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: NOAA Climate Program Office - Understanding Climate Impacts on Fish Stocks and Fisheries to Inform Sustainable Management

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-CPO-2014-2004106

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.431, Climate and Atmospheric Research

Dates: Letters of intent must be received via email by the Competition Manager, Adrienne Antoine (Adrienne.Antoine@noaa.gov), by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday, July 14, 2014.

Full applications for this Competition must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Friday, September 12, 2014.

Funding Opportunity Description: For FY 2014, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Climate Program Office (CPO), Coastal and Ocean Climate Applications (COCA) program, in partnership with the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), will support a competition to improve understanding, projection, and management of the impacts of climate variability and change on fish stocks and fisheries in the U.S. Northeast Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (NESLME). In addition, this competition is also soliciting proposals for one year and up to $50,000 to develop a workshop focused on bringing together scientists from various disciplines (e.g. physical, ecological, social, economic) to promote interdisciplinary partnerships and discuss and prioritize future research needs to advance understanding of the impacts of climate variability and change on fish or other species that support economically important fisheries in the U.S. Proposals should collaborate with relevant NOAA Laboratories, Fisheries Science Centers, and Cooperative Institutes to the extent this collaboration enhances the effectiveness of the research and its outcomes.

Complete information regarding the FY14 research topic and priorities - along with the names and contact information of the relevant Competition Manager – is outlined below and also provided in the COCA program information sheet (http://cpo.noaa.gov/GrantsandProjects.aspx).

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is responsible for the stewardship of the nation's living marine resources and their habitat. NMFS scientists are working to understand the effects of climate change and ocean acidification to minimize the disruptions they cause, adapt to the changes that are coming, and ensure that current and future generations can enjoy the benefits of healthy marine ecosystems. The NMFS mission activities address NOAA's Healthy Oceans Goal and other Goals outlined in the NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan (http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp/).

The NOAA Climate Program Office's (CPO) Coastal and Ocean Climate Applications (COCA) program, overseen by CPO's Climate and Societal Interactions (CSI) Program, addresses the needs of decision makers dealing with pressing climate-related issues in coastal and marine environments. The program is designed to support interdisciplinary teams of researchers in the development and transition of climate-related research and information to advance decision-making. COCA's research and capacity building activities address the objectives of the Climate Adaptation and Mitigation and the Healthy Oceans goals outlined in the NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan (NGSP) (http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp/).

This new funding opportunity is focused on understanding and responding to the impacts of climate variability and change on NOAA's marine resource management responsibilities including implications for marine ecosystems, fish stocks, fishery management, and the communities and economies that depend on them. This competition specifically addresses the improved understanding of marine ecosystems to inform the resource management decisions objective of NOAA's Healthy Oceans goal (http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp/). Starting in FY14, this new competition for the COCA program will provide resources to advance understanding of current and future climate-related impacts on living marine resources and the communities that depend on them to inform sustainable management and resilience of the Nation's fisheries in a changing climate. This FY14 funding opportunity will focus resources on the U.S. Northeast Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (NESLME). However, future funding opportunities may prioritize other U.S. regions. Therefore in addition, COCA, in partnership with NMFS, is also soliciting proposals for one year and $50,000 to develop a workshop focused on bringing together scientists from various disciplines (e.g. physical, ecological, social, economic) to promote interdisciplinary

partnerships and discuss and prioritize future research needs to advance understanding of the impacts of climate variability and change on fish or other species that support economically important fisheries in the U.S. Please note this option is open to all U.S. regions.

B. Program Priorities

Healthy and productive fisheries are an essential component of the U.S. economy and society. In 2011, U.S. commercial and recreational fishing supported 1.7 million jobs in fishing, generated $199 billion in sales, and contributed $88 billion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product. Sustainable fisheries create and sustain jobs, stabilize economies in coastal areas, support working waterfronts, provide opportunities for commerce, and help to meet the growing demand for seafood across the U.S. and the world.

There is increasing concern about the impacts of climate variability and change on fish stocks, fisheries, and marine ecosystems in the Northeast and other U.S. regions. Climate-related parameters (e.g. extreme events, winds, ocean temperatures, stratification, currents, coastal precipitation, runoff, inundation etc.) can directly and indirectly affect marine ecosystem conditions, which in turn impact the abundance, distribution, and productivity of fish or other species that support economically important fisheries (i.e., fish stocks). Sustainable fisheries management in a changing climate requires an increased understanding of how climate, fishing, and other stressors interact to affect fish stocks, their habitats and prey.

The NESLME encompasses an area of approximately 260,000 km2 from Cape Hatteras in the south to the Gulf of Maine and western Scotian Shelf in the north (For more information on the NESLME see http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/ecosys/ecology/index.html). The NESLME has been experiencing climate-related impacts and is projected to be significantly impacted by changing climate conditions in the future. To improve the resilience and adaptation of fisheries in the NESLME in a changing climate, in FY14, COCA, in partnership with NMFS, is soliciting proposals to address relevant research priorities under the following two options:

Option 1 – Three-year research projects that advance the understanding and projection of the impacts of climate variability and change on fish or other species that support economically important fisheries in the NESLME. Each project can request up to $600,000 a year for three years for a total of $1.8 million over three years, and includes both direct and indirect costs.

Option 2 – Two-year research projects that improve our understanding of the socioeconomic impacts of climate variability and change on fisheries and fishery dependent communities in the NESLME and/or enhance the use and application of climate-related data and information in fisheries stock assessments and management decisions. Each project team can request up to $150,000 a year for two years for a total of $300,000 over two years, and includes both direct and indirect costs.

Option 3

In FY14, COCA, in partnership with NMFS, is also soliciting proposals for one year and up to $50,000 to develop a workshop focused on bringing together scientists from various disciplines (e.g. physical, ecological, social, economic) to promote interdisciplinary partnerships and discuss and prioritize future research needs to advance understanding of the impacts of climate variability and change on fish stocks and fisheries in the U.S. marine ecosystems. Please note this option is open to all U.S. regions.

Option 1 and 2 proposals must address one or more of the following priority areas of research:

- Research to improve understanding of the direct (e.g. recruitment, growth, physiology, behavior) and indirect (e.g. trophic interactions, habitats,) impacts of climate variability and change on fish stocks.
- Research to improve understanding of how climate variability and climate change, fishing pressure, and other stressors interact to affect fish stocks and ecosystem state.
- Development and application of high-resolution, coupled, regional climate ocean-ecosystem models to provide past and future projections for improving our understanding of climate impacts on fish stocks.
- Improved acquisition, integration, synthesis, analysis, delivery and application of existing (historical and current) climate and marine ecosystem observations and monitoring information.
- Social and economic research to understand past and possible future impacts of climate variability and change on fisheries and fisheries-dependent communities to advance the identification of adaptation options.

- Development and implementation of communication efforts based on user-friendly science-based information resources (e.g. tools, trainings, guidebooks, websites, communities of practice) to enhance communication, awareness and/or visualization of climate impacts on fish stocks and fisheries.

- Integration of climate-related information into fisheries stock assessments, habitat assessments, ecosystem assessments, management plans, and practices.

All Option 1 and 2 projects should:

1. Advance the application and integration of climate–related information into NOAA's fisheries stewardship responsibilities. Investigators should identify and leverage NOAA initiatives, funding opportunities, activities, and programs that are relevant to the proposed project.

2. Collaborate with relevant NOAA Laboratories, Fisheries Science Centers, and Cooperative Institutes to the extent this collaboration enhances the effectiveness of the research and its outcomes.

3. Collaborate with and/or leverage relevant research and decision-making institutions - e.g. non-governmental organizations; academic institutions; state, tribal, and local governments; private sector organizations; and other federal agencies (e.g. Department of the Interior, National Aeronautics and Space Administration) - to the extent this collaboration enhances the effectiveness of the research and its outcomes.

4. Include interdisciplinary collaborations (e.g. between physical, ecological, social, economic scientists and managers/decision makers), and, if applicable, promote communication and partnerships between the scientific and marine resource management communities for continued use and understanding of climate-related information.

While the intent is to fund all options, the number and type of projects funded and funding amount of all projects are subject to the availability of funding.

References:

Websites:

- Coastal and Ocean Climate Applications Program - http://cpo.noaa.gov/ClimatePrograms/ClimateandSocietalInteractions/COCAProgramasx
- National Marine Fisheries Service - http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/
- National Marine Fisheries Service - Climate, Fisheries and Protected
- Species http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2014/03/climate_portal.html
- NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan - http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp/
- Understanding Climate Impacts on Fish Stocks of the Northeast Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem: Key Research Needs and Future Directions Workshop -
- http://www.joss.ucar.edu/meetings/understanding-climate-impacts-fish-stocksnortheast-shelf-large-marine-ecosystem-key

Reports and Papers:

- Griffis, R and Howard, J (eds.) 2013. Oceans and Marine Resources in a
- Changing Climate: A Technical Input To The 2013 National Climate Assessment. Island Press.
- Kappel, E.S and Cullen, V (eds.) 2013. Oceanography: Special Issue on
- GLOBEC, Understanding Climate Impacts on Ocean Ecosystems. Oceanography. Vol. 26, No. 4.

Information regarding the research topic and priorities - along with the names and contact information of the relevant Competition Manager - is also provided in the COCA program information sheet:

http://cpo.noaa.gov/GrantsandProjects.aspx

C. Program Authority

49 U.S.C. 47720(b), 15 U.S.C. 2904, 15 U.S.C. 2931-2934

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

It is anticipated that approximately $1.5 million will be available in 2014 for new projects. For Option 1, each project can request up to $600,000 a year for three years for a total of $1.8 million over three years. For Option 2, each project team can request up to $150,000 a year for two years for a total of $300,000 over two years. For Option 3, each project team can request one year and up to $50,000. While the intent is to fund all options, the number and type of projects funded and funding amount of all projects are subject to the availability of funding. Federal funding for FY2015 may be used to fund some awards submitted under this Competition.

B. Project/Award Period

Option 1 and 2 Projects under this announcement are multiyear awards and are expected to cover a performance period of 2–3 years. Option 3 projects under this announcement are one-year awards.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards will generally be a grant. If, however, it is anticipated that NOAA will be substantially involved in the implementation of the project, the funding instrument will be 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. Funding for contractual arrangements for services and products for delivery to

NOAA is not available under this announcement.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and federal, state, local and tribal governments.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Applications are submitted through grants.gov under "Apply for Grants". If an applicant does not have Internet access, CPO Grants Manager Diane Brown should be contacted by mail at NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room 12734, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 for hard copy submission instructions. Please allow two weeks after receipt for a response.

B. Content and Form of Application

The purpose of the LOI process is to provide information to the competition manager of the applicant's intent to apply and provide information on the relevance of their proposed project to the Climate Program Office in advance of preparing a full application.

While LOIs are strongly encouraged, applicants are not required to do so and are allowed to submit a full application even if they have not submitted an LOI. LOIs must be sent by e-mail to the Competition Manager, Adrienne Antoine (Adrienne.Antoine@noaa.gov) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, July 14, 2014 (the subject line should identify PI's name and the tentative title of the proposal).

The LOI must provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the competition. The LOI cannot be more than two pages in length and must include the components listed below.

- Identification of the Option being targeted in the LOI.

- A tentative project title.
- Name(s) and institution(s) of Principal Investigator(s), and the Lead Principal Investigator.
- Statement of the problem.
- Brief summary of work to be completed, methodology to be used, data sets needed or to be collected, and approximate cost of the project.
- Brief description of any potential collaborative partnerships
- Relevance to the Competition and Option being targeted.

If these components are not included or the LOI is submitted late, the LOI will not be considered by the Competition Manager. A response to the LOI from the Climate Program Office (e-mail or letter) will be sent to the investigator only if the LOI is not deemed relevant to the competition. However, the final decision to submit a full application will be made by the applicant.

2. Full Application

Failure to comply with the provisions outlined below will result in applications being returned without review.

Full applications are limited to 30 pages using 12-point font type with one-inch margins on standard 8.5 by 11 inch paper. For full applications with 3 or more Principal Investigators, the page limit is 35. The page limit includes the title page, abstract, results from prior research, statement of work, budget justification, budget table, vitae, current and pending support, associated figures, references, and appendices. All the Federal Forms (SF424, SF424A, SF424B, CD511), the NEPA Statement, and other mandated forms should be inserted as separate files when submitted and are not included in the page count.

The following forms and elements are required in each application.

(1) Title page: The title page shall identify the Principal Investigator (PI) and the institutional representative. If more than one investigator is listed on the title page, please identify the lead investigator. The lead PI and institutional representative should be identified by: full name, title, organization, telephone number, e-mail, and address. For paper submissions, the lead PI and the institutional representative must sign the title page. The total amount of Federal funds being requested should be listed for each budget period. If there are several institutions submitting separate applications associated with the same project, the names of all component institutions along with their lead PI name, e-mail, and amount requested per year must also appear on the title page of all applications that anticipate being funded under the same project.

(2) Abstract: A one-page abstract must be included and should contain an introduction to the problem, rationale, and a brief summary of the work to be completed. Abstracts must include a paragraph describing the work's relevance to the competition as well as the goals and priorities identified in NOAA's Next-Generation Strategic Plan (NGSP). For multiple applications associated with the same project, the abstract must be identical in all applications.

(3) Results from prior research: The results of each prior research project led by the Principal Investigator(s) during the last 3 years relevant to the proposed effort should be summarized in brief paragraphs. Because NOAA believes it important that data sets developed with its support should be shared with the scientific community, PIs should also indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and useable by the community in the past. This section should not exceed two pages. For multiple applications associated with the same project, this section must be identical in all applications.

(4) Statement of work: The proposed project must be completely described, including identification of the problem, scientific objectives, proposed methodology, and relevance to the competition and to NOAA's NGSP. Benefits of the proposed project to the general public and the scientific community should be discussed. This section should clearly identify and describe any collaborative partnerships. In addition, data sharing procedures to be followed by the project should be indicated. The statement of work, including references, figures, and other visual materials, must not exceed 15 pages of text. Applications from 3 or more investigators may include a statement of work containing up to 20 pages of overall project description. For multiple applications associated with the same project, all applications must have an identical statement of work, including a clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant.

(5) Data Sharing Plan: 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.

Unless otherwise noted in this federal funding announcement, a Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as an appendix. 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. 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. 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. Information on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Policy is available under: http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-

15.pdf

(6) Budget Table and Justification:

Budget Table: An itemized budget for each year and a total itemized budget must be included as a separate spreadsheet that breaks down the budget per object class category. Travel must be itemized to include destination, airfare, per diem, lodging, and ground travel.

Budget Justification: A brief description of the expenses listed on the budget table and how they address the proposed work. Item justifications must include all line items from the budget table including: salaries, equipment, publications, supplies, tuition, travel, etc. Investigators who will not be requesting funds for salaries must also be listed, indicating their estimated time of commitment. Purchases of equipment (meaning tangible nonexpendable personal property including exempt property charged directly to the award

having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit) must include a purchase versus lease justification. Note that the budget table and justification are considered part of the required 30-page limit (35-pages for applications with 3 or more PIs). For multiple applications associated with the same project, the Lead Principal Investigator should include a spreadsheet that displays the total budget for all partners. All other partners should include a separate budget for their portion of the project.

(7) Federal Budget Forms: Budget numbers corresponding with the descriptions contained in the statement of work and budget table must be included. In addition to including the total budget on the SF424, the application must include the total budget and budgets for years 1, 2, and 3 in separate columns in Section B on page 1 on the SF424A. (Note that this revised 424A Section B format is a NOAA requirement that is not reflected in the Instructions for the SF 424A). Note that these forms are not part of the required page limit. For multiple applications associated with the same project, each application requesting funding from NOAA needs to complete the federal budget forms for their specific institution.

(8) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: A copy of the institution's current Indirect

Cost Rate Agreement (IDCRA) must be included. The IDCRA does not, however, count as part of the required page limit. To obtain an indirect cost rate, if your institution does not already have one, an applicant must submit an indirect cost proposal to the cognizant agency and negotiate an indirect cost agreement.

(9) Vitae: Abbreviated curriculum vitae are required with each application.

Reference lists should be limited to all relevant publications in the last three years with up to five other relevant papers. For multiple applications associated with the same project, each application should include identical vitae for all applications.

(10) Current and pending support: For each Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator(s), submit a list of all current and pending Federal support that includes project title, supporting agency with grant number, investigator months per year, dollar value, and duration. Requested values should be listed for pending support. Applicants cannot request funding for the same project activity that is supported with other Federal funds. For multiple

applications associated with the same project, each application should include identical current and pending support information for all applications.

(11) Letters of Support: All letters of support must be submitted as part of the proposal.

(12) DUNS Number: All applications must have a DUNS (Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System) number when applying for federal grants. No application is deemed complete without the DUNS number, and only the Office of

Management and Budget (OMB) may grant exceptions.

(13) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), of each applicant's project that is seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA's compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including the NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA,

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 questions from the NOAA NEPA questionnaire need to be addressed with the initial application. However, after review of the application, NEPA information may be requested if NOAA determines such information is required. 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 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 application. 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.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Letters of Intent for this Competition must be received by the Competition Manager, Adrienne Antoine (Adrienne.Antoine@noaa.gov), via email by Monday, July 14, 2014 @ 5:00 p.m.

Full applications for all Competitions must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Friday, September 12, 2014.

D. Intergovernmental Review

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

E. Funding Restrictions

Fees and profit are disallowed.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Letters of Intent - Letters of Intent must be sent to the Competition Manager via email to Adrienne Antoine (Adrienne.Antoine@noaa.gov). If an applicant does not have Internet access, Letters of Intent should be sent via mail to, CPO Grants Manager Diane Brown NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room 12734, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Full Proposals – Full proposals must be submitted via grants.gov unless an applicant does not have Internet access, in which case, CPO Grants Manager Diane Brown should be contacted by mail at NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room 12734, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 for hard copy submission instructions.

Please refer to the information about submission dates and times above to help ensure your application is received on time.

1. Full Application

Applications are submitted through grants.gov "Apply for Grants". If an applicant does not have Internet access, CPO Grants Manager Diane Brown should be contacted by mail at NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room 12734, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 for hard copy submission instructions. Please allow two weeks after receipt for a response.

Please refer to the information about submission dates and times above to help ensure your application is received on time.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria will be used as described in Section V.B. Below. Please not that the percentages given in this section reflect final weighting for proposals that make it through Stages 1 and 2, described below. To determine the final score, the scores from Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be combined, with a weighting of 75% for the Stage 1 score and 25% for the Stage 2 score.

1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Application to the Program Goals

(Stage 1 Weight 0%) (Stage 2 Weight = 100%) (Final Weight= 25%)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, tribal or local activities. For this CPO grant competition this will include the potential value of the research to NOAA's stewardship mission and trust resources responsibilities.

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (Stage 1 Weight = 70%) (Stage 2 Weight = 0)

(Final Weight =52.5%) This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether the goals of the competition will be realized through clear project goals and objectives. For this CPO Grant Program Competition, this will include: (1) how well the proposed work addresses the research topic and one or more of the research priorities outlined in the Funding Opportunity Description above and the Program Information sheet (2) any collaboration with and/or leveraging of relevant research and decision-making institutions in the area of study (e.g.: NOAA Laboratories, Fisheries Science Centers, Cooperative Institutes, and Sea Grant; non-governmental organizations; academic institutions; state, tribal, and local governments; private sector organizations; other federal agencies, etc.) - to the extent that this collaboration enhances the effectiveness of the research and its outcomes; and (3) if applicable, the relative potential value to relevant decision makers.

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants Stage 1 Weight =20%) (Stage 2 Weight =0)

(Final Weight = 15%) This criterion assesses whether the applicant team possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and/or administrative resources to accomplish the project.

4. Project Costs (Stage 1 Weight = 10%) (Stage 2 Weight = 0) (Final Weight =7.5%)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. This criterion includes the PI's record of making their data accessible and useable by the scientific community in the past and the data sharing procedures described in the Statement of Work.

5. Outreach and Education (Stage 1 Weight = 0%) (Stage 2 Weight = 0) (Final

Weight =0) NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. This criterion is not separately scored in this competition: it is considered as part of the utility and relevance to decision makers and in the Technical and Scientific Merit criterion.

B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full application has been received, an administrative review will be conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

The reviews will take place in two stages. In Stage 1, independent peer mail reviewers and/or independent peer panel reviewers consisting of both Federal and non-Federal experts will evaluate applications using the following three criteria described above: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and project costs. A second review panel in Stage 2 will assess relevance. To determine the final score, the scores from Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be combined, with a weighting of 75% for the Stage 1 score and 25% for the Stage 2 score. Neither panel will give consensus advice. The identity of mail reviewers and panel reviewers are privileged.

A panel review is conducted during Stage 1 and each reviewer will provide one score for each of three criteria: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and project costs for each application. The scores from the reviewers for each application will be combined using the weighting averages provided below to produce a single numerical score for Stage 1. Applications will be evaluated by at least three individual technical reviewers. Proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2.

If a mail review and a panel review are both conducted for Stage 1, the mail reviews will be provided to the Stage 1 review panel for use in its deliberations prior to providing its ratings, but the Competition Manager will use only the numerical rank order of the peer review panel to determine the average score for each proposal.

Proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2. In Stage 2, a second panel comprised of either federal or a combination of federal and non-federal partners will determine scores for Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Application to the Program Goals. Each panel reviewer will provide a relevance score for each application that moved forward from Stage 1. The applications and their associated scores from Stage 1 will be provided to the Stage 2 panel.

The Stage 1 and Stage 2 weighting of scores for the individual criteria is shown in the following table:

Criterion	Stage 1 Weight	Stage 2 Weight	Final weight
1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability	0%	100%	25%
2. Technical/Scientific Merit	70%	0%	52.5%
3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants	20%	0%	15%
4. Project Costs	10%	0%	7.5%
5. Outreach and Education	0%	0%	0%
Stage Total	100%	100%	100%
Final weighting for each stage score	75%	25%	100%

To determine the final score, the scores from Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be combined, with a weighting of 75% for the Stage 1 score and 25% for the Stage 2 score, leading to the overall weightings for each criterion reported in section V.A above. The final score for each

application will be used to determine the numerical rank order of proposals within each Competition.

The Competition Manager will recommend applications to the Selecting Official in numerical rank order unless a recommendation out of rank order is justified based upon any of the factors listed in the following section.

C. Selection Factors

The Competition Manager will recommend applications to the Selecting Official in numerical rank order. Should applications receive a tie score, and funding is not available for every tied application, the Selecting Official may preferentially recommend applications for funding also according to any of the factors listed in the following section. The Selecting Official will review the amounts requested for each selected application (including costs for computing and networking services) and recommend the total duration and the amount of funding, which may be less than the application and budget requested.

The Selecting Official will select awards in rank order unless a selection out of rank order is justified based upon any 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 area

e. By project types

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

4. Program priorities and policy factors

5. Applicant's prior award performance

6. Partnerships with/participation of targeted group

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.

The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for awards to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of applications will occur during the 6-7 months following the full applications due date. CPO anticipates that funding decisions on applications will be made during fall of 2014. Such decisions are contingent upon the final FY 2014 appropriation for NOAA by Congress and the final allocation of funds to CPO by NOAA. Funding for successful applicants is expected to begin during fall 2014 for most approved projects. Applications should use November 1st, 2014 as the start date unless otherwise directed by the Competition Manager.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, and/or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, final scope of activities, project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant, the NOAA Grants Management Division, and NOAA program staff. Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding by an official of the NOAA Climate Program Office. 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. Notifications will be issued to the Authorizing Official and the Principal Investigator of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not selected for recommendation.

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 17, 2012 (77 FR 74634) are applicable to this solicitation.

Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs. Publication of this announcement in no way obliges NOAA or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The National Environmental Policy Act is applicable to the Notice. See Section IV above for the necessary information.

C. Reporting

Award recipients are required to submit financial and technical progress reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically via https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov. The first technical progress report covering the first 9 months of a multi-year award is due 10 months after the start date of the award. Each subsequent technical progress report covering a period of 12 months is due 12 months after the previous report. The comprehensive final technical progress report is due 90 days after the expiration date of the award.

Certifications Regarding Federal Felony and Federal Criminal Tax Convictions, Unpaid Federal Tax Assessments and Delinquent Federal Tax Returns

In accordance with Sections 523, 536, and 537 of the Commerce Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2014 (Pub. L. 113-76, Division B), 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. 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.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the CPO website for frequently asked questions document regarding this opportunity at http://cpo.noaa.gov/GrantsandProjects.aspx. Contacts:

Competition Manager: Adrienne Antoine (Adrienne.Antoine@noaa.gov)

VIII. Other Information

None