrate a high probability of providing information specific to the recovery and/or management of the particular DPS or

management unit. To do so, such proposals may be required to include genetic analyses or other acceptable techniques to properly identify specimens to their DPS or management unit, when appropriate. Proposed budgets must reflect costs associated with any such analyses.

Outreach. Proposals involving public education and outreach should demonstrate a high probability of improving or increasing public understanding of and participation in conservation activities. In order to be considered a priority for funding, proposals that exclusively address outreach activities should demonstrate how the proposed work will directly mitigate or reduce a significant threat(s) to the target species.

Outreach projects could, for example, involve developing outreach tools (e.g. websites, brochures), convening regional coordination workshops or meetings, or working with local fishermen or boaters to address a particular issue (e.g. hook and line entanglement, boat strikes). Note that all proposals should address the dissemination of results and/or information resulting from completion of the proposed activities (including peer-reviewed publications) as explained in detail under the evaluation criteria listed in section V.A. (Evaluation Criteria) of this document.

Applicants interested in further discussion of funding priorities within their region should contact their Regional Program Coordinator listed in Section VII, Agency Contacts.

C. Program Authority

16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Up to approximately $300,000 may be available for distribution under this program in FY 2021 for new awards. While there is no set minimum or maximum amount for any award, most awards are expected to be in the range of $10,000 to $100,000 per year. Note that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program, and there is considerable uncertainty regarding the level of available funding for FY 2021. Thus, there is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make any new awards or that awards will be made for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific grant proposal or to obligate any available funds.

If an application for a financial assistance award is selected for funding, NOAA has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, pre-award costs are not allowed under the award (except research) unless approved by the Grants Officer in accordance with 2 CFR §200.458.

B. Project/Award Period

In general, a project period will extend up to a maximum of three years. For multi-year proposals, applicants must include project plans and separate budgets for each year of the project. Multi-year projects may be funded in one-year or greater increments depending on available funds and terms of the award. In either case, multi-year awards do not compete for funding in subsequent budget periods within the approved award period. Rather, any funding required for subsequent years is added to the multi-year award incrementally, provided demonstration of satisfactory performance by the recipient and provided funds to support the continuation of the project are available. If a grant recipient wishes to continue work on a funded project beyond the project period and obligated award funds have not been expended by the end of this period, the recipient can notify the assigned Federal Program Officer no later than 30 days prior to the end of the award period to determine eligibility for a no-cost extension. If, however, the money is expended and funds are needed to continue the project, the applicant should submit another proposal during the next competitive award cycle (e.g. FY 2022) or seek an alternate source of funding.

Project start dates should be no earlier than July 1, 2021, unless an earlier start date request is approved by the Program Office. The end date should always end on the last day of any given month when making a projection for the award start and end dates.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Under this solicitation, NOAA will fund projects as grants or cooperative agreements, as appropriate for the nature of the project. The funding instrument (grant or cooperative agreement) will be determined by the NOAA Grants Management Division. A cooperative agreement will be used if the proposed project involves substantial Federal scientific or programmatic involvement. Substantial involvement means that, after award, NOAA scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role; it is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities. The dominant role and prime responsibility resides with the award recipient for the project as a whole, although specific tasks and activities may be shared by the recipient and NOAA.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are federally recognized tribes defined under the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act (Public Law 103-454; for list see https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2020-01707) or presidential executive order. Organizations of federally recognized tribes, such as the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, that have delegated authority to represent federally recognized tribes on matters relating to listed, candidate, or proposed species, are also eligible to apply. Organizations of federally recognized tribes are required to provide supporting documentation demonstrating that they do have delegated authority from tribal officials and that the delegated authority is for the type of activity being proposed in the application.

Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this notice. In addition, NOAA and NMFS employees shall not provide assistance by writing or reviewing any part of an application, write letters of support for any application, or otherwise confer any unfair advantage on a particular application. However, proposed activities can involve collaboration with current NMFS programs or NMFS employees, and NMFS employees can submit letters verifying that they would collaborate on a particular project if funded. Applicants must contact the Federal Program Officer listed in Section VII, Agency Contacts, prior to submission for guidance if collaborating with a NMFS program or NMFS employee. The level of collaboration may dictate whether the funding is awarded through a grant or cooperative agreement.

Applicants not meeting these eligibility criteria will not be considered for funding under this solicitation.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There are no cost sharing or match requirements under this solicitation.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Funding can only support work on ESA-listed species, recently delisted species (for work conducting post-delisting monitoring only for recovered species that have been delisted within the past 5 years), and species that have become a candidate or a proposed species by the grant application deadline. Species must also be under NMFS or joint NMFS-U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service jurisdiction. Species under the sole jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will not be considered.

Projects focusing on Pacific salmonids will not be considered under this grant program. Tribal conservation efforts for these species may be supported through the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The federal funding announcement and application instructions for this grant program are available via the Grants.gov website at http://www.grants.gov. Applicants without internet access can obtain application instructions from NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources, ATTN: Maggie Miller (F/PR3), 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring MD 20910, (phone) 301-427-8457, (email) Margaret.H.Miller@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

All prospective applicants should read this section in its entirety. All instructions regarding formatting and preparation of proposals must be followed. Proposals should be submitted via the Grants.gov website.

There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by the same Principal Investigator or tribe. Multiple applications submitted by the same applicant must, however, clearly identify distinct projects.

Proposals must adhere to the following provisions and requirements by the proposal submission deadline. Failure to follow these instructions will be reflected in lower scoring by reviewers (see Section V. Application Review Information). Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals early in the event that we are able to pre-screen applications for any deficiencies, contact applicants, and obtain revised applications by the solicitation deadline. This pre-screen is a courtesy, not an obligation on the part of the Program Office, and it is not a guarantee for this competition. The pre-screen is limited to addressing technical matters, confirming receipt of application components, and providing publicly available information about the applications. No substantive comments or pre-review of application content will take place.

The following forms are required as part of each application: Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424); Budget Information, Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A); Assurances, Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B); and Certifications Regarding Lobbying (CD-511). These forms are available on Grants.gov and may be downloaded with the application package. For applicants submitting proposals by mail, all forms requiring

signatures must be signed in ink (preferably blue ink) or using a valid electronic signature or digital signature.

Proposals and all attachments must be formatted to fit on letter-sized paper (8.5" x 11"). Text must be no smaller than 10-point font, and all pages must be numbered. If possible, please submit proposal documents as pdf files to ensure conversion errors do not occur when proposals documents are later accessed in Grants Online system. Please do not submit the same file or sections of the application more than once when submitting your application in Grants.gov.

The Project Description should not exceed 15 pages. Appended material must not exceed a total of 10 pages, as described further below in Section IV.B.6. Pages exceeding these limits will not be reviewed. However, the list of references cited, budget table and narrative, indirect cost rate agreement, and Data Management Plan will not be counted against page limits.

Letters of support or endorsement from any NMFS, NOAA, or Department of Commerce personnel or office will NOT be accepted.

To be considered, proposals must include the following elements:

1. Title Page
Provide the project title, project duration (with a start date of July 1, 2021 or later unless applicants request and get approval for an earlier start date from the Federal Program Officer, Maggie Miller; see Section VII, Agency Contacts), applicant name(s), name(s) of the Principal Investigator (or Project Manager) and any Co-Investigators (or Co-Managers), complete contact information (mailing address, email address, and phone number) for the applicant(s) and all Co-investigators (or Co-Managers), and a statement regarding the Federal, non-Federal, and total costs of the project.

2. Project Summary (1-page limit)
Provide a brief summary discussing the proposal’s purpose; the proposed activities; the geographic area where the activities would occur; the recovery objectives or actions as specified in an ESA Recovery Plan (if applicable) or as identified by NMFS as a regional priority; and the expected outcomes and benefits of the proposed activities. If the proposal focuses on implementing recovery actions identified in a Recovery Plan, indicate the priority number or level assigned to the particular actions. Please make this summary as succinct and cogent as possible; it will be made publicly available if the project is funded.

3. Project Description (15-page limit)
Describe the project activities completely and accurately. The Project Description should be a clear statement of all work to be undertaken and must include the information listed below in (a)-(g). Multi-year proposals must include a project description that covers each year of the proposed award period. If multiple projects are included in the proposal, the information listed below must be included for each project. The 15-page limit does not change if a proposal includes multiple projects.

(a) Project goals and objectives: Identify the specific problem(s) or opportunities the project intends to address and describe its significance to the recovery of the species. Identify the project objectives, which should be simple and understandable, as specific and quantitative as possible, and attainable with the time, money, and human resources available. Scientific research proposals must state the question or questions to be answered.

(b) Methods: Describe the methodologies or technical plan for activities that are to be conducted during each budget period of the project. Include detailed descriptions of the specific plan and/or methods that will be employed. Project milestones and the timelines (e.g. the number of months) necessary to meet them should also be discussed for each budget period. Information about relevant permits necessary to conduct the work must be included. See Section IV.G.1. (Permits and Approvals) below for further information about permits and approvals.

(c) Benefits or results expected: Identify the outcomes or results and the benefits to the species that should result from the successfully completed project. Discuss how the project's success in meeting the stated goals and objectives will be measured or assessed. Describe how these expected outcomes, results, or products will be applied and/or made available to any appropriate user groups.

(d) Need for Government financial assistance: Demonstrate the need for government financial assistance. List all other sources of funding that are or have been sought for the project.

(e) Federal, state, tribal and local government activities: List any plans or activities (Federal, state, tribal or local) this project would affect and, if applicable, identify the relationship between the proposed work and other ongoing work, or work planned, anticipated, or underway through Federal Assistance or other means. If the proposal is a continuation of previous or ongoing work, a brief discussion of results or accomplishments to date should be included; progress or final reports for previous awards may be included in the appendix.

(f) Environmental Impacts: Discuss whether any negative environmental, biological, social, political, or economic impacts are expected as a result of the proposed activities. Also, discuss any potential negative impacts on listed species or their critical habitat as a result of the proposed activities. If any negative impacts are anticipated, describe what steps will be taken to minimize or mitigate these impacts. Incidental take of protected species and impacts to Essential Fish Habitat should be noted. This information is the basis for a determination of the level of analysis required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), so please be thorough. See Section VI.B. (Administrative and National Policy Requirements) below for further information about NEPA requirements.

(g) Project management: Describe how the project will be organized and managed and who will be responsible for carrying out project activities. The lead organization/individual and person listed as the technical contact should be identified as the Project Manager (PM) or Principal Investigator (PI). Use of subawardees, subcontractors, or volunteer staff time to complete project activities and oversight of those individuals should be discussed. The PM/PI is responsible for all technical oversight and implementation of the approved work plan as delineated in the proposal. One PM or PI must be designated on each project, but the PM/PI may or may not be the applicant. However, if the applicant is not the PM/PI, there must be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and PM/PI (e.g. applicant will be responsible for managing the grant funds and the PM will be responsible for completing the project milestones on time and within budget, etc.). Project participants or organizations that will have a significant role in conducting the project should be listed as Co-investigators or Co-Managers. Organizations or individuals that support the project, for example, researchers contributing data or materials or NMFS collaborators, should be referred to as Cooperators. Copies of the PM's or PI's and all Co-investigator's/Co-Manager's current abbreviated resumes or curricula vitae must be included as appendices.

4. Data Management Plan (2-page limit)
Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically no later than 90 days after the award expires) and free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely-used or international standards.

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should align with the Data Management Guidance for this program, which

is available at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/funding-and-financial-services/frequent-questions-species-recovery-grants-tribes#data-management-and-data-sharing. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered during the proposal review (see Section V.A.6, Evaluation Criteria). A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.

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

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

For further information on NOAA’s Data Sharing Policy, please refer to information posted at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/funding-and-financial-services/frequent-questions-species-recovery-grants-tribes#data-management-and-data-sharing

5. Total project costs and budget justification
Each application must include clear and concise budget information, both on the required Federal forms and as described here. Multi-year applications must include budget information for each year of the proposed activity. All budget costs should be ROUNDED to the nearest dollar.

Applications must include OMB standard form (SF) 424A, "Budget Information - Non-construction Programs." All instructions should be read before completing the form, and the amounts per category and total amounts indicated on the form should correspond with

amounts indicated elsewhere in the proposal. For an example of how to complete the form, please refer to the sample SF424A at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/webdam/download/75517584 [pdf].

Provide a budget spreadsheet or table showing costs by category (e.g., salary, benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, subawards, indirect) and by Federal and non-Federal share (if applicable). Such budget detail must be provided for each year of multi-year projects. Costs should be itemized to the maximum extent possible. All funds MUST be estimated to the nearest dollar; any budgets containing cents will be returned for revision. In order to display correctly, budget tables or spreadsheets must be formatted to fit letter-sized paper (8.5" x 11") and, preferably, saved as pdf files. Do NOT format tables as multiple sheets or tabs within an Excel spreadsheet as sheets can be lost when applications are prepared for review in NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online. For an example of how to display costs and format budget tables, please refer to the sample table posted at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/webdam/download/67997818 [pdf].

A budget justification in narrative form for each year of the requested budget must also be provided to explain and justify all project costs, including contractual and/or subaward costs. This narrative must be organized to clearly correspond to the information provided in the budget table. For instructions on how to prepare a budget justification, please refer to the guidance posted at https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf.

Detail provided in the budget table/spreadsheet and the narrative justification must be sufficient so reviewers can interpret how costs were estimated or calculated, especially for costs over $5,000. Subaward costs must be itemized and justified similarly to other cost categories, and contract price or cost must be justified. For any non-Federal share, applicants should identify the itemized costs and describe valuations consistent with 2 C.F.R. 200.306(d)-(k).

6. Appendices (10-page limit)
Abbreviated curricula vitae or resumes of the PM/PI and any Co-Managers/ Co-Investigators must be included with the application. Applicants requiring ESA scientific research permits must also include evidence of such a permit (e.g. by providing the permit number) or evidence that they have submitted an ESA permit application. If indirect costs are being requested as part of the proposed budget, a copy of the applicant agency's indirect cost rate agreement must be provided (see Section IV.F.1. below). Additional material that is necessary or useful to the description of the project may also be provided (e.g. letters of

endorsement; maps, photos, tables or other visual materials). Applicants are highly encouraged to submit a map or maps of the geographic location of the proposed work (as applicable); such visual information helps inform reviewers. Do not submit any letters of support or endorsement from any NMFS, NOAA, or Department of Commerce personnel.

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

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

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

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service or received by http://www.grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on Thursday, October 29, 2020. Applications submitted by U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Use of a delivery service other than U.S. Postal Service must be documented with a receipt. Proposals submitted after the deadline cannot be considered for funding. Applicants must track their own applications to ensure receipt by NOAA.

For applications submitted through Grants.gov, there will be several automated email receipts sent to the application submitter with the date and time of submission. The final email confirms the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing. If email

confirmation receipts are not provided within two business days of application submission, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk (800-518-4726) and contact the NMFS Office of Protected Resources to confirm the application has been received by NOAA. PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject an application, and an advance registration process described in Sections IV.C. (above) may take up to three weeks or more in some cases. Please keep this in mind when developing your submission timeline.

Important note on Grants.gov application attachment file names: Attachment file names may only include the following UTF-8 characters: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore (_), hyphen (-), space ( ) and period (.). If applicants use any other characters when naming their attachment files, their applications will be rejected.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Cost Rates.

The budget may include an amount for indirect 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, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. A copy of the current approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the federal government must be included in the application.

Applicants that have not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs, which may be used indefinitely (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). If the 10% de minimis rate is chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until a recipient non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the recipient may apply to do at any time.

If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award. If an applicant chooses to establish an indirect cost rate, 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

2. Allowable Costs.
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 determined by reference to the Office of Management and Budget's "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements," regulations published in 2 C.F.R. part 200. A project begins on the effective date of an award agreement between the recipient and the Grants Officer and ends on the date specified in the award. Accordingly, applicants cannot be reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or preparing the application.

G. Other Submission Requirements

1. Permits and Approvals

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, State, tribal and local government permits and approvals where applicable for the proposed work to be conducted. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of permits must be included in the proposal package.

Most projects involving directed or incidental take of threatened or endangered species require permits under section 10 of the ESA (as implemented at 50 CFR § 222.307 and 222.308). If an ESA permit covering the proposed activities has already been issued, the permit number must be provided in the application. Issuance of the necessary ESA permit(s) or evidence that the applicant has submitted a permit application is required in order for a proposal to be considered for funding. If the grant applicant is not the Principle Investigator (PI) or the permit holder, a copy of the authorization to work under the permit (e.g., designation as a Co-Investigator under the permit) and/or a letter of support from the permit holder is required.

For further information on permit requirements and application procedures for federal natural resource permits, contact the NMFS Office of Protected Resources Permits Division (301-427-8401) or see: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permits-and-forms#protected-resources.

If proposed activities will take place within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks,

National Seashores, and other federally designated protected areas, the applicant is responsible for requesting and obtaining any necessary permits or letters of agreement from the appropriate government agencies prior to award.

Failure to obtain other Federal, State, tribal and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement or failure to provide information necessary to complete environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA environmental assessments or documentation) may delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding.

2. Address for submitting proposals

Applications should be submitted electronically through the Grants.gov website at http://www.grants.gov. NOAA strongly recommends that applicants do not wait until the application deadline to begin the application process through Grants.gov. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a unique entity identifier (i.e. Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number) and register in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its application; the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) is now a part of SAM and is located at www.sam.gov. Applicants should allow at least 5 business days to complete the SAM registration; registration is only required once, but must be updated annually. If issues arise, the process may take three weeks or more. Note that organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or via the internet (https://iupdate.dnb.com/iUpdate/viewiUpdateHome.htm). Also, it may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject an application. Please keep this in mind when developing your submission timeline.

If you experience a Grants.gov “systems issue” (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before the application deadline, please (i) print any error message received and (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Applicants need to obtain a case number regarding communications with Grants.gov. Please note: problems with an applicant organization’s computer system or equipment or failure to comply with the Grants.gov system requirements are not considered “systems issues.” Similarly, an applicant’s failure to: (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered AOR submits the application, or (iii) notice receipt of an email message from Grants.gov are not considered systems issues. A Grants.gov “systems issue” is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. It is the applicant’s responsibility to take necessary steps to document a “systems issue” and contact NOAA. In the event of a confirmed “systems issue,” NOAA reserves the right to accept an application in an alternate format (i.e. hard copy

submission), however, all applications must be received by the deadline. Late applications will not be accepted.

For applicants unable to effectively submit via Grants.gov, hard copies may be submitted (by postal mail or commercial delivery) by the deadline to the NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources, ATTN: Maggie Miller, 1315 East-West Highway, SSMC3, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Applications submitted by U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Use of a delivery service other than U.S. Postal Service must be documented with a receipt. Paper applications should be printed on one side only, on 8.5” x 11” paper, and not be bound in any manner. An SF-424 form must be included, signed in ink or using a valid electronic signature or digital signature. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The proposals will be evaluated by reviewers based on the following criteria as described below (with their relative weights):

1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of the Proposal to the Program Objective (30 points).

This criterion addresses whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to the program goals as stated in section I.A. and I.B of this document. Reviewers will consider whether proposals clearly identify project goals and objectives and whether those goals and objectives are applicable to conservation and recovery of threatened or endangered species, delisted species, proposed or candidate species as specified in sections I.A. and I.B. of this document.

Reviewers will also score the proposal based on their consideration of the contribution of potential outcomes, results, or products to species conservation and management goals; whether milestones and products are clearly identified; and whether performance measures for evaluating effectiveness of the completed project are clearly identified. Reviewers will consider whether the proposal is designed to have a direct impact on species recovery as a result of implementation of management actions. If the proposal addresses the continuation of previously funded or ongoing work, reviewers should consider whether an adequate justification for the continuation of the same work is provided by the applicant (e.g., what benefit would additional results have?).

(Score: 1-30 points; where, for example, 1= no importance/relevance to the program goals or objectives, very limited potential to contribute to species recovery; 15= moderately important/ relevant, reasonably likely to make a meaningful contribution to species recovery; 30= extremely important/relevant, extremely likely to make a significant contribution to recovery of a threatened or endangered species, involves implementation of significant management actions, addresses a priority species.)

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (30 points).

For proposals addressing management and outreach, this criterion addresses whether the approach is appropriate for achieving the stated goals and objectives, whether the approach will result in successful execution of the project, and if the anticipated results can be achieved in the time line specified. Reviewers will consider whether sufficient information is provided to evaluate the design of the project relative to the stated goals/objectives.

For proposals addressing research and monitoring, this criterion addresses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate for achieving the stated goals/objectives, and if the anticipated results can be achieved in the time line specified. Reviewers will consider the sufficiency of information to evaluate the project technically, the strengths and/or weaknesses of the technical design relative to securing productive results, and if data collection is proposed, the inclusion of quality assurance considerations.

For all applications, reviewers will consider whether the proposal includes an effective mechanism for evaluating the project’s success in meeting the stated goals and objectives.

(Score: 1-30 points; where, for example, 1= completely unsound and/ or unlikely to meet the stated objectives and no performance measures included; 15= intermediately sound, and/ or reasonably likely to meet the stated objectives; 30= extremely sound and highly likely to meet the stated objectives.)

3. Overall Qualification of Applicants (10 points).

This criterion addresses whether the applicant possesses the necessary expertise, experience, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Reviewers will consider previous related experience and qualifications of the project's PM or PI, Co-Manager(s) or Co-Investigator(s) and other personnel, including designated contractors, consultants, and cooperators. Reviewers will also consider past award performance of the applicant(s) and PM/PI. Reviewers will also evaluate whether application instructions contained in this document were followed and if all required elements were submitted based on information

provided in the application.

(Score: 1-10 points; where, for example, 1= completely unqualified and/or lacking the resources or capacity to accomplish the project, poor past award performance, application instructions were not followed; 5= intermediate level of qualifications or experience and/or adequate resources and capacity to accomplish the project, satisfactory past award performance, application instructions generally followed; 10= extremely qualified/ experienced, has all necessary resources and demonstrated capacity to accomplish the project, exceptional past award performance, application instructions followed thoroughly.)

4. Project Costs (15 points).

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is sufficiently detailed, realistic, and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. The itemized costs and the overall budget must be adequately justified and appropriately allocated. Reviewers will consider whether sufficient detail was provided to evaluate how costs were estimated.

(Score: 1-15 points; where, for example, 1= unrealistic and lacking sufficient detail; 8= adequately detailed and realistic; 15= extremely detailed and realistic.)

5. Outreach and Education (10 points).

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. Reviewers will consider whether project results or products will be shared appropriately given the nature of the proposed work and whether sufficient detail is provided to make this determination. Depending on the nature of the project, "outreach and education" may include, for example, peer reviewed publications, presentations at professional meetings, development of brochures, internal agency meetings, public meetings, or distribution of project results to appropriate managers or management agencies. Proposals should be rated on whether the outreach/ education discussed is appropriate for the type and nature of the proposal and whether the outreach/education is expected to be effective.

(Score: 1-10 points, where 1= insufficient/ineffective outreach; 5= adequate outreach; 10= extremely effective outreach)

6. Data Management Plan Technical Soundness (5 points).

This criterion addresses the contents of the Data Management Plan. Proposals should be

rated on the extent to which the plan includes 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.

(Score: 1-5 points, where 1= poorly detailed or absent data management plan; 3= adequately detailed data management plan; 5= comprehensive and clear data management plan.)

B. Review and Selection Process

Programmatic evaluation of proposals will take place in three steps: initial screening, merit review, and selection by the Selecting Official (i.e., the Assistant Administrator for NMFS). Initial screening of applications will be conducted to ensure that application packages have all required forms and application elements, clearly relate to the Species Recovery Grants to Tribes solicitation, and meet all of the eligibility criteria. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

Applications meeting the requirements of this solicitation will then undergo merit review. Each application will undergo a technical review by qualified person(s) with appropriate subject-matter expertise who may be from Federal, state, or tribal agencies, academic institutions, or non-profit organizations. Technical reviewers will independently evaluate and score proposals using the evaluation criteria provided in section V.A. (Evaluation Criteria) above. These technical review scores will be provided to a panel of Federal employees, consisting of staff from at least three of NMFS' regional offices. The panel will consider the technical review scores and comments, application materials, regional and program priorities, and the applicant's prior award performance, if applicable, and then independently evaluate and score the proposals using the evaluation criteria provided in section V.A. (Evaluation Criteria) above. The panel members' scores will be averaged and used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

After applications have undergone merit review, the Selecting Official will decide which applications will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Officer based upon the numerical ranking of the applications and evaluations of the applications by the merit reviewers as well as the selection factors set forth in Section V.C. (Selection Factors) below.

C. Selection Factors

The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order of proposals to the Selecting Official for final recommendation to the NOAA Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall award in

the rank order of the review ratings unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon the following factors, where applicable:

a. Availability of funding

b. Balance/distribution of funds
i. Geographically
ii. By type of institutions
iii. By type of partners
iv. By research areas
v. By project types
vi. By species or species groups

c. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies

d. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Sections I.A. (Program Objectives) and B (Program Priorities) and Section II. A. (Funding Availability)

e. Applicant's prior award performance

f. Partnerships with and/or participation of targeted groups

g. 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.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

The 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. 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. 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.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during winter 2020, and funding is expected to begin during summer 2021 for most approved projects.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, which the NOAA Grants Officer will issue electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system. The authorizing document, the CD-450 award cover page, is provided to the Authorized Representative identified by the applicant on the SF-424. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications will be kept on file in the Program Office for a period of at least 12 months and then destroyed.

NOAA is not responsible for delays in processing new awards that are not accompanied by adequate and accurate budget justifications and forms. For guidance on preparing budget justifications, please refer to tips and examples posted on our website at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/funding-and-financial-services/frequently-asked-questions-species-recovery-grants-tribes.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements.
The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), are applicable to this solicitation. Refer to http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/default.htm.

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements
The Uniform Guidance as codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and implemented by the Department of Commerce at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, apply to awards in this program. Refer to http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/default.htm.

3. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions
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://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/default.htm. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions, including those limiting the use of funds for compliance activities such as outstanding environmental compliance requirements, which will be applied on a case-by-case basis, and requirements for submitting progress reports.

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

5. Limitation of Liability
Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for the program listed in this notice. 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 or to obligate any

available funds.

6. Review of Risk
After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official as described in Section V.B. of this Federal Funding Opportunity, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.205. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

7. Minority Serving Institutions
The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

8. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals that are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_216/216-6A.html, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations.

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g. the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). NOAA has a NEPA Questionnaire (https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf) that may be applicable to some projects, but applicants do not need to provide answers to the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire at this time. However, NOAA may require

additional information from the applicant regarding potential environmental impacts prior to reviewing the application. In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposed project. 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.

Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize potential adverse impacts on the environment. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they have sufficient environmental documentation to allow program staff to determine whether the proposal is categorically excluded from further analysis, covered under an existing programmatic analysis, or whether additional analysis is necessary in conformance with requirements of NEPA. For those applications needing further analysis, affected applicants will be informed after the merit review stage and asked to assist by providing any information necessary to complete a draft Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. Failure to provide information necessary to complete environmental analyses may delay or prevent the award of funds if a project is selected for funding.

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

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content;

methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.

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

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

C. Reporting

Grant recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports through the Grants Online system (https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/home/Login/LoginController.jpf). All financial and performance (technical) reports shall be submitted through Grants Online in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.327-.329 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. All performance 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 last semi-annual performance report may not be required depending on award conditions. Additional reporting on project outputs and outcomes may be required at the request of the Program Office to facilitate program performance evaluation. A comprehensive final report is due 90 days after award expiration. Data collected by recipients under a Species Recovery Grant must be made publicly available in accordance with the approved Data Management Plan. Any reports or publication resulting from funded work should acknowledge funding received through the "NOAA Fisheries' Species Recovery Grant Program."

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier 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 of $25,000 and over.

VII. Agency Contacts

If you have any questions regarding this proposal solicitation, please contact the Species Recovery Grants Federal Program Officer, Maggie Miller, at the NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources, Endangered Species Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, by phone at 301-427-8457, or by email (Margaret.H.Miller@noaa.gov).

You may also contact one of the following coordinators in your region for further guidance: Ellen Keane, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (Ellen.Keane@noaa.gov, 978-282-8476); Calusa Horn, Southeast Regional Office (Calusa.Horn@noaa.gov, 727-824-5312); Justin Greenman, West Coast Regional Office (Justin.Greenman@noaa.gov, 562-980-3264); Barbara Mahoney, Alaska Regional Office (Barbara.Mahoney@noaa.gov, 907-271-3448).

VIII. Other 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. § 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.