2019 Partnerships for Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery and Conservation

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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: 2019 Partnerships for Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery and Conservation

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-PIRO-2019-2005826

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

Dates: Proposals must be received by http://www.Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., Hawaii Standard Time, on December 21, 2018. 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 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. 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. Applications not adhering to postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected and returned to the sender without further consideration.

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Marine Fisheries Service (hereinafter, "NMFS") is soliciting competitive applications for the fiscal year 2019 Partnerships for Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery and Conservation. Projects are being solicited to support specific programmatic activities related to the following two priorities:

Priority 1: Conducting outreach and monitoring efforts at seal haul-out locations and providing support for monk seal health and safety responses. Priority 1 projects can occur within Maui,

Lanai, Molokai, Hawaii Island or Oahu.

Priority 2: Addressing management strategies outlined in the Main Hawaiian Islands Monk Seal Management Plan. Priority 2 projects can occur within the entire Main Hawaiian Islands (Maui, Lanai, Molokai, Hawaii Island, Kauai, or Oahu).

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NMFS is soliciting competitive proposals for grants and cooperative agreements that will support specific programmatic activities (including education and outreach projects) related to Hawaiian monk seal recovery and conservation. Total available funding under this notice is not anticipated to exceed $310,000. Applicants will be selected by NMFS on a competitive basis as outlined in this announcement.

B. Program Priorities

Applicants should ensure that proposals address one (1) of the two (2) stated priorities, which are listed in no particular rank order of preference (i.e., no one factor carrying a higher priority than any another). The application should clearly identify which priority it falls within on the title page of the application.

Priority 1: Conducting outreach and monitoring efforts at seal haul-out locations and providing support for monk seal health and safety responses. Priority 1 projects can occur within Maui, Lanai, Molokai, Hawaii Island or Oahu.

Projects under priority 1 should focus on community engagement and capacity-building projects designed to achieve the following outcomes:

A) Field response programs to reduce adverse human-seal interactions associated with monk seal haul-outs and pupping events and provide to NMFS seal sighting and incident reports. Proposals must clearly outline and demonstrate capacity to:
• Independently receive, vet, and document all monk seal sighting and incident reports via NMFS hotlines and other sources.
• Immediately and accurately refer to NMFS all reports involving possible seal injuries, alleged legal violations and other situations requiring direct NMFS staff engagement.
• Dispatch project personnel, including project volunteers and local community members to rapidly assess monk seal sighting and incident reports and provide NMFS with timely initial situational assessment information.
• Dispatch project personnel, including volunteers and local community members, to provide on-scene presence at haul-outs or pupping events to reduce adverse interactions between the public and monk seals via community-appropriate outreach activities and minimal use of temporary signage and light fencing materials.

• Develop and maintain personnel and resource capacity sufficient for comprehensive program management and administration, including internal policies and procedures for personnel safety, regulatory compliance, public relations, information management, and volunteer recruitment, retention, training, and performance evaluation.
• Use branding elements (personnel uniforms, vehicle marking, etc.) that are unique to the project and clearly distinguish the project, its personnel, and assets from NOAA and other government personnel and assets.
B) An Effective communication strategy targeting specific target audiences (e.g., beach and ocean users, visitors, tour companies, shoreline property managers, etc.) to improve awareness and understanding of Hawaiian monk seal biology, endangered species status, and recovery issues and opportunities, including:
• Monk seal haul-out and pupping.
• Community stewardship of monk seals.
• Promotion of appropriate wildlife viewing behaviors.
• Conducting the above in close collaboration with the NMFS Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Program and partners, including other grantees, community stakeholders, and state and local government agencies, and consistent with the following two plans; NMFS Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Plan (2007), (https://go.usa.gov/xPjNH), and Main Hawaiian Islands Monk Seal Management Plan (2015), (https://go.usa.gov/xPjNF).

Priority 2: Addressing management strategies outlined in the Main Hawaiian Islands Monk Seal Management Plan. Priority 2 projects can occur within the entire Main Hawaiian Islands (Maui, Lanai, Molokai, Hawaii Island, Kauai, or Oahu).

The MHI Plan was developed to guide conservation and recovery of the Hawaiian monk seal given the unique management challenges faced in main islands. The plan is available at: https://go.usa.gov/xPjNF. Six management strategies are outlined in the plan along with objectives and major activities necessary to achieve each objective. While the MHI Plan was developed by NOAA Fisheries and many of the listed activities and outcomes describe NOAA's intended efforts, the Plan was also intended to provide guidance and inspiration for partners and potential cooperators interested in facilitating monk seal conservation and recovery. Projects under priority 2 should focus on community engagement and capacity-building designed to achieve one or more of the following four strategies within the MHI Plan:

1. Health: Reduce disease-related mortality.
2. Fishery Partnerships: Reduce monk seal-fishery interactions through engagement, outreach, and prevention.
3. Engagement: Engage communities and build positive relationships.

4. Education: Increase effective education and outreach.

C. Program Authority

Authority 16 U.S.C. §661

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total funding available under this notice is not anticipated to exceed $310,000. Actual funding availability for this program is contingent upon FY 2019 Federal appropriations. The maximum funding per project is dependent on priority area.

PRIORITY 1: Total funding for Priority 1 is not anticipated to exceed $250,000. Proposals are not to exceed $125,000 per project. If a multi-year project is proposed, funding can be no more than $125,000 per project year, up to 39 months.

PRIORITY 2: Total funding for Priority 2 is not anticipated to exceed $60,000. Proposals are limited to $15,000 per project. If a multi-year project is proposed, funding can be no more than $15,000 per project year, up to 36 months.

Award amounts will be determined by the proposals and available funds. There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by the same applicant; however, multiple applications submitted by the same applicant must clearly identify different projects. If an application for a financial assistance award is selected for funding, NOAA/NMFS has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, pre-award costs are not allowed under the award unless approved by the NOAA Grants Officer.

B. Project/Award Period

PRIORITY 1: The project period is recommended to be 13 months in duration. If a multi-year project is proposed, projects can request up to three project periods, 13 months each, up to 39 months. May 1, 2019 is the earliest recommended start date to be used on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the NOAA Program Officer.

PRIORITY 2: The project period is recommended to be 6 to 18 months in duration. If a multi-year project is proposed, projects can request up to three project periods, 12 months each, up to 36 months. September 1, 2019 is the earliest recommended start date to be used on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the NOAA Program Officer.

Multi-year applications will be considered. If a multi-year application is selected for initial funding, NOAA/NMFS has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

NOAA/NMFS will fund the projects under this competition as grants and/or cooperative agreements. The government will be substantially involved in the management and/or operation of the program if a project is funded through a cooperative agreement. This substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, partnering in collaborative efforts and/or alignment of activities to meet program priorities. Substantial involvement may also include NMFS staff assisting in trainings; development of outreach materials and activities; development of meeting agendas and participant lists; conduct and facilitation of meetings; and recruitment, training and management of volunteers.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are individuals, institutions of higher education, nonprofits, commercial organizations, state, local, and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies and their employees, as well as, Federal instrumentalities (including employees and members)are not eligible to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or matching is required under the program.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

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. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer

Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. If you do not have Internet access, an application package may be received by contacting: Penny Larin, NOAA Federal Program Officer, Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1845 Wasp Blvd, Building 176, Honolulu, HI 96818, Phone: (808) 725-5057.

B. Content and Form of Application

Application Format

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 double-spaced (printed or typed), printed or typed in at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins. 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 rejection/return of the application.

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 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.

Each application must include:

- Federal application forms, including:
  - SF-424.
  - SF-424A, Budget Information, Non-construction Programs must be completed, and also include all matching funds.
  - SF-424B, Assurances, Non-construction Programs must be completed for each submitted non- construction application.
  - CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.
  - SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).
  - Title Page (Proposal cover sheet, limit 1 page).
  - Narrative Project Description (described below, limit 15 pages).
  - Budget Justification (described below, limit 2 pages). Provide justifications (in narrative format) for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget justification should be broken out and detailed using the same budget categories as noted on the SF-424A budget form, with a corresponding budget narrative for each of the funding periods anticipated when applying for a Multi-Year award (2 to 5 years).

- NEPA Questionnaire. The NOAA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questionnaire must be completed for each application. For more information on this requirement, see section "B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements" and http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf. This questionnaire does not count towards any page limits.
- Data Sharing or Management Plan (up to 2 pages, if the project collects environmental data).
- Attachments (limit 10 pages). Other Supporting Documentation and relevant attachments the applicant deems important to the overall understanding and evaluation of the proposed project (combined into one PDF document). All combined attachments must be no longer than 10 pages. Attachment information can include: charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations; abbreviated CVs or resumes of key personnel; letters of collaboration; an indirect cost rate agreement; permit information; or any other supporting information.

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 signature, original forms in hard copy and an electronic copy of the entire application on CD, including scanned signed forms. If the applicant has completed the entire application in Grants.gov but is unable to submit it via Grants.gov, then this application package should be provided via CD along with printed and signed versions of forms SF-424, SF-424B, and CD-511. The authorized representative MUST sign and date these forms over the printed signature that will appear in the signature box. Paper applications should not be bound in any manner.

Content Requirements

1. Title Page (Proposal Cover Sheet, 1 page maximum)
   (a) Project title
   (b) Principal Investigator (or Project Manager) and Financial Representative with complete contact information (address, fax, email, and phone number)
   (c) Any co-investigators (or Co-managers) with contact information
   (d) Start and end dates of proposed project
   (e) Identification of programmatic priority applicable to the project (Priority 1 or 2)
   (f) Funding type request (grant or cooperative agreement)
   (g) Total cost of the project, including federal and non-federal funding requested
   (h) If requesting a multi-year project, the project costs per funding period

2. Project Summary (1 page maximum): Provide a brief summary of the project goals and

objectives, the program priority and associated outcomes to be addressed (see Section I.B. above), the proposed activities, the geographic area where the project would occur, and expected outcomes and benefits of the proposed activities. This summary may be posted on our website if the project is funded.

3. Narrative Project Description (limit 15 pages): Describe the project activities completely and accurately. The Project Description should be a clear statement of all work to be undertaken and must include the information listed below. Multi-year applications must include such information for each year of the proposed activity.

(a) Goals and Objectives: Identify one (and only one) program priority (either priority 1 or 2 in Section 1.B above). State expected project accomplishments and their significance to the stated program priority. Objectives should be attainable within the specified time period and with the available monetary and human resources. Objectives should be simple, understandable, and as specific and quantitative as possible.

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

(c) Project Description: Describe the technical plan of activities that will be accomplished to meet the proposed project goals and objectives. Include detailed descriptions of activities, collaborators, milestones, and expected products resulting from the completed project. The description should include:

i. Project activities and how they relate to the project’s goals and objectives.

ii. A list of the activities that will be conducted by project personnel, volunteers, community members, etc. Describe the oversight of volunteers and how their time will be used to complete project activities.

iii. Clearly describe strategies for meeting each objective described in this Announcement, milestones for each strategy, and a description of the specific activities and associated timelines necessary to meet them. Describe the timelines in increments (e.g., month one, month two, etc.), rather than by specific dates. Please provide an explanation if dates are necessary. Make sure the timelines are reasonable and reflect your overall project period. Specify the quantitative and/or qualitative evaluation criteria (metrics) you will use to determine the relative success or failure of the project in achieving the stated project goals, objectives, and milestones.

iv. Identify the outcomes, results, or products, and how they relate to the program priorities. Describe how the project outcomes, results, or products will be applied and/or made available to any appropriate user groups through outreach and education efforts.

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

vi. Federal, State and local government activities: List any plans or activities (Federal, State, or local government activities) this project would affect and describe the relationship between the proposed project and those plans or activities.

vii. If this is a re-submission of a previous grant application, include a brief description of how the new proposal has been revised in response to reviewer comments.

viii. Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant: Describe how governmental and non-governmental entities will participate in the project and the nature of their participation.

4. Budget Justification (not to exceed 2 pages in length)

(a) Each application must include clear and concise budget information covering total project costs, both on the required Federal forms and in a detailed budget narrative. Multi-year applications must include detailed budget information for each funding period of the proposed activity.

The NOAA Grant Management Budget Narrative guidance can be found on their website: https://go.usa.gov/xPjNf

(b) Applications must include OMB standard form 424A, "Budget information - Non Construction Programs." All instructions should be read before completing the form, and the amounts per category and total amounts indicated on the form should correspond with amounts indicated in the budget narrative and justification.

(c) On a separate sheet or spreadsheet, list itemized costs per category and the corresponding Federal and non-Federal share and direct and indirect cost totals. Describe and justify the requested budget. For the non-Federal share, the itemized costs should be

separated into cash and in-kind contributions. If in-kind contributions are included, describe briefly the basis for estimating the value of these contributions.

(d) 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

5. Data Sharing or Management Plan (up to 2 pages, if the project collects environmental data. The data sharing plan will not count towards any other page limits.)

(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) If projects submitted in response to this announcement collect or manage environmental data, then applications must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.

(c) NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a

formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. 4. 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.

6. Appendices (maximum 10 pages): Abbreviated curricula vitae or resumes of the PM and any Co-Managers should be included with the application. Additional material that is necessary or useful to the description of the project may also be provided (e.g., letters of collaboration, tables or visual materials). Letters of collaboration are strongly recommended.

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/portal/public/SAM/. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Part 25, which may be accessed at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=35be46d4aad32de8a6573d14609aa19b&mc=true&node=pt2.1.25&rgn=div5. See section G. Other submission requirements for additional information.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by http://www.Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., Hawaii Standard Time, on December 21, 2018. 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.

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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 returned to the sender without further consideration.

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

NOAA 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. 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, 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

Full Applications should be submitted through www.grants.gov. If you do not have Internet access, an application package may submitted to Penny Larin, Federal Programs Officer, NOAA/NMFS/PIRO; 1845 Wasp Blvd., Building 176, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96818.

Registration Process

1. Required registrations: You must complete and maintain the following 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, and applicants should begin the registration process as soon as possible.

(a) Grants.Gov: The first step in submitting an application online is to complete a onetime 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.
Your DUNS Number assignment is free.

(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.
Registration is free.
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 email address provided for the primary point of contact will receive a message alerting that designee 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. Only authorized the individual(s) will be able to submit the application, and the system may need time to process a submitted application. 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 confirming receipt; the second confirming there are no errors with an application submission; and the third validating 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 NOAA Pacific Islands Regional Office, Federal Programs Office staff to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission. You must obtain a Grants.gov support number.

3. Federal employees are not allowed to assist in the preparation of an application or proposal, except that these individuals may provide you with information on program goals, funding priorities, application procedures, and completion of application forms. Because this is a competitive program, Federal employees will not provide assistance in conceptualizing,

developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for an application or proposal.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors that 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.

Two technical review/merit panels will be convened - one panel for each of the two program priorities. The applications will be evaluated under either program priority number 1 or 2, depending on which priority is specified in the project proposal. Applications will not be evaluated under more than one program priority. Each panel will evaluate proposals by assigning scores up to the maximum indicated for each of the criteria below.

1. Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to Program Objective and Priority (30 points). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NMFS, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. Applications will be evaluated to determine if the project goals and objectives are: clear; relate to project activities; and relate to the program's funding priorities (Section 1.B above). Proposals should address the following questions: What is the likelihood of meeting project milestones and achieving anticipated results in the stated time period? Does the project proposal describe meaningful outcomes, results, or products? Does the project proposal describe how partners and stakeholders will be productively engaged in the project?

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (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 project design, strengths and/or weaknesses and the means that are to be employed for securing productive results (e.g., evaluation criteria). Proposals should have sufficient information to enable reviewers to provide a technical evaluation of the project. Proposals should address the following questions: Does the project have a strong technical design to ensure the project will produce productive and meaningful results? Does the proposal clearly indicate who will be responsible for carrying out project activities? Does the proposal clearly indicate

when/how communication with NOAA regarding project activities and objectives will take place? Does the proposal specify the quantitative and/or qualitative evaluation criteria (metrics) that will be collected, documented, and reported by the applicant to determine the relative success or failure of the project in achieving the stated project goals, objectives, and milestones?

3. Overall Qualifications of the Applicant(s) (20 points). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Reviewers will consider previous related performance experience and qualifications of the project's PM, Co-Manager(s) and other personnel, including designated contractors, consultants, and cooperators. Reviewers will also consider past award performance of the applicant(s) and PM and whether the proposed project is a status quo continuation of past efforts under a previous award or if it is expected to achieve new or enhanced project results or outcomes.

4. Project Costs (10 points). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. This includes reviewing the reasonableness of the costs associated with the required tasks to be performed, and the overall relationship with the cost effectiveness for successfully completing the project. Are all costs itemized, and do they directly support the project goals, objectives, and activities? Is the overall budget justified and appropriately allocated?

5. Outreach and Education (10 points). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. Applications will be evaluated on whether project results or products will be shared appropriately, given the nature of the proposed work, and whether sufficient detail is provided to make this determination. Depending on the nature of the project, outreach and education may include: postings on websites and social media, presentations, meetings and community events, development of brochures, education materials, or training manuals. Is there an appropriate outreach/education plan or products for the type and nature of the proposal? Will the outreach/education plan or product(s) be expected to be effective? Per the NOAA Data Sharing Directive, data management plans shall be also evaluated as part of the proposal review process as part of the evaluation criterion.

B. Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 3 steps: initial screening; technical review/merit panel; and final selection by the Selecting Official (the NOAA/NMFS Regional Administrator).

1. Initial Screening - An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to determine compliance with application requirements and completeness of application materials. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete or non-responsive will be eliminated from further review. 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 title page, 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 be returned and rejected without further consideration.

2. Technical Review/Merit Panel - 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 review and merit of each proposal. The technical reviewers and merit panel members will be the same reviewers. Their evaluation will be based solely on the information included in the application and based on the criteria described in Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria.

Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score prior to a Panel Meeting or Webinar. There will be one panel for each priority. 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. During the Panel Meeting or Webinar, reviewers can revise their scores and comments. Panelists must individually submit their final score to the competition manager by the end of the panel meeting or Webinar. After the panel scores are submitted, a compilation of all proposals in rank order is developed based on the average score from the technical review and panel.

C. Selection Factors

The NOAA PIRO Regional Administrator, as the Selecting Official, will review the funding recommendation and comments of the technical merit review 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 ranked 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 funds;
2. Balance/distribution of funds;
   a. By research area;
   b. By project type;
   c. By type of Applicant;
   d. By type of partners;
   e. Geographic distribution;
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies;
4. Program objectives and priorities as noted in Section I A. and 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. The Selecting Official may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality;
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 project commencement.

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 June of 2019. The earliest start date for projects will be May 1, 2019 for priority 1, and September 1, 2019 for priority 2, 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 Authorizing 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). Unsuccessful paper applications will not be returned to the applicant. 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 special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements. These special 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 Special Award Conditions that have been placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

2. Administrative Requirements - Successful applicants that accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the Department of Commerce and NOAA standard terms and conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in Grants Online, NOAA's financial assistance management system. In addition, award documents provided by the NOAA grants office though the Grants Online award package may contain program-specific special award conditions.

3. NEPA Requirements - As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA),

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, of applications that request Federal funding. 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 and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). Program applications should, to the best extent, provide what they know about their projects at the time of submitting their grant application. Examples of the level of detail to be incorporated into proposals to assist in the environmental review can be found in http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf.

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. Funds will not be released until NOAA completes the requisite NEPA analysis and documentation. Funds may 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 that 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.

4. Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that

the amount of funds has not yet been determined for the program described in this notice, and applicants 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 proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award funding for any specific projects or obligate any 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 of these costs not being included under the award. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

5. 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.

6. 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. It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

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

8. Unpaid or Delinquent Tax Liability – In accordance with Section 523 of Division B and Sections 744 and 745 of Division E of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) or a future public law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) will be required to provide certain pre-award representations regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns. The form must be completed and

submitted with grant applications for: (a) all for-profit and non-profit organization applicants (Part I, and if required, Part II); and (b) all non-Federal entity applicants anticipating receipt of $5 million or more in the current Federal Fiscal Year appropriated funding (Part II only). The form can be found at http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/forms.html. When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide certain applicants a form to be completed by the applicant's authorized representative making a certification regarding Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law. If a form is provided, an award may not be issued until it is returned and accepted by NOAA.

9. 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.

10. 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 http://www.ago.noaa.gov and at http://go.usa.gov/hKbj.

11. 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.

12. 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.

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 of 2006 - The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), 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.

3. Performance Progress Reports: - Basic information that should be in all report submissions includes the project title, award number, dates of the award period, dates of the reporting period, and the name(s) of the grantee and the principal investigator. Inclusion of media such as photography and statistics (tables, graphs, etc.) to help document programmatic activities in report submissions is also encouraged. Pertinent, captioned photographs of project activities are requested, and may be included within the progress report document submitted via Grants Online. Semi-annual progress reports should describe the tasks accomplished within the reporting period (from the proposal and amendments) and the tasks that were actually accomplished in the period, using the evaluation criteria (metrics) for each objective as outlined in your Project Description (see section IV.B.3.c). The report should also explain any special problems or differences between the scheduled and accomplished work.

(a) Report title, reporting period, organization, project manager/investigator, grant number, date.

(b) Executive Summary: A brief and succinct summary of the project.

(c) Purpose:

- Detailed description of problem or impediment that was addressed by the project.
- Objectives of the project.

(d) Approach: Detailed description of the work that was performed.

(e) Project Management: List individuals and/or organizations actually performing the work and how it was done.

(f) Findings/Results:

- Actual accomplishments and findings.
- If significant problems developed which resulted in less than satisfactory or negative results, these should be discussed.
- Description of need for additional work, if any.

- Collected data during the course of the performance period should be included in tabular format (e.g., spreadsheet). Final reports must include a complete dataset of data collected during performance period.

(g) Evaluation:

- Describe the extent to which the project goals and objectives were attained. This description should address the following: Were the goals and objectives attained? How? If not, why? Were modifications made to the goals and objectives? If so, explain.

(h) Dissemination of project results:

-Explain, in detail, how the project's results have been and will be disseminated.

4. Publications, Videos, and Acknowledgement of Sponsorship: Publication of the results or findings of the funded award activities in appropriate professional journals, outreach materials, or press releases, and production of video or other media is encouraged as an important method of recording and reporting scientific information. These are also constructive means to expand access to Federally funded research. The recipient is required to submit a copy of any publication to the funding agency, and when releasing information related to a funded project, include a statement that the project or effort undertaken was or is sponsored by NOAA Fisheries Service. The recipient is also responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including Internet sites and videos) based on or developed under an award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following acknowledgement and disclaimer: "This project received funding under award [number] from NOAA Fisheries PIRO. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA Fisheries." The final report is a public document and may be posted, partially or in its entirety, on the NOAA Fisheries website.

VII. Agency Contacts

If you have any questions regarding this proposal solicitation, please contact Ms. Penny Larin, NOAA Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1845 Wasp Blvd, Building 176, Honolulu, HI 96818; Phone: (808) 725-5057; Email: Penny.Larin@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

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.