

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal Year 2014 Monkfish Research Set-Aside

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-NEFSC-2014-2003824

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.454, Unallied Management Projects

Dates: Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov on or before 5 p.m. EST on Monday January 6, 2014. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline.

If an applicant does not have Internet access, hard copy proposals will be accepted, and date recorded when they are received in the program office. Electronic or hard copies received after the deadline will not be considered, and hard copy applications will be returned to the sender. Mark hard copy proposals "Attention-2014 Monkfish Research Set Aside Program."

Funding Opportunity Description: NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), in coordination with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (Councils), is soliciting monkfish research proposals to utilize 500 Monkfish Days-at-Sea (DAS) that have been set-aside by the Councils to fund monkfish research endeavors through the 2014 Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. No Federal funds are provided for research under this notification. Rather, proceeds generated from the sale of monkfish harvested during a set-aside DAS will be used to fund research activities and compensate vessels that participate in research activities and/or harvest set-aside quota. Projects funded under the Monkfish RSA Program must enhance the knowledge of the monkfish fishery resource or contribute to the body of information on which monkfish management decisions are made. Priority will be given to monkfish research proposals that investigate research priorities identified by the Councils and detailed under the Program Priorities section of this announcement.

NEW CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM: Applicants must submit a budget that is based solely on monetary needs. Do not submit a request for specific DAS. Please see IIA for detailed information.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Amendment 2 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) established the Monkfish RSA Program, which sets-aside 500 monkfish DAS annually from the total number of monkfish DAS allocated to limited access monkfish vessels, to address monkfish research priorities identified by the Councils. NMFS, in coordination with the Councils, is soliciting proposals for monkfish research to be conducted under the 2014 Monkfish RSA Program. DAS will be awarded to successful applicants.

B. Program Priorities

Projects funded under an RSA DAS award must enhance understanding of the monkfish fishery resource or contribute to the body of information on which management decisions are made. NMFS and the Councils will give priority to funding research proposals in the following areas. The priorities are listed in order of importance.

2014 Monkfish RSA Program Research Needs and Priorities:

1. Research on monkfish life history focusing on: (a) age and growth, (b) longevity, (c) reproduction, and (d) natural mortality;
2. Migration patterns focusing on: (a) short- and long-term movements with respect to management areas and off-shelf movements, and, (b) habitat use;
3. Research concerning trophic interactions of monkfish with other species and monkfish cannibalism;
4. Cooperative research surveys to fill in gaps in current survey coverage;
5. Research concerning bycatch and discard mortality focusing on: (a) Target species (i.e., monkfish or Northeast multispecies), and (b) non-target species (e.g., monkfish or skate); and
6. Trawl and gillnet gear studies focusing on: (a) Size and/or species selectivity, and, (b) bycatch reduction, including reducing bycatch of and interactions with protected species.

C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is found under sections 303(b)(11), 402(e), and 404(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1853(b)(11), 16 U.S.C. 1881a(e), and 16 U.S.C. 1881(c), respectively. The Monkfish RSA

Program was established by Amendment 2 to the Monkfish FMP, (70 FR 21927, April 28, 2005), and implementing regulations at 50 CFR 648.92(c).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

DAS will be awarded to successful applicants. No Federal funds are provided for research under this notification. Funds generated from landings harvested and sold under the Monkfish RSA Program shall be used to cover the cost of research activities, including vessel costs. For example, the funds may be used to pay for gear modifications, monitoring equipment, the salaries of research personnel, or vessel operation costs. The Federal Government is not liable for any costs incurred by the researcher or vessel owner should the sale of catch not fully reimburse the researcher or vessel owner for their expenses. Any additional funds generated through the sale of set-aside landings, above the cost of the research activities, shall be retained by the vessel owner as compensation for the use of his/her vessel.

To apply for RSA DAS, applicants must submit a budget that is based solely on monetary needs, which includes funds necessary to execute the research plan and funds necessary to compensate vessel owners harvesting set-aside quota. Upon project selection, NMFS will negotiate with successful applicants on the specific RSA DAS award. Priority will be given to the higher technically ranked proposal, although additional selection factors listed in Section VC. "Application Review Information/Selection Factors," of this document will be considered in making final recommendations for award. NMFS will establish a common monkfish price estimate, based on the best and most recent data available at the time of negotiations, to determine the amount of set-aside necessary to cover research and compensation fishing expenses.

B. Project/Award Period

The research project may encompass all or part of the 2014 monkfish fishing year (May 1, 2014 through April 30, 2015). However, multi-year grant awards may be approved under this announcement. If a multi-year grant award is approved, the research DAS available under subsequent RSA solicitations will be adjusted accordingly. If a successful applicant is unable to harvest the entire set-aside award before the end of the monkfish fishing year (May 1, 2014 - April 30, 2015), the applicant may request that the unused RSA award be carried forward into the subsequent fishing year.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Proposals selected for funding will be funded through a grant or cooperative agreement depending upon the amount of collaboration, participation, or involvement by NOAA in the

management of the project. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, proposals for collaboration between NOAA scientists and a recipient scientist. Funding for contractual arrangements for services or products for delivery to NOAA is not available under this notice.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

1. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, institutions of higher education, hospitals, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, individuals, state, local, and Native American tribal governments. Federal agencies and institutions are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this notice. Additionally, employees of any Federal agency or Regional Fishery Management Council are ineligible to submit an application under this program. However, Council members who are not Federal employees may submit an application.

2. DOC/NOAA supports cultural and gender diversity and encourages women and minority individuals and groups to submit applications to the RSA program. In addition, DOC/NOAA is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. DOC/NOAA encourages proposals involving any of the above institutions.

3. DOC/NOAA encourages applications from members of the fishing community and applications that involve fishing community cooperation and participation.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None required.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

1. Research proposals submitted under the 2014 Monkfish RSA Program must be received within the application submission period to be eligible for consideration.

2. Proposals for different and distinct projects must be submitted separately in accordance with the format requirements in Section IV.B. Multiple stand-alone projects in the same proposal will not be accepted.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application information is available at <http://www.grants.gov>. Electronic copies of the Standard Forms for submission of research proposals may be found on the Internet in a PDF (Portable Document Format) version at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov/acquisition/standard.html>. Applicants without Internet access may contact Cheryl Corbett, NMFS, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543, by phone 508-495-2070, fax 508-495-2004, or email at cheryl.corbett@noaa.gov. To apply for this NOAA Federal Funding Opportunity, please go to <http://www.grants.gov>, and use the following funding opportunity number: NOAA-NMFS-NEFSC-2014-2003824.

B. Content and Form of Application

Should a recipient wish to include a coversheet with his/her proposal, the coversheet should summarize key information already contained in detail within the proposal. Such information might include, for example, the program name, date, applicant name, project title, project duration, principal investigator(s), program priorities addressed, pounds requested, and funds requested, and funds requested broken down by research, compensation, and total value. Applications must adhere to the provision under "Applications" and the nine requirements under "Required Elements" by the application deadline. Failure to follow these provisions will result in proposals being returned to the applicant without review.

1. Applications

a. Applications submitted to the 2014 Monkfish RSA Program must include a Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance), including a detailed budget using Standard Form 424A, (Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs), Standard Form 424B (Assurances--Non-Construction Programs), Commerce Department Form CD-511, (Certification Regarding Lobbying), and if applicable, Standard Form SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities). These forms are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. These forms should be submitted through the Grants Online website. Applicants submitting hard copy must include one signed original and two signed unbound copies of the application (including supporting information).

b. The Standard Form SF424 must include the estimated monetary value of the entire project, including costs of compensation fishing and research project costs. This value must be recorded under item 18. Estimated Funding (e) "Other" on the SF424.

c. The Standard Form SF424A must report the total value under "Non-Federal."

2. Required Elements Proposals should be limited to 12 pages, excluding item "e" below. The format may vary, but must include:

a. A narrative project description to include project goals and objectives. Funding objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible; clear as to the "what and when," but avoiding the "how and why;" and attainable within the time, funding, and resources available. Proposals should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific performance measures, describing how investigators foresee research results being used in the management arena to enhance the understanding of the monkfish resource or contributing to the body of information on which management decisions are made (see Section I.B.). The main body of the narrative should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and include: (1) Project design and management, including who is responsible, expected products, and participants other than applicant; (2) project duration (starting on the first day of the month and ending on the last day of the month); (3) names and affiliations of the principal investigator(s) (PI); (4) contribution and relevance of the proposed work; and (5) a summary of the existing state of knowledge related to the project;

b. A detailed budget that is based solely on monetary needs, which includes funds necessary to execute the research plan and funds necessary to compensate vessel owners harvesting set-aside quota. Upon project selection, NMFS will negotiate with successful applicants on the specific RSA DAS award. The budget must include a breakdown of research costs including labor, vessel, permit, equipment, supplies, and overhead, as applicable. The proposal must state how the proceeds from the sale of compensation fishing activities, including those derived from incidental catch, will be divided between the vessel and applicant. Proposals must provide a description of the safeguards that will be used to ensure that the RSA DAS will not be exceeded. Applicants should be aware that all monkfish landed by a vessel participating in a monkfish RSA project, including fish landed for research purposes, is considered monkfish RSA quota;

c. A list of any Federal regulations that the applicant needs to have waived and a brief justification for such a waiver;

d. Each proposal must identify the RSA activities for the vessel(s) participating in the research project. All vessel(s) selected by the applicant should be listed in the proposal, if possible.

e. Supporting documents, including resumes, letters of intent for vessels to participate in research activities, and any relevant contracts; and

f. As part of this application process, questions from The Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance Applicants, OMB Approval Number 0648-0538, must be answered and submitted with the application. These questions include: A1-A3, A11, A12, B1, C1, D1-D3, E1, E4, F1-F3, F10-F13, H1-H24, H26, H27-H31. This

form is located at <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov>. Failure to complete all of the indicated questions with current and relevant information will result in the application being considered incomplete.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov on or before 5 p.m. EST on Monday January 6, 2014. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. If an applicant does not have Internet access, hard copy proposals will be accepted, and date recorded when they are received in the program office. Electronic or hard copies received after the deadline will not be considered, and hard copy applications will be returned to the sender. Mark hard copy proposals "Attention-2014 Monkfish Research Set Aside Program."

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants will need to determine if their State participates in the intergovernmental review process. This information can be found at the following website: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc. This information will assist applicants in providing either a Yes or No response to Item 16 of the Application Form, SF-424, entitled "Application for Federal Assistance."

E. Funding Restrictions

1. The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 17, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 74634), are applicable to this solicitation.

2. Utilization of set-aside DAS should occur within the 2014 monkfish fishing year (May 1, 2014, through April 30, 2015). However, unused RSA DAS may carry over into the following fishing year provided adequate rationale as to why the DAS were not utilized is provided.

3. The Federal Government shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the conduct of the project. Any additional funds generated through the sale of set-aside landings above the costs of the research activities, shall be retained by the vessel owner as compensation for the use of his/her vessel.

F. Other Submission Requirements

1. Applications should be submitted through <http://www.grants.gov>. If an applicant does not have Internet access, hard copies should be sent to, NMFS, Northeast Fisheries Science

Center, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543. Mark hard copy proposals "Attention 2014 Monkfish Research Set Aside Program."

2. NOAA employees (whether full-time, part-time, or intermittent) are not permitted to assist in the preparation of an application, except that staff may provide information on program goals, funding priorities, application procedures, and completion of application forms. Because this is a competitive program, NMFS and NOAA employees will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for an application. However, the Council or NMFS contact person may provide assistance to researchers who are seeking vessels to participate in research projects.

3. 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 assistance opportunities, including special fishing privileges. The impacts of the 500 DAS set-aside was analyzed in the Final Supplemental Impact Statement (FSEIS) prepared for Amendment 2. Applications that propose research and/or compensation fishing that is not within the scope of the NEPA analysis contained in the Amendment 2 FSEIS may require the applicant to provide additional information that will serve as the basis for any further analyses.

4. Permits and Approvals

a. Vessels participating in the Monkfish RSA Program must obtain the appropriate vessel documentation consistent with experimental fishing regulations at 50 C.F.R. § 600.745 and 50 C.F.R. § 648.12. Vessels conducting certain types of research activities that require relief from fishery regulations may be required to obtain an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) or other permit. NMFS may not exempt a vessel from any requirement imposed by any state. Therefore, applicants are urged to discuss with state fisheries agencies any proposed landings in their state(s), and must obtain any additional permits that may be required by such state(s). In order to assist NMFS in determining whether or not the proposed research would require a permit, researchers should briefly address the following questions:

i. Location and Time of Year - specific time of year and areas where fishing will occur (e.g., coordinates, 10-minute squares, closed areas; include map if possible);

ii. Gear Type, Including Mesh Size or gear modification (trawl; pot; gillnet; dredge; acoustic gear, including frequency and amplitude);

iii. Fishing Effort (number of vessels, number of tows, length of tows, number of pots, duration of tended gear, sampling frequency, etc.);

iv. Catch - estimated species composition and amount (directed catch and bycatch);

b. If an exemption from Federal regulations is proposed, a list of the specific regulations to be exempted and a brief justification for each regulation to be exempted must be included. Should an applicant submit a request for an EFP to NMFS, the completed application should be received by NMFS at least 60 days before the requested start date of the proposed research to allow for additional review and analysis.

c. Projects may not have more than 50 vessels authorized to conduct compensation fishing at any given time, unless sufficient rationale can demonstrate that more than 50 vessels are needed. In addition, principal investigators and project coordinators should be aware that it may take NMFS up to 4 weeks to process requests to revise the list of vessels that are authorized to conduct compensation fishing.

To apply, please go to <http://www.grants.gov>, and use the following Federal Funding Opportunity #NOAA-NMFS-NEFSC-2014-2003824. Applicants without Internet access may contact Cheryl Corbett, NMFS, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543, phone 508-495-2070, fax 508-495-2004, or email cheryl.corbett@noaa.gov.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

NMFS will solicit written technical evaluations from up to three or more appropriate private and public sector experts to determine the technical merit of the proposal and to provide a rank score of the project based on the criteria set forth below:

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of the proposed project: This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. Provide a clear definition of the problem, need, issue, or hypothesis to be addressed. The proposal should describe its relevance to RSA program priorities and detail how the data gathered from the research will be used to enhance the understanding of the fishery resource or contribute to the body of information on

which management decisions are made. If not directly related to priorities listed in this solicitation, provide justification why the proposed project should be considered. (25 points)

2. Technical/scientific merit: This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Special emphasis will be given to proposals that foster and improve cooperative interactions with NMFS. A clear definition of the approach to be used including description of field work, theoretical studies, and laboratory analysis to support the proposed research in the area and time proposed is important. The time frame for utilizing research DAS and conducting the proposed research should be clearly specified. Activities that take place over a wider versus narrower geographical range, where appropriate, are preferred. (25 points)

3. Overall qualifications of the project: This criterion assesses whether the applicant, and team members, possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. This includes demonstration of support, cooperation and/or collaboration with the fishing industry, and qualifications/experience of project participants. Where appropriate, combined proposals involving multiple principal investigators are preferred versus separate stand-alone proposals on related projects. For proposals involving multiple vessels, special attention will be given to specification of safeguards to ensure that the authorized DAS set-aside will not be exceeded. (15 points)

4. Project costs: This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. Cost-effectiveness of the project is considered. (25 points)

5. Outreach and education: This criterion assesses whether the project involves a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. This includes identification of anticipated benefits, potential users, likelihood of success, and methods of disseminating results. Where appropriate, data generated from the research must be formatted in a manner consistent with NMFS and ACCSP databases. A copy of this format is available from NMFS. (10 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Following completion of the technical evaluation as described above, NMFS will convene a management review panel, including Council members and technical experts, to review and individually critique the scored proposals to enhance NOAA's understanding of the proposals as they relate to the program priorities enumerated in Section I.B. above. Initial successful applicants may be required, in consultation with NMFS, to further refine/modify the study methodology as a condition of project approval. No consensus recommendations will be made by the management review panel.

C. Selection Factors

The program officer will make recommendations to the Selecting Official based on technical ranking and management reviews. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank technical order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research areas
 - e. By project types
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies.
4. Program priorities and policy factors.
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups.
7. Adequacy of information necessary to conduct a NEPA analysis and determination.

Key program policy factors (see 4 above) to be considered by the Selecting Official are: (1) The time of year the research activities are to be conducted; (2) the ability of the proposal to meet the applicable experimental fishing requirements; (3) redundancy of research projects; and (4) logistical concerns. Therefore, the highest scoring projects may not necessarily be selected for an award. All approved research must be conducted in accordance with provisions approved by NOAA. Unsuccessful applications will be returned to the submitter. Successful applications will be incorporated into the award document.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of research DAS under the Monkfish RSA Program, review of proposals will occur during the 3 months following the date given in this announcement that the proposals are due to NMFS. Initiation of approved RSA project activities should begin

during Spring/Summer 2014 for most projects. May 1, 2014, should be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the Program Officer.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that their applications have been recommended for selection to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin project operations. Official notification of selection, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows a project to begin. Notifications will be issued to the Authorizing Official and the Principal Investigator of the project. Successful and unsuccessful applicants may be notified either electronically or in writing.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The DOC Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements are set forth in the Federal Register notice of December 17, 2012 (77FR 74634) and are applicable to this solicitation. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-12-17/pdf/2012-30228.pdf>.

Applicants should furnish sufficient information to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project. NOAA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) staff must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by NEPA, for applicant projects or proposals that are seeking NOAA federal assistance opportunities, including special fishing privileges. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following websites: www.nepa.noaa.gov , www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf , and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/ceq_regulations/regulations.html. Consequently, applicants are required to provide, under the description of program activities, detailed information on the activities to be conducted. This shall include locations, sites, species and potentially effected habitat, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns which 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, etc.). The impacts of the 500 DAS set-aside were analyzed in the FSEIS prepared for Amendment 2, however, if the proposed activities exceed the scope of that document, additional NEPA analysis may be required. Applicants may be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an Environmental Assessment if NOAA determines such an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts associated with their proposed research activity. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

In some cases, if additional information is required after an application is selected, set-aside quota can be withheld by the NOAA Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment of any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

C. Reporting

1. Recipients will be required to submit the following financial and performance (technical) reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically unless the recipient does not have Internet access, in which case hard copy submissions will be accepted. A final Financial Status Reports (SF-425) is required to be submitted to the Grants Officer no later than 90 days after the award expiration.

a. The SF425 must report \$0.00 on every line item and the comment section should read: This is an RSA grant award which has no federal dollars associated with it. The final accounting information will be submitted with the final report.

2. Performance or progress reports are required to be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer semi-annually. These reports will be due no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of an award. The final report is due no later than 90 days after the award expiration. The format of the final report may vary, but the report must contain:

- a. A brief summary of the completion report (200-word or less abstract);
- b. A description of the issue/problem that was addressed;
- c. A detailed description of methods of data collection and analyses;
- d. A discussion of results and any relevant conclusions presented in a format that is understandable to a non-technical audience. This should include benefits and/or contributions to management decision-making;
- e. A list of entities, firms, or organizations that actually performed the work, and a description of how the work was accomplished;
- f. A detailed accounting of the following items is required: All fish caught during compensation fishing and research, fish landed, fish sold, and, if applicable, the

disbursement of any additional funds generated through the sale of set-aside landings above the costs of the research activities; and

g. Data from research projects must be submitted in electronic format with appropriate documentation to NMFS, as requested.

6. All monkfish and skate that are landed by a vessel participating in monkfish RSA project must be reported to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) per the instructions provided by NMFS. Non-compliance with this reporting requirement could be cause for not awarding future NOAA projects. This reporting requirement includes research quota that is landed for research purposes.

7. Successful applicants will be required to submit project results in electronic form in accordance with data collection protocols of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) and/or other data base formats as may be required by NMFS.

VII. Agency Contacts

Information may be obtained from Phil Haring, New England Fishery Management Council, by phone 978-465-0492 ext. 117, or by email at pharing@nefmc.org; or from Cheryl Corbett, NMFS, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, phone 508-495-2070, fax 508-495-2004, or email cheryl.corbett@noaa.gov for grant related questions; or from Ryan Silva, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, Cooperative Research Liaison, phone (978) 281-9326, fax (978) 281-9326, email ryan.silva@noaa.gov for compensation fishing/regulatory questions.

VIII. Other Information

1. In no event shall NOAA or DOC be responsible for application preparation costs if these programs are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to award any specific project or to provide special fishing privileges.

2. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA): DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, "Public Information," which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the Act. Applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under FOIA. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, the applicant should identify and bracket such

information or data, marking it as "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information- Limited Use." Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be maintained to the extent permitted by law.

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

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

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

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