FY21 Saltonstall-Kennedy Competition

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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: FY21 Saltonstall-Kennedy Competition

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-FHQ-2021-2006561

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.427, Fisheries Dev and Utilization Research and Dev Grants and Coop Agreements Program

Dates: Pre-proposals must be received at http://www.Grants.gov under the competition link named “PRE PROPOSALS FY21 Saltonstall-Kennedy”, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Time, August 07, 2020, 60 days after the posting date of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Within 45 days of the pre-proposal due date, NOAA will inform the authorized representatives if the Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) Program encourages or does not encourage submission of a full proposal. It will be the responsibility of the authorized representative to forward notification to the Principal Investigator(s). Regardless of whether you are encouraged or not encouraged, all those who submit accepted pre-proposals and meet all requirements are eligible to submit full proposals.

NOTE: Only the Authorized Representative listed on the application will receive status notifications on any pre-proposal and full proposal should one be submitted. It will be the responsibility of the Authorized representative to forward any notification received to others within the project team, including the Principal Investigator.

Full Applications must be received by http://www.Grants.gov under the competition link named “FULL Proposals FY21 Saltonstall-Kennedy”, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Time, November 20, 2020, 165 days after the posting date of the NFO. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

When developing your full application submission timeline, please keep in mind that you are encouraged to apply through the www.grants.gov website. This electronic submission system is relatively complex for first time users and involves several preliminary registrations to be completed before your application can be submitted. If you have already used the Grants.gov website, the required registrations may have already been completed. Please allow sufficient time for the application to be submitted electronically and for possible computer delays.

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. Applications not adhering to postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected and destroyed.

NOTE: Under this one solicitation there are two (2) competition links. Please be sure to submit your pre-proposals to the “PRE PROPOSALS FY21 Saltonstall-Kennedy” link within the dates specified in this NOFO. FULL Proposals must be submitted to the “FULL Proposals FY21 Saltonstall-Kennedy” link prior to the date specified in this NOFO.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Saltonstall-Kennedy Act established a fund (known as the S-K fund) used by the Secretary of Commerce to provide grants or cooperative agreements for fisheries research and development projects addressing aspects of U.S. fisheries, including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing, marketing, and associated business infrastructures (see section IV, F; Funding Restrictions). Under this authority, grants and cooperative agreements are made on a competitive basis (subject to availability of funding) to assist in carrying out projects to expand domestic and foreign markets related to U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries.

The term “fisheries” encompasses wild capture, marine aquaculture and recreational fishing. The objective of the S-K Research and Development Program, referred to throughout this document as the S-K Program, is to address the needs of the fisheries and fishing communities in optimizing economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries and practices, dealing with the impacts of conservation and management measures, and increasing other opportunities to use existing infrastructure to support keeping working waterfronts viable. U.S. fisheries include any fishery, commercial or recreational, that is, or may be, engaged in by citizens or nationals of the United States or other eligible applicants.

Proposals submitted to this competition must address at least one of the following priorities: Promotion, Development, and Marketing; Science or Technology that Promotes Sustainable U.S. Seafood Production and Harvesting. This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) includes information on application and criteria for research proposals requesting a maximum of

$300,000 in Federal funding for up to a two-year period. Matching funds are not required, nor will they be considered during the evaluation process. Awards are anticipated to start no earlier than September 1, 2021.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The objectives of the S-K Program and, therefore, the funding priorities for the S-K Grant Competition, have changed over the years since the program began in 1980. The program has evolved as Federal fishery management laws and policies and research needs have evolved in response to changing circumstances.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires us to undertake efforts to prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished fisheries, insure conservation, minimize by-catch, protect essential fish habitats, and realize the full potential of U.S. fishery resources. It further requires that we take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities; provide for the sustained participation of such communities; and, to the extent possible, minimize the adverse economic impacts of conservation and management measures on such communities.

The objective of the S-K Program is to address the needs of fishing communities in optimizing economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries and practices, dealing with the impacts of conservation and management measures, and increasing other opportunities to keep working waterfronts viable.

NMFS seeks applications that demonstrate direct benefits to the U.S. fishing industries and applications which involve fishing community participation aimed at helping fishing communities to resolve issues that affect their ability to fish; making full use of those species that are currently under Federal or state fishery management plans; and addressing the socioeconomic impacts of overfishing and overcapacity. U.S. fisheries include any fishery, commercial or recreational, that is, or may be, engaged in by citizens or nationals of the United States or other eligible applicants.The S-K Grant Competition is open to applicants from a variety of sectors, including individuals, industry, academia, and state and local governments.

B. Program Priorities

Applications may address one or more of the two priorities listed below. However, a singular research priority that most closely reflects the objectives of your proposal must be identified and will be used by NMFS for review purposes. These priorities are aimed at

promoting and developing United States fisheries through advancing the economic vitality of

the fishing industry and fishery working waterfront communities, rebuilding fish stocks, and maintaining and restoring healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems for the long-term benefit of the public.

Solicitation Priorities:

Priority #1 – Promotion, Development, and Marketing

Projects sought should:

- Promote better business practices to increase market demand for, and value-added of, U.S. commercial and recreational fish species.

- Develop collaborative and improved regional, national, and global public relations and marketing opportunities that can position the U.S. seafood industry to increase domestic production and better compete in global markets.

- Include marketing strategies which involve participation of the seafood industry locally, regionally, or nationally.

Priority #2- Science or Technology that Promotes Sustainable U.S. Seafood Production and Harvesting

Projects sought should:

- Directly impact fisheries (to include commercial, recreational, wild capture, and aquaculture) through the development of science and technology based projects that lead to the strengthening of existing, or the creation of new markets and opportunities in U.S. fishing communities.

- Demonstrate a direct need or benefit to the fishing community that connects all segments of the fisheries supply chain from growing/harvesting to processing and marketing.

- Include, within the scope of the project, participation of the seafood industry and/or fishing community.

C. Program Authority

Authority for the Saltonstall-Kennedy Program is provided under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act, as amended (15 U.S.C. 713c-3).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Grant awards are dependent on the availability of Federal funding as provided in enacted Appropriations Acts. This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is being released prior to final appropriations due to award process time frames. While the FY 2021 President's budget proposed $0 for this program, final Congressional direction has not been determined. Applicants are not guaranteed any level of funding.

Project proposals requesting less than $25,000 or greater than $300,000 in federal funding, will not be accepted or reviewed. The number of awards made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for each project, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and the amount of funds made available to the S-K Program. There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by the same applicant during this competitive solicitation; however, multiple applications submitted by the same applicant must clearly identify different projects, and each application will be rated individually in the competitive review process. If you have several projects that you are seeking funding for, submit a separate application for each project; do not consolidate several projects into one application.

B. Project/Award Period

We will award grants or cooperative agreements for a maximum period of two years (24 months), but shorter term project proposals are welcomed.

Applications beyond this 24 month duration will not be considered. The requested award start date must begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month. The earliest start date for projects will be September 1, 2021, dependent upon availability of Federal funding as provided by Congress, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including National Environmental Policy Act analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument (grant or cooperative agreement) will be determined by the NOAA Grants Office. 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 among the recipient and NOAA. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations, between the applicant's Authorized Representative and NOAA/NMFS representatives.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

You are eligible to apply for a grant or a cooperative agreement under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Competition if:

1. You are a citizen or national of the United States;
2. You represent an entity that is a corporation, partnership, association, or other non-Federal entity, non-profit or otherwise (including Indian tribes), if such entity is a citizen of the United States within the meaning of section 2 of the Shipping Act, 1916, as amended (46 U.S.C. app. 802); or
3. You are a citizen of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, or the States of Micronesia.

We recognize the interest of the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior in defining appropriate fisheries policies and programs that meet the needs of the U.S. insular areas, so we encourage applications from individuals, government entities, and businesses in U.S. insular areas. We support cultural and gender diversity in our programs and encourage women and minority individuals and groups to submit applications. We are also committed to broadening the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), which include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities, in our grant programs. To find out more about MSIs go to http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html.

We encourage applications from members of the fishing community and applications that involve fishing community cooperation and participation. We will consider the extent of fishing community involvement when evaluating the potential benefit of funding a proposal.

Eligible Applicants must submit a pre-proposal that meets the submission requirements

listed in this NOFO by the established due date. Full proposals will not be reviewed or evaluated if a pre-proposal was not received on time and ranked.

Non Eligible Applicants

You are not eligible to submit an application under this program if you are an employee of any Federal agency; a Regional Fishery Management Council (Council); or an employee of a Council. However, Council members who are not Federal employees can submit an application to the S-K Grant Competition.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or matching is required. The S-K Act, as amended, does not require that you share in the total cost of the project. Cost sharing is voluntary and will not increase the chances of your project being selected. If you choose to cost-share and if your application is selected for funding, you will be obligated to account for the amount of cost-share dollars reflected in the award documents, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. This commitment of matching dollars becomes a binding offer. If project costs are shared, NMFS must provide at least 50 percent of total project costs.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive funding under this competition; however, Federal scientists can serve as uncompensated partners on proposals. Should you wish to partner with a Federal agency, a written agreement detailing this participation must be provided. The agreement should describe any planning, scheduling, conducting, and analyzing of proposed project activities or work to be conducted by a Federal employee, and/or resources provided by the partnering agency, e.g. equipment or lab space.

Infrastructure (see section IV, F; Funding Restrictions).

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

For the full application, the standard application package, consisting of the standard forms, i.e., SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at http://www.grants.gov.

If an applicant has problems with Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-

800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. If you do not have Internet access, a pre-proposal or full proposal application package may be received by contacting Clifford Cosgrove, S-K Program Manager, NOAA/NMFS (F/MB); 1315 East-West Highway, Room 14321, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282, Phone: (301) 427-8736, or email: clifford.cosgrove@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Format requirements for both pre-proposals and full proposals: All application materials should be submitted in Adobe PDF or a common word processing format, and when printed out should meet all format requirements. All pages must be no less than single-spaced printed or typed, in at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins. If these requirements are not followed, the pre-proposal or full proposal will be withdrawn without consideration.

Pre-proposals should be submitted through Grants.gov. The SF-424 must be filled out and signed as part of the grants.gov pre-proposal submittal. Though the SF-424 form allows for additional attachments, do not use this function. Pre- proposals may only have an SF-424 form as a cover page, and a separate 2-page pre- proposal narrative. If these requirements are not followed the pre-proposal will be withdrawn without consideration.

Pre-proposal Format

The pre-proposal process is intended to provide an indication to potential applicants of the technical merit and the relevancy of the proposed project to the S-K Program before preparing a full proposal. The intent is to reduce the burden of preparing full proposals that do not have a high probability for being funded. When drafting a pre-proposal, applicants should clearly convey how your proposed project meets the four evaluation criteria and the identified single priority area. Late or incomplete pre-proposals, as well as those that deviate from content or format requirements, will be withdrawn without consideration.

Federal employees are not allowed to assist in the preparation of pre-proposals. However, they may provide you with information on program goals, funding priorities, and pre-proposal application procedures. Because this is a competitive program, Federal employees will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring pre-proposals.

The SF-424 form will serve as the cover page for the 2-page pre-proposal. Each pre-proposal may not exceed two pages, single-spaced, and may not include any other attachments or links embedded within the two page narrative.

The pre-proposal narrative must be submitted using the format described above and must provide:

a. Name of organization, Title of project, and Principal Investigator(s), with email contact(s).

b. Priority: Applicants must identify the single priority that is most addressed by the pre-proposal. If more than one priority is addressed by the proposal, one priority must be identified as the primary. The primary priority will dictate the type of subject matter expert used to evaluate your pre-proposal. If one is not identified, a priority will be identified for you.

c. Background section that sets the stage for the work and identifies which one of the priorities in Section I.B the pre-proposal addresses directly.

d. Rationale of why the work should be conducted and how it is relevant to the S-K Program.

e. Clear statement of objectives and general methodology to be used.

f. Identification of required permits (i.e. ESA, MMPA) and permit numbers, if applicable.

g. Estimated budget amount (a detailed budget narrative is not required).

Information contained in the pre-proposal narrative needs to provide sufficient information for reviewers to evaluate the project based on the pre-proposal evaluation criteria (see Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria)

Full Application Format

A complete standard NOAA grant application package is required in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Applications that are not complete on the closing date of this announcement will not be reviewed. Your application must contain all required documents and forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they MUST be signed in ink. Paper applications without inked signatures on their forms will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed. The Authorized Representative MUST sign and date these forms in the space reserved for electronic signature. Signatures (electronic or ink) must match the name printed in the “Authorized Representative” section of the SF-424

Block 21. Another Authorized Representative may not sign on behalf of the individual noted in Block 21. An incomplete application or one that does not follow the format requirements will not be considered and will be withdrawn from the competition.

Each application must include (listed below are minimum requirements that must be included in the proposal submission. If any of these are not included the proposal will not be considered and will be withdrawn from the competition):

- An identified singular research priority that most closely reflects the objectives of your proposal. If more than one priority is addressed by the proposal, one priority must be identified as the primary. The primary priority will dictate the type of subject matter expert used to evaluate your proposal. If one is not identified, a priority will be identified for you.

- Federal application forms, including:

o SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. Applicants must enter the NOAA assigned pre-proposal number in box 5b.

o SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-construction Programs must be completed. Indicate any matching funds, if applicable.

o SF-424B, Assurances - Non-construction Programs must be completed for each submitted non-construction application.

o CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.

o SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).

- Data Sharing Plan

- A Project Summary (described below, limit 2 pages).

- A Project Narrative (described below, limit 20 pages)

- A Budget Narrative (described below).

Each application should (should to mean recommended but not required) also include:

- NOAA NEPA Questionnaire (https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf). It is recommended that you pay attention to responding to Questions 1-19 and 20-37, the latter of which are specific to NMFS project submissions. Note: It is strongly recommended that applicants complete this questionnaire when initially submitting a full proposal application.

- Other Supporting Documentation and relevant attachments the applicant deems important to the overall understanding and evaluation of the proposed project [such as references, curricula vitae (not to exceed two pages each), letters of collaboration received from the relevant partners or communities involved in the project, etc. (combined into one PDF document)], which does not count against the 20-page limit for the Project Narrative.

Note: Letters of support will not be accepted during the review process. Letters of support are letters stating support of the project from individuals or entities that do not have direct involvement in the project.

- An image that may be used on the NOAA S-K Program website along with the project description should the project receive funding. Please do not send copyrighted images or images of vessels with the vessel name readable. If no image is received and the project is funded NMFS reserves the right to select a picture to post on the NOAA S-K Program website along with the project description.

Content Requirements:

A. Project Summary

It is critical that the project summary accurately describe the project being proposed and convey all essential elements of the project for public dissemination.

Provide a summary of the proposed project (two page maximum). The summary must include:

- Abstract: A project abstract in plain language (limited to 200 words).

- Summary of potential commercial benefits to the fishing community of the research results (limited to 100 words).

Awardee’s abstract and summary of potential benefits will be used for reporting purposes and may be used on the NOAA S-K Program website along with the Principal Investigators contact email.

-In addition to the abstract and summary of potential benefits, each project summary should include a clear description of proposed activities including the species/resources to be addressed. It is critical the project summary accurately describes the project being proposed and conveys all essential elements of the project for public dissemination.

- Applicant Information: Applicant organization and name, title, and contact information of the Principal Investigator.

- Project Information: Project title, location, requested project period (start and end dates), Federal funding requested, and identification of the singular S-K priority that most closely reflects the objectives of your proposal.

- Partners: Identification of collaborating partners, organizations, Co-Principal Investigators, titles and contact information.

B. Project Narrative

The project narrative comprises the research plan for the project. The narrative must be detailed enough for reviewers to make a clear connection between the proposed activities and the proposed benefit to the fishing community. The major part of the narrative should be devoted to a description and justification for the proposed project, including details of the method to be used. It should include a timeline for major activities of the proposed project, and should indicate who will be responsible for which activities. There should be no ambiguity about who will perform particular parts of the project or the time at which these activities will take place. The project narrative may not exceed 20 pages. The tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations that you submit to document the project and the problem/opportunity you seek to address are included in the 20-page limit. The following do not count towards the 20-page limit: standard application forms, 2-page project summary (format requirements above), budget and justification, curricula vitae (CV) or resumes (resumes or curricula vitae, limited to two pages each), letters of collaboration, lists of permits, NEPA questionnaire, and data sharing plan.

The project narrative should closely follow the evaluation criteria outlined in this solicitation

(see Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria) for the application to receive a consistent review against competing applications. The narrative should demonstrate your knowledge of, and convey the need for the project, and show how your proposal builds upon any past and current work in the subject area, as well as relevant work in related fields. The narrative should highlight any relationship to fishery management plans, or other fishery-related strategic planning or management documents, and if the project will yield environmentally compatible socioeconomic benefits to the fishing community, such as increased business opportunities, recreational opportunities, or decreased safety hazards. You should not assume that we already know the relative merits of the project you describe. You must describe your project as follows:

1. Project goals and objectives - Identify the one specific S-K Program priority (described in Section I. B. Program Priorities) to which the proposed project responds. The primary priority will dictate the type of subject matter expert used to evaluate your proposal. Identify the problem/opportunity you intend to address and describe its significance to the fisheries resource and fishing community. Objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible; clear as to the “what and when,” but should avoid the “how and why”; and attainable within the time, money and human resources available. Projects should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific performance measurements. If you are applying to continue a project previously funded under the S-K Program, describe in detail your progress to date and explain why you need additional funding. If the proposal is for renewed support, include a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work. We will consider this information in evaluating your current application.

2. Project impacts - Describe the anticipated impacts of the project on the fisheries resource and the fishing community in terms of increased product yield, or other measurable benefits. Identify the benefits that will be achieved as a result of this effort, both to the recipient, the industry and the general public as a whole. Describe how you/your organization (or others) will monitor progress and measure the project’s impacts.

3. Evaluation of project - Specify the criteria and procedures that you will use to monitor and evaluate the relative success or failure of a project in achieving its objectives.

4. Need for government financial assistance - Explain why you need NOAA financial assistance for the proposed work, and why other funding sources, if applicable, cannot fund all the proposed work. List all other sources of funding you have or are seeking for the project.

5. Federal, state, and local government activities and permits - It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. You must note whether or not permits are required. If no permits are required, this section must indicate “no permits are required”. If permits are required, provide a list of all applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work and an indication of the status of any permits needed (e.g., not yet applied, permit application submitted/pending, permit granted, etc.) or a statement indicating that no permits are necessary. List any existing Federal, state, or local government programs or activities that this project would affect, including activities requiring: certification under state Coastal Zone Management Plans; Section 404 or Section 10 permits issued by the Corps of Engineers; exempted fishing permits, letters of authorization or other permits under Federal Fishery Management Plans (FMP); environmental impact statements to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act; scientific permits under the Endangered Species Act and/or the Marine Mammal Protection Act; or Magnuson-Stevens Act Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation if the project may adversely affect areas identified as EFH. Describe the relationship between the project and these FMPs or activities, and list names and addresses of persons providing this information. You may obtain information on these activities from the NMFS Regions (see Section VII- Agency Contacts). This section does not count towards the 20-page limitation.

6. Statement of Work

a) What is the project design? What specific work, activities, procedures, statistical design, or analytical methods will you undertake? Describe methodologies or technical plans for activities to be conducted under the project. You should provide sufficiently detailed information on the proposed activities and potential environmental effects so that NOAA can analyze the impacts of the project as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (see Section VI. B.2). The NEPA questionnaire does not count towards the 20 page limitation.

b) Who will be responsible for carrying out the various activities? Provide information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including the technical and administrative points of contact, as appropriate.

c) What are the project milestones? Display timelines for major tasks, target milestones for important immediate and final products, and key project outcomes. This includes identifying all consultation and permitting requirements and their status (e.g., not applied for, pending, secured). Describe the timelines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2), rather than by specific dates. Identify the individual(s) responsible for the various specific activities.

7. Project management - Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Describe how the necessary experience, facilities, and administrative resources are in place to successfully meet the responsibilities associated with managing a federal financial assistance award. Proposals should demonstrate the applicant organization's knowledge and experience in delivering the project requested in this application. The Principal Investigator may or may not be the applicant; however, if the applicant is not the Principal Investigator, there must be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and Principal Investigator (e.g., the applicant may be responsible for managing the grant funds and the Principal Investigator will be responsible for completing the work).

Include the resume or curriculum vitae of the Principal Investigator(s) and any consultants and/or subcontractors, and indicate their level of involvement in the project. Include copies of any agreements between you and the participants describing the specific tasks to be performed. Agreement documents, and resumes/curricula vitae (2 page maximum for each), should be included in the "Supporting Documentation". This information does not count toward the project narrative's 20 page limitation.

8. Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant - Describe how any entities other than the applicant will participate in the project, and the nature (sub-award, sub-contract, volunteer, etc.) of their participation.

9. Outreach and Education - How will this project provide a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding the results of the funded proposal? This includes the degree to which the potential users of the results, (i.e. industry or state resource managers) have been involved in the planning of activity, will be involved in the execution of the activity and/or are providing funds, and whether there is a plan to disseminate the results to user groups (including Regional Fishery Management Councils/Interstate Fisheries Management Commissions, etc.) and the public. Describe specific outreach goals and activities.

10. How will project results be disseminated? Describe any expected products of the project, such as a training manual, management plan, brochures, number of people trained, video, technique, or piece of equipment. Detail if/how products will be distributed to potential users (resource managers, researchers, other interested parties).

11. Data Sharing Plan up to 2 pages (not included in the 20-page limitation; can be submitted as an appendix).

(a.) 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.

(b.) Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Sharing Plan of up to 2 pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Sharing Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Sharing Plan, 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.

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

(d.) 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. Budget Narrative

Each application must include clear and concise budget information, both on the required Federal forms and as described here. In order for federal program officers to fully evaluate

the appropriateness of proposed costs, a budget narrative must explain and justify all Federal and non-Federal costs by object class category, as listed on the SF-424A under Section B, Budget Categories. Provide detailed narrative descriptions of all costs, and explain each calculation for all budget categories. You are encouraged to include a budget table to further clarify the cost breakdown. If applicable, briefly describe the basis for estimating the value of the cost-sharing derived from in-kind contributions. All proposed costs must be reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary to the supported activity. Additional Budget Narrative Guidance may be found at http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/training.html.

The budget narrative must include the following:

a) Personnel costs, including salary and wages, should be broken out by named Principal Investigator (PI) and number of months requested per year, per PI, as a percentage of their normal salary rate. Support for each PI should be commensurate with their stated involvement, which may or may not correspond to their current position. Any unnamed personnel such as post-doctoral researchers, technicians etc., should be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to PI personnel costs above. Funds for graduate students must comply with 2 CFR §200.466 Scholarships and student aid costs, and must be reasonable compensation for the work performed. Fringe benefits should be identified separately from salary and wages; fringe benefit rates should be applied consistently, and should apply equally to both Federal and non-Federal (matching) funds, if applicable. Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. All funds must be estimated to the nearest dollar; do not submit budgets containing cents.

b) Travel costs should be broken out by number of people traveling, destination and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Projected travel costs should be inclusive of transport costs, lodging costs, and per diem expenses for all travelers, which are to be described in detail in the budget narrative. If travel details for a particular trip are unknown, explain the basis for estimating proposed costs. To qualify for support, attendance at meetings or conferences must enhance the investigator’s capability to perform the research or disseminate its results. Domestic travel is to be justified separately from foreign travel, since the latter may require additional clearances. You must adhere to the provisions of the "Fly America Act".

c) "Equipment" is non-expendable, tangible personal property with a per unit cost of $5,000 or more and a useful life of more than one year. Items that do not meet the equipment definition must be included under supplies. List each piece of equipment separately and

reference the type/model to be purchased and its contribution to the achievement of the project goals. General use equipment must be used 100% for the proposed project if charged directly to the award; if the equipment will be used for multiple projects, only a portion of the expense that is commensurate with the actual use of the equipment during the project may be requested.

d) Supplies should be itemized to the level of detail known or may be based on established historical costs. Whenever possible, you should include the quantity/number of units and cost per unit to justify expenses listed in the supplies category.

e) Contractual costs should be itemized separately, according to standard budget categories that appear in the SF-424A; all types of contractual costs should be included in the Contractual line on the SF-424A and explained in detail in the budget narrative. You must indicate the basis for each contract cost estimate and specify the products or services to be obtained through all contracts.

f) Other costs should be listed by type of material or nature of expense (e.g. sub-award) and should be broken down by quantity/number of units and cost per unit, if applicable.

g) The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an approved indirect cost rate agreement with the Federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, and 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 costs agreement with the Federal government must be included with the application.

If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

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

D. Supporting Documentation - This section should include the supporting documentation not included in the project narrative such as: qualifications of the primary project personnel (resumes or curricula vitae, limit two pages each); agreements with key partners; and letters of collaboration received from the relevant partners, or communities involved in the project. Letters of support will not be accepted during the review process. Letters of support are letters stating support of the project from individuals or entities that do not have direct involvement in the project.

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

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/. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, which may be accessed at https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2018-title2-vol1/xml/CFR-2018-title2-vol1-part25.xml

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; 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. The Federal awarding agency 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 the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. Applicants should allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration; registration is required only once, but must be renewed periodically.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Pre-proposals must be received at http://www.Grants.gov under the competition link named “PRE PROPOSALS FY21 Saltonstall-Kennedy”, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Time, 60 days after the posting date of the NOFO. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or

another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Within 45 days of the pre-proposal due date, NOAA will inform the Authorized Representative identified on the SF-424, based upon their pre-proposal, if the S-K Program encourages or does not encourage submission of a full proposal.

Eligible Applicants must submit a pre-proposal by the date specified in the DATES section. Full proposals will not be reviewed or evaluated if a pre-proposal was not received and ranked.

Full Applications must be received by http://www.Grants.gov under the competition link named “FULL Proposals FY21 Saltonstall-Kennedy”, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Daylight Time, 165 days after the posting date of the NOFO. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

NOTE: Under this one Notice of Funding Opportunity there are two (2) competition links. Please be sure to submit your pre-proposals to the “PRE PROPOSALS FY21 Saltonstall-Kennedy” link within the dates specified in this NOFO. FULL Proposals must be submitted to the “FULL Proposals FY21 Saltonstall-Kennedy” link prior to the date specified in this NOFO.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs". Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC), established as a result of EO 12372.

F. Funding Restrictions

Projects that mainly involve infrastructure (to include personnel, buildings or equipment) development that are for the primary benefit of the applicant are not eligible for funding under the S-K Program. Such projects will be rejected from the competition with no further review.

The S-K Program will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities,

travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, travel or salaries for Federal employees, or profit as allowable costs in the proposed budget. NOAA funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Project costs can only include support for activities conducted between the effective start date and end date of the award (including any approved no-cost extensions), and cannot include activities undertaken either before or after the agreed upon dates. Applicants will not be reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award. Such expenditures may not be considered as part of the applicant's cost-share or matching contribution.

G. Other Submission Requirements

All pages must be no less than single-spaced printed or typed, in at least a 12–point font with one-inch margins on letter sized (8.5” x 11”) paper. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out. Failure to follow these requirements will result in the application being withdrawn from the competition.

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov is inaccessible, paper applications will be accepted. Paper applications must be submitted with completed, signed, inked signatures, with original forms in hard copy and an electronic copy of the entire application on a thumb drive, including scanned signed forms.

If the applicant has completed the entire application in Grants.gov but is unable to submit via Grants.gov, the application package should be provided via thumb drive along with printed and signed versions of forms SF-424, SF-424B, and CD-511. The Authorized Representative MUST sign and date these forms in the space reserved for electronic signature. Signatures (electronic or ink) must match the name printed in the “Authorized Representative” section of the SF-424 Block 21. Another Authorized Representative may not sign on behalf of the individual noted in Block 21. Paper applications should not be bound in any manner.

All pre-proposals should be submitted through www.grants.gov. The Pre-proposal package is comprised only of the SF-424 and the 2-page pre-proposal. If you do not have Internet access, a pre-proposal application package may be submitted to Clifford Cosgrove, S-K Program Manager, NOAA/NMFS (F/MB); 1315 East-West Highway, Room 14321, Silver

Spring, MD 20910-3282.

Full Applications should be submitted through www.grants.gov. If you do not have Internet access, a full application package may be submitted to Clifford Cosgrove, S-K Program Manager, NOAA/NMFS (F/MB); 1315 East-West Highway, Room 14321, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282.

Registration Process

1. Required registrations: You must complete and maintain the following free registrations to be eligible to submit an application using the Grants.Gov website. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. Registration can take between 3 days to 4 weeks or more, so applicants should begin the registration process as early as possible.

(a) Grants.Gov: The first step in submitting an application online is to complete a one-time registration process. Individuals wishing to submit a grant application, using Grants.gov, are required to complete this one-time registration process. Neither a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number nor the System for Award Management (SAM) registration is necessary for Individual Registration.

(b) Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) - All Applicant Organizations (optional for Individual Applicants) must be issued a DUNS number. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit identification number provided by Dun and Bradstreet. It will be used as the Universal Identifier when applying for Federal awards or cooperative agreements. You may request a DUNS number by calling 1-866-705-5711 (toll free) or through the Internet at
http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.

(c) System for Award Management (SAM) – All Applicant Organizations (optional for Individual Applicants) must complete and maintain an active registration. New registrations take an average of fourteen (14) business days. The renewal process may require as much time as the initial registration. SAM registration includes the assignment of a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code for domestic organizations which have not already been assigned a CAGE Code. To register, go to: http://www.SAM.gov.

You must renew and revalidate your entity’s registration at least every 12 months from the date you last certified to and submitted the registration in SAM - and sooner, if your entity’s information changes. The primary point of contact's email address will receive a message

alerting them to the entity's/entities' renewal requirements at 60 days, 30 days and 15 days prior to expiration. If you do not renew your registration, it will expire. You must have an active SAM registration in order to be eligible to receive contract awards or payments, submit assistance award applications via Grants.gov, or receive certain payments from some federal government agencies.

2. Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days to establish. Please plan your time accordingly to avoid late submissions, as such submissions will be rejected. The Grants.gov validation process for a submitted application can take up to two business days to complete (following submission through Grants.gov). Only validated applications are sent to NOAA to review. To ensure successful submission of an application, it is strongly recommended that a final and complete application be submitted at least two business days prior to the submission deadline.

After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic acknowledgment of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by NOAA.) Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt; the second confirms that there are no errors with an application submission; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). You should save and print the proof of submission. If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with both the Grants.gov help desk and the S-K Program Manager Clifford Cosgrove to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support number.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

A. Evaluation Criteria

Pre-Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to pre-proposals ranging from 0-40 points based on the following four evaluation criteria, which need to be addressed in the pre-proposal.

1) How well the proposal addresses the needs of the fishing community/communities.

Does the project demonstrate direct benefits to U.S. fisheries?

2) Approach and methodology (realistic and timely objectives and appropriate design).

Does the proposal provide a clear description of the approach to be used? Is the conceptual framework appropriate to the aims of the project? Are the objectives in the proposal realistic, and can they be reached within the proposed project period?

3) How relevant the proposed project is to the S-K priority it is applying for.

Does the proposal describe its relevance to a S-K priority described in section B? Does this study address an important problem, providing a clear definition of the problem, need, issue or research need to be addressed?

4) Involvement/collaboration with the fishing community, industry, or other stakeholders.

Is participation of the fishing community (recreational, commercial or both) meaningfully incorporated into the project design?

The maximum score for each criterion is 10 points, for a total of 40 points.
The scoring for each criterion should be similar to an academic grading scale where 0-2=F; 3-4=D; 5-6=C; 7-8=B; 9-10=A;

Scoring will be determined by subject matter experts providing scores based upon receiving up to ten points for meeting each of the provided criteria. The S-K Research Program will review the complete set of pre-proposals and consider the merit ranking and relevance to determine whether to ‘encourage’ or ‘not encourage’ full proposals.

Full Application Evaluation Criteria:

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 points based on the following five evaluation criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors the reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets the criterion. We encourage applicants to make explicit connections to the evaluation criterion and factors in their applications. Written comments are required to justify provided scores in each section of the review. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive. Score ranges are identified for each evaluation criteria below. Top range scores indicate the application fully addressed the criterion, a score of 0 indicates the criterion was not addressed at all.

The summed scores of the five evaluation criterion determine the total score. The final numerical score should be similar to an academic grading scale where; 0-59=F; 60-69=D; 70-79=C; 80-89=B; 90-100=A.

1. Importance and applicability of the proposed project(s) to the S-K priority being applied for and relevance to S-K Program goals (0 points - 30 points). This criterion assesses how well the proposal describes its relevance to a S-K Program Priority in Section B and how information gathered will contribute to the S-K goal of addressing the needs of the fishing communities in optimizing economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries and practices.

Is the participation of the fishing community/industry meaningfully incorporated into the project design? Does this study address an important problem, providing a clear definition of the problem, need, issue or research need to be addressed? Will the project(s) yield environmentally compatible socioeconomic benefits, such as increased business opportunities, recreational opportunities, or decreased safety hazards?

2. Approach and Methodology (0 points - 30 points). This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

Proposals should provide a clear definition of the approach or market strategy to be used, including, when applicable, descriptions of field work, theoretical studies, and laboratory analysis to support the proposed research. Does the project demonstrate support, cooperation and/or collaboration with the fishing industry? Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Are the objectives in the proposal clearly defined and focused, realistic and can be reached within the proposed project period? Can the research question be answered using existing data? If not, what are the alternatives to obtain the data? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider ways to resolve the issues or implement alternative methods, approaches or tactics? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies, markets or technologies? Is sufficient detail provided in the proposal about the methods proposed for monitoring and evaluating the success of the project, and are they appropriate? Is there sufficient description of the project’s environmental impact? Have permits been applied for or acquired? Are the costs for the project clearly defined?

3. Overall qualifications of the team (0 points - 10 points). This criterion assesses whether

the team members possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project and meet the responsibilities associated with managing a Federal financial assistance award.

Does the applicant have the capacity/knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners, that shows adequate administrative capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the proposed project? Does the proposal include resumes of the principal investigator(s)? In cases where sub-contracts/sub-awards are proposed for carrying out specific tasks, are the quality/appropriateness of the personnel, facilities and procedures (laboratory methods, work plan and or quality oversight procedures) adequate?

4. Anticipated impacts of results (0 points - 20 points). This criterion evaluates what the potential impact and/or benefit will be to the fishing community.

Does the proposal adequately describe the potential impact and/or benefit to be achieved? How is this benefit and/or impact determined? How much of an impact and/or benefit is expected to be achieved by the project? Can a reasonable cost/benefit comparison be applied? Does the project demonstrate that a significant benefit will be generated at a reasonable cost?

5. Outreach and education (0 points - 10 points). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy.

Does the proposal identify anticipated benefits, potential users, indicators of success, and methods of disseminating results? Is an effective method proposed for dissemination of project results given the nature of the work? Depending upon the project, outreach and education may include peer reviewed publications, presentations at professional meetings, brochure development, public meetings, or distribution of project results to appropriate managers or management agencies. Is the outreach/education component appropriate for the type and nature of the proposal, and is it expected to be effective? Are the various target audiences, such as the fishing community or the general public, identified? Will the outreach methods acknowledge NOAA Fisheries' support of the project? Does the Data Information Sharing Plan include a description of the types of environmental data and information 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, sharing and security; and

prior experience in publishing such?

B. Review and Selection Process

This will be a two-stage competition with pre-proposals and full proposals. At both stages, an administrative review will be conducted by NOAA to determine compliance with requirements, completeness of the application, and responsiveness to this NOFO and programmatic priorities.

Encouragement of pre-proposals is based primarily on how well the proposal addresses the four evaluation criteria located in section “A. Evaluation Criteria”.

Scoring will be determined by subject matter experts providing scores, based upon receiving up to ten points for meeting each of the provided criterion. The S-K Program will review the complete set of pre-proposals and consider the merit ranking and relevance to determine whether to ‘encourage’ or ‘not encourage’ full proposals. Applicants are allowed to make changes to their full proposal that address input received on the corresponding pre- proposal.

A summary statement will only be provided to the Authorized Representative listed on the SF-424 submitted for a pre-proposal, stating whether their pre-proposal was complete and timely and whether a full proposal is ‘encouraged’ or ‘not encouraged’ for the full proposal stage. It will be the responsibility of the Authorized Representative to forward notification to the Principal Investigator(s). Regardless of whether you are encouraged or not encouraged, all those who submit accepted pre-proposals and meet all requirements are eligible to submit full proposals.

Full Proposal Review and Selection

1. Initial Screening - An initial administrative review will be conducted on each application to determine compliance with application requirements and completeness of application materials, and to ensure a pre-proposal was submitted by the due date. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete or non-responsive will not be considered and will be withdrawn.

When applications are received they will be screened to ensure they were received by the deadline date (see Section IV. C. Submission Dates and Times); the applicant is eligible to apply; the proposed project addresses one of the funding priorities; and includes a project summary with an abstract and summary of potential benefits, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B, Content and Form of Application. We do not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order

to identify deficiencies that would cause your application to be rejected so that you would have an opportunity to correct them. However, should we do so and provide you information about deficiencies, or should you independently decide it is desirable to do so, you may correct any deficiencies in your application before the deadline. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it. If your application does not conform to the requirements listed above, and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will not be considered and will be withdrawn.

2. Technical Review - After the initial screening, independent written technical evaluations from three or more appropriate Federal, private or public sector experts (e.g. industry, academia, or governmental experts) with subject matter expertise will be obtained to determine the technical merit of the proposal. Their evaluation will be based solely on the information included in the application, based on the criteria described in Section V. A, Evaluation Criteria. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. No consensus advice will be given. These reviewers will be required to certify they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the application(s) they are reviewing. NOAA will protect technical reviewer identity to the maximum extent permitted by law. Following completion of the technical review, the individual technical review scores will be averaged to determine the final technical score for each application. Applications will be ranked in descending order by their final technical scores.

Note: All encouraged Pre-proposal applicants and applicants who submit a Full Proposal will receive reviewer comments. If you submitted a Pre-proposal that was not encouraged and would like to receive the reviewer comments please contact the appropriate Regional S-K Program point of contact listed in Section VII.

A “cutoff" score will be established. Applications that scored below the cutoff will be eliminated from further consideration.

Applications above the cutoff score will move to panel in the rank order unless a proposal is justified to be forwarded to panel out of rank order (see Section C: Selection Factors).

3. Constituent Panel Review - For those applications at or above the cutoff technical evaluation score, NMFS may solicit individual comments and evaluations from a panel or panels of three or more representatives selected by NOAA. Panel members will be chosen from the fishing industry, state government, non-government organizations, and others, as appropriate. The panelists’ role is to enhance the Agency's understanding of this select group of proposals received under the competition, prior to recommendations for selections being made. Should Constituent Panel Review(s) be conducted, panelists will be provided with the

applications, and for applications to continue a previously funded project, information on progress on the funded work to date.

Each panelist will evaluate, in a group setting (meeting or webinar), the applications in terms of the significance of the problem or opportunity being addressed, the degree to which the project involves collaboration with fishing community members and other appropriate collaborators, proposed means to disseminate project results, and benefits (industry, resource, economic) derived from investment in the project. Prior to the panel discussion, each member of the panel will independently assign a numerical rating between 1.0 and 5.0 (poor to excellent) for each application according to the following scale, and provide comments to support their score.

1 – Poor; application was marginally responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V. A) but did not address program priorities outlined in the NOFO.

2 – Fair; application was adequately responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V. A) and marginally addressed program priorities outlined in the NOFO.

3 – Good; application was strongly responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V. A) and partially addressed program priorities outlined in the NOFO.

4 – Very Good; application was frequently responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V.A) and satisfactorily addressed program priorities outlined in the NOFO.

5– Exceptional; application was highly responsive to the evaluation criteria (Section V. A) and exceptionally addressed program priorities outlined in the NOFO.

Panel members will be required to certify they do not have a conflict of interest and that they will maintain confidentiality of the panel deliberations. NOAA will protect panelist identity to the maximum extent permitted by law.

During the Panel (in-person or virtually), reviewers can revise their scores and comments. Panelists must individually submit their final score to the S-K Program Manager by the end of the panel meeting. No consensus advice will be given by the Panelists on recommendations or scores. After the panel scores are submitted, a compilation of all proposals in rank order will be developed based on the average score from the constituent review panel.

4. Funding Recommendations

Technical Review Only - The S-K Program Manager, in consultation with the NMFS Regional Administrators (RAs) and Office Directors (ODs) and Science Center Directors (SDs), will develop a recommendation for project funding for those Applications that scored above the cutoff score.

Constituent Panel Review (if applicable) - The S-K Program Manager will use the constituent panel ranking and review comments along with input from the NMFS Regional Administrators (RAs), Science Center Directors (SD), and Office Directors (ODs), to develop a recommendation for project funding.

Not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities, as appropriate. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be required to modify objectives, work plans and budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. Awards are not necessarily made to the highest ranked applications.

C. Selection Factors

The AA, as the Selecting Official, will review the funding recommendation and comments of the RAs/ODs/SDs and, where appropriate, the Fisheries Management Council Executive Directors to determine which applications will be recommended to the NOAA Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall recommend proposals to the Grants Officer for funding in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors listed, in no order of significance:

1. Availability of funding;

2. Balance and distribution of funds;

a. By research area;
b. By project type;
c. By type of Applicant;
d. By type of partners; or
e. Geographic distribution;

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

4. Program priorities as noted in Section I A. & B;

5. Applicant's prior award performance in conducting a previous award, such as the applicant’s use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions.

6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups; and

7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications being considered for funding are expected to be complete by May of 2021. The earliest start date for projects will be September 1, 2021, dependent upon availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive notification from a NMFS Regional representative that the application has been recommended for funding selection to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project, and it is not a guarantee of funding. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. This notification will be issued to the Authorized Representative of the project either electronically through use of Grants Online or in hard copy. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until the Applicant’s Authorized Representative has received official notice of the award from the NOAA Grants Officer and has reviewed and accepted the terms of the award. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified their proposal was not recommended for funding or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in IV.B (Content and Form of Applications). Unselected paper applications will be destroyed.

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an 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.

Award documents provided by the Grants Officer may contain specific award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements. These specific award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award, as applicable, and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award so they are fully aware of the relevant Standard Terms and Conditions as well as any Specific Award Conditions that have been placed on the award.

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 and may be accessed online at https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Administrative Requirements - Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the Department of Commerce and NOAA Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at http://www.ago.noaa.gov and at http://go.usa.gov/hKbj. In addition, award documents provided by the NOAA grants office though the Grants Online award package may contain program-specific award conditions.

2. NEPA Requirements - NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA notice of 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.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf. 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).

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 will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. 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.

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approval for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposed activities to minimize the potential for adverse impacts to the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests for, or approval of required environmental permits should be included in the application package. Applications will be reviewed to ensure they contain sufficient information to allow NOAA staff to conduct a NEPA analysis so that appropriate NEPA documentation, required as part of the application package, can be submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division along with the recommendation for funding for selected applications.

Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact must furnish information requested to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

3. 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 the amount of funds has not yet been determined for the S-K Program described in this notice and are advised that the competition described herein may be subject to cancellation due to unavailability of funding or revision of agency priorities. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award funding for specific projects or obligate available funds. You should not initiate your project in expectation of Federal funding until you receive a grant award document signed by an authorized NOAA official. If you incur any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, you do so solely at your own risk. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

4. Paperwork Reduction Act - This collection of information contains requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SFLLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0040, 0348-0044, 0348-0043, 0348-0046 and 0605-0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

5. Administrative Procedure Act/Regulatory Flexibility Act - Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required by the Administrative Procedure Act or any other law for rules concerning public property, loans, grants, benefits, and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comments are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared, and none will be prepared. It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

6. Executive Order 12866 - It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

7. Review of Risk - After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, 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.

8. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, And Audit Requirements - Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4.

9. 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.

10. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

11. DOC Terms and Conditions - Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/ and at http://go.usa.gov/hKbj.

C. Reporting

1. Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. Financial Status Reports (SF-425) are required to be submitted to the Grants Officer semi-annually, or as outlined in the award conditions. Financial Status Reports should be entered directly into the Grants Online system.

2. 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 subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at https://www.fsrs.gov/ on all sub-awards over $25,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

3. Performance Progress Reports – Recipients must complete Performance Progress Reports directly in Grants Online using the formatted template for Research Performance Progress Reports provided in Grants Online.

The final report is a public document and may be posted, partially or in its entirety, on the NOAA Fisheries S-K Program website along with the Project Abstract, Summary of Potential Benefits and the Principal Investigator, including the Principal Investigator email contact information.

VII. Agency Contacts

Regional S-K Program point of contacts:

Headquarters - Program Manager – Kim Raneses, (206) 669-4151; email: Kim.Raneses@noaa.gov,

Alaska Region: Shawn Carey, telephone: (907) 586-7845; email: Shawn.Carey@noaa.gov;
Greater Atlantic Region: Nicole MacDonald, telephone (978) 281-9299; email: Nicole.MacDonald@noaa.gov;
Pacific Islands Region: Scott Bloom, telephone: (808) 725-5055; email: Scott.Bloom@noaa.gov,
Southeast Region: Kim Raneses, telephone: (206) 669-4151; email: Kim.Raneses@noaa.gov
West Coast Region: Sheryl Robinson, telephone: (503) 230- 5421; email: sheryl.robinson@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552) generally provides that any person has a right of access to Federal agency records, except to the extent that such records (or portions thereof) are protected from disclosure by exemptions. The DOC regulations implementing the FOIA are found at Subpart A of 15 CFR Part 4 (Disclosure of Government Information) which sets forth rules for DOC and operating units to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. Unless prohibited by law and to the extent permitted under the FOIA, contents of applications and proposals submitted by successful applicants may be released in response to FOIA requests. In addition, 2 CFR § 200.315 (Intangible property) requires that research data relating to published research findings produced under an award that were used by the Federal Government in developing an agency action that has the force and effect of law will be made available to the public through the procedures established under the FOIA.

Funded applications submitted in response to this NOFO may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information, which is exempt from disclosure

under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.