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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY16 CRCP Coral Reef NGO Partnership

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCM-2016-2004583

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.482, Coral Reef Conservation Program

Dates: Complete applications must be submitted electronically via www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Thursday, January 21, 2016 to be considered for funding.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to invite Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with demonstrated expertise and experience in supporting coral reef management in the United States to submit proposals to establish partnerships with the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) to further the conservation of U.S. coral reefs. This document describes the coral reef conservation partnership(s) that the NOAA CRCP envisions, identifies the qualities that NOAA desires in a partner, and describes criteria against which applications will be evaluated for funding consideration. Partnerships selected through this notice will be implemented through a cooperative agreement of up to 48-months (4 years) in duration.

Pursuant to Section 6403 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act (CRCA), 16 U.S.C. 6401-6409, and pending Congressional appropriations, CRCP funding of approximately $700,000 is expected to be available for initiating partnership(s) with up to four non-governmental organizations in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016. CRCP will consider funding either a single proposal that includes support for all seven coral reef states and territories or up to two proposals in the Pacific Islands (benefitting Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and/or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) and up to two proposals in the Atlantic/Caribbean region (benefitting Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). Applications may propose work plan of up to 48 months, in conformance with the requirements of Section IV of this announcement, and may request between $100,000 and $700,000 per year (approximately $100,000 per state or territory), depending on how many of the seven coral states and territories will benefit from the proposed project(s). As required by the CRCA, recipients are required to match NOAA's Federal contributions with non-Federal matching contributions at a minimum ratio of 1:1 unless the applicant is granted a waiver to the matching requirement by the agency.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Coral reefs and associated seagrass and mangrove communities are among the most complex and diverse ecosystems on earth. They support important fishing and tourism industries, protect coasts from wave and storm damage, contain an array of potential pharmaceuticals, and provide local communities with a source of food, materials and traditional activities.

As shallow-water, near shore communities, coral reef ecosystems are ecologically linked to adjacent watersheds and are highly vulnerable to human activity. Stresses in the coral reef environment include poor water quality from runoff and inadequate sewage treatment, sedimentation, destructive fishing practices, recreational overuse and misuse, and impacts from climate change, including changes in ocean chemistry.

To address these and other threats, Congress passed the Coral Reef Conservation Act (CRCA or the Act), codified at 16 U.S.C. 6401.-6409, which established the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) and provided guidance for allocation of Federal funding toward efforts to conserve coral reef ecosystems in the U.S. and internationally. As described in the Act, one of the primary functions of the CRCP is to provide financial assistance to external partners for coral reef conservation projects consistent with the Act and CRCP priorities. CRCP implements several financial assistance programs under the Act's authority, including the partnership projects announced in this notice. More information about CRCP is available at http://coralreef.noaa.gov/.

From 2002 to 2008, CRCP efforts focused on priorities articulated in "A National Coral Reef Action Strategy" (http://coris.noaa.gov/activities/actionstrategy), which outlined efforts needed to better understand coral reef ecosystems and reduce impacts from thirteen key threats that had been identified by NOAA in conjunction with the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.

Coral Reef Conservation Program priorities were refined and redirected in 2009 to focus program investments on three of the most pressing threats to coral reefs: land-based sources of pollution, fishing impacts, and climate impacts. The CRCP's approach for addressing these threats is described in more detail in a number of documents, including:

*CRCP Goals and Objectives 2010-2015 (still in effect) (http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/strategy/currentgoals/resources/3threats_go.pdf);

*the seven Jurisdictional Coral Reef Management Priorities documents (http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/strategy/reprioritization/managementpriorities);

*the seven Jurisdictional Capacity Assessments, which evaluate each jurisdiction's ability to

implement coral reef conservation measures and identify impediments to effective coral reef conservation and management (http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/strategy/reprioritization/capacityassessments/);
* a report entitled, “A Synthesis of Issues Affecting the Management of Coral Reefs and Recommendations for Long-Term Capacity Building in U.S. Jurisdictions” (http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/strategy/reprioritization);
*the CRCP International Strategy (http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/strategy/currentgoals/resources/intl_strategy.pdf).
These documents are relevant to CRCP grant programs, but some may be more or less relevant to particular competitions. Please refer to the Program Priorities in Section I.B. for details on which of the above documents are relevant to this funding announcement.
As directed by the Act, NOAA also issued Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program Implementation Guidelines, most recently published at 75 Fed. Reg. 48934 (Aug. 12, 2010) and available at http://go.usa.gov/3FT7z. The most recent Guidelines cover 2010-2015 but their approach remains generally in effect until further notice unless otherwise stated in a NOAA CRCP funding announcement posted on Grants.gov. Please note that CRCP funding announcements are issued only on Grants.gov, not in the Federal Register as stated in the Guidelines, and the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notice referenced in the Guidelines is updated as described in Section VI.B. of this announcement.
In Fiscal Year 2016, the CRCP intends to initiate new awards in the following three funding categories, through separate funding announcements on Grants.gov:
1. CRCP Domestic Coral Reef Conservation Grants;
2. CRCP International Coral Reef Conservation Cooperative Agreements;
3. CRCP Coral Reef Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Partnership Cooperative Agreements.
All of the following information in this funding opportunity pertains only to the FY 2016 CRCP Coral Reef NGO Partnership Cooperative Agreements funding category.

B. Program Priorities

NOAA’s Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) developed overarching goals and objectives to help guide the program’s funding investments, and in June of 2009 articulated those goals and objectives in a document entitled, CRCP Goals and Objectives 2010-2015 (still in effect; http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/strategy/currentgoals/resources/3threats_go.pdf). At the same time, the CRCP sponsored priority-setting processes at the jurisdictional level to help local coral reef managers articulate a set of common priority goals and objectives upon which local coral reef management efforts would focus, and identify priority locations for conservation action; these Jurisdictional Coral Reef Management Priorities and the priority coral reef watersheds identified during the process are captured in a series of documents that

were published in the spring of 2010 and continue to guide CRCP program investments. (http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/strategy/reprioritization/managementpriorities). Subsequently, some jurisdictions developed additional action-oriented strategies, site-based management plans and conservation action plans, and updated their coral reef Local Action Strategies based on CRCP and jurisdictional priorities.

In the past few years, CRCP has also sponsored an assessment of the capacity of each jurisdiction to help identify and eliminate bottlenecks and impediments to coral reef conservation efforts in a number of categories. The resulting Jurisdictional Capacity Assessment documents, which contain a variety of recommendations pertinent to each jurisdiction, and a national level synthesis document entitled, “A Synthesis of Issues Affecting the Management of Coral Reefs and Recommendations for Long-Term Capacity Building in U.S. Jurisdictions” are available at:
http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/strategy/reprioritization.

Together, these documents are used to direct support toward the specific priority conservation needs identified by the CRCP and jurisdictional partners, particularly in instances where the priorities of both overlap. As such, CRCP expects the majority of projects proposed under this competition will involve the development and implementation of projects that address the CRCP Goals and Objectives and Jurisdictional Coral Reef Management Priorities and/or Jurisdictional Capacity Issues and will focus effort primarily in locations previously identified as priority sites for coral reef management. Projects that do not specifically address these priorities or locations may be proposed, but are likely to be less competitive.

Through this funding announcement the CRCP seeks to better support the needs of U.S. coral reef managers working within State and Territorial agencies by establishing either a single comprehensive partnership covering all seven regions or up to four partnerships—one or two partnerships in the Atlantic/Caribbean and one or two partnerships in the Pacific Islands—with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that have demonstrated expertise and experience in implementing local coral reef conservation projects. Cooperative agreements between the CRCP and NGO partner(s) are expected to augment the technical support provided to the governor-appointed natural resource management agencies in the seven U.S. States, Territories, and Commonwealths that have primary management authority and responsibility for conserving U.S. coral reef ecosystems in Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam.

Applicants should document their previous involvement in coral conservation efforts in each jurisdiction in which they are proposing to work. If the applicant does not have previous experience or existing staff in a particular jurisdiction, they should provide specific information about how the applicant intends to fill such gaps through reassignment of existing staff or through the establishment of agreements and/or subawards with other

partner organizations that have successfully worked in that location.

C. Program Authority

Authority for NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program is provided by Section 6403 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 6401-6409.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Under 16 U.S.C. 6401-6409 and pending Congressional appropriations in FY 16 and subsequent years, CRCP funding of approximately $700,000 per year is expected to be available for initiating partnership(s) with up to four non-governmental organizations in FY 2016. CRCP will consider funding either a single proposal that includes support for all seven coral reef states and territories or up to two proposals in the Pacific Islands (benefitting Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and/or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) and up to two proposals in the Atlantic/Caribbean region (benefitting Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). Applications may propose a work plan of up to 48-months, in conformance with the requirements of Section IV of this announcement, and may request between $100,000 and $700,000 per year (approximately $100,000 per state or territory), depending on how many of the seven coral states and territories will benefit from the proposed project(s). The anticipated number of awards ranges from one to four and will be adjusted based on the available funding and the outcomes of the review process described in Section V of this announcement.

Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to establish any specific partnership or to obligate available funds for partnership activities. There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, it does so at its own risk of not being selected or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for any proposal preparation costs. In addition, NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for any incurred project costs if this program fails to receive funding.

If no proposal is funded in the current fiscal period, a proposal may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

B. Project/Award Period

CRCP expects to initiate between one and four cooperative agreement award(s) with

successful applicant(s) beginning on October 1, 2016, and extending for a period of up to 48-months.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Successful applicants will enter into a cooperative agreement with NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program as described under the terms of this document. Federal cooperative agreements are different from traditional grants in that they allow for 'substantial federal involvement' in the planning and implementation of funded projects. Substantial involvement on the part of NOAA may include the collaboration and participation of NOAA Federal Program Officers, Coral Reef Management Liaisons, Coral Reef Fisheries Liaisons, and other CRCP staff in project development, planning and implementation; technical monitoring of award activities beyond ordinary stewardship; and coordination of funded projects with other CRCP-funded efforts as needed. Applications should be written with the understanding the project will be a cooperative agreement. As the Federal government will be substantially involved in the project; applicants may suggest anticipated Federal roles and responsibilities in their proposals. Applicants tentatively selected for potential funding are expected to discuss how the CRCP might be involved in the project after during project negotiations.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are limited to non-profit Non-Governmental Organizations that have demonstrated expertise and experience in supporting coral reef management in U. S. States and Territories.

NOAA employees are not permitted to assist in the preparation of applications or write letters of support for any application. NOAA CRCP staff is available to provide general information on programmatic goals and objectives, ongoing coral reef conservation programs/activities, and regional funding priorities. For proposals that involve collaboration with current NOAA projects or staff, NOAA employees may provide a limited statement verifying the nature and extent of the collaboration and confirming prior coordination activities. Letters of support from NOAA employees are not allowable and will not be included among the application materials considered by merit reviewers.

Federal agencies and employees cannot receive funds under this announcement but may serve as collaborative project partners. If Federal agencies are collaborators, applicants are expected to provide detail on the planned level of Federal engagement in the application. Examples might include, but are not limited to partnership services; serving in a review capacity; or participating in priority task teams, working groups, or leadership teams.

The lead applicant on any proposal will be responsible for ensuring that allocated funds are used for the purposes of, and in a manner consistent with, this program, including any funds awarded to an eligible sub-awardee.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program awards are subject to statutory and regulatory matching fund policies. Federal funds for any coral conservation award funded under 16 U.S.C. 6403(b) may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the award. Therefore, any coral conservation project under this Grant Program requires a 1:1 contribution of non-Federal matching funds.

"Cost sharing or matching" is defined by 2 C.F.R. 200.29 as "the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute)." NOAA will accept any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third party in-kind contributions of goods and services, will be accepted as part of an applications cost sharing or matching when they meet all of the following criteria listed in 2 C.F.R. 200.306.(b):

(1) Are verifiable from the non-Federal entity's records;

(2) Are not included as contributions for any other Federal award;

(3) Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives;

(4) Are allowable under Subpart E—Cost Principles of this part;

(5) Are not paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs;

(6) Are provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency; and

(7) Conform to other provisions of this part, as applicable.

Matching funds may come from a variety of public and private sources and may include third party in-kind goods and services such as private boat use and volunteer labor. Goods and services provided by the recipient have the valuation described in 2 C.F.R. 200.306. Federal agencies and employees' in-kind services cannot be considered as part of an applicant's matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage. Applicants are permitted to combine contributions from multiple non-federal partners in order to meet the 1:1 match requirement, consistent with the standards described in 2 C.F.R. 200.306, and if funds are available within the project period stated in the application.

Applicants should specify the source(s) of match in their proposal and detailed budget narrative and may provide or be asked to provide letters of commitment to confirm stated match contributions. Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by

the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the number of volunteer or community participation hours devoted to specific projects, and all other cash or third party in-kind contributions.

Applicants may choose to designate part or all of their Federally-negotiated indirect costs as match. This may be convenient because the valuation of such costs has already been Federally-approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to the “Indirect Costs” policies in Section IV.B.10 of this announcement.

In addition, any Program Income that may arise in the project may be put toward cost sharing or added to the project, consistent with 2 C.F.R. 200.307.

The NOAA Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets the following two requirements identified in 16 U.S.C. 6403(b)(2):

1. No reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement, and,

2. The probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement.

In the case of a waiver request, the applicant should provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver including attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other extenuating circumstances preventing the availability of match. Match waiver requests, including the appropriate justification, should be submitted as part of the final application. Please address the waiver request as described in Section IV.B.10. of this announcement.

In addition, under 48 U.S.C. 1469a, the Department of Commerce has determined that any requirement for local matching funds under $200,000 (including third party in-kind contributions) to be provided by the governments of American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands shall be waived, notwithstanding any other provision of law. Any matching funds otherwise required by law to be provided by government entities of an insular area may be waived at the discretion of the operating unit. Please contact the individual listed in Section VII. Agency Contacts for more information about eligibility for this exemption.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard SF-424 application package is available online at http://www.grants.gov. If this is not feasible, an application package may be requested from Ms. Jenny Waddell, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, 1305 East-West Highway, SSMC4, 10th floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, phone 301-713-3155, extension 150: or e-mail Jenny.Waddell@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should describe Year 1 activities and projects in great detail; out-year activities and projects should be described as comprehensively as possible with respect to achieving the overall goals of the proposal. Specific out-year activities will be negotiated by the recipient and the Federal Program Officer each year during the development of that year's detailed work plan, prior to the release of out-year funding. Funding in year 2 and subsequent years is contingent upon the availability of funding from Congress, submission of a detailed out-year work plans and budgets, agency reviews of proposed activities and projects with respect to Environmental Compliance obligations, the approval of the NOAA Grants Management Division, and satisfactory performance in the preceding year(s), and is at the sole discretion of the agency.

All application materials should use a legible 11- or 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides. The complete package should total no more than 60 pages, not including the title page, a table of contents if one is included, necessary Federal forms, or any appendices. Applications that exceed the 60-page limit will be shortened by removing pages at the end of the proposal narrative (element 3 below) before it is forwarded to merit reviewers for evaluation. Pages excised from lengthy applications will not be reviewed or considered. Applications that are incomplete, unclear, or contain numerous typographical errors may not be understood effectively by reviewers, resulting in lower evaluation scores, so applicants are advised to review their application materials closely before they are submitted to the agency for consideration. Appendices should be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (e.g., support letters, resumes, references, lists of relevant work products or reports, detailed methodologies, data sources, etc.). Applicants should paginate their proposal and any appendices.

Please keep in mind that the total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices combined shall not exceed 5 megabytes. Files that are larger than five megabytes may not be properly downloaded, uploaded, or received by the agency or the reviewers. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed.

All applications should contain the following thirteen components:

1. Title Page (Proposal Cover Sheet). Include proposal title; complete contact information for the Principal Investigator and the organization's Authorized Representative; the DUNS number of the applicant, which must match the applicant's registered organization name to receive funds; requested start date (October 1, 2016); duration of proposed project (up to 48-

months); the Federal funding amount requested broken out by jurisdiction and task; and the amount and source of non-Federal matching contributions to the project.

2. Proposal Summary. Provide a 2-5 page summary of the proposed cooperative agreement. The summary should provide a description of the applicant's capabilities, overall project goals and objectives, brief summaries of the projects that the applicant intends to complete over the award period in each geographic area, and a brief summary of the anticipated products and desired outcomes from the proposed activities. Please note that this information may be utilized during Congressional notification and shared with the public.

3. Proposal Narrative. The proposal narrative description (25-40 pages) should describe each of the discrete projects or tasks proposed in the application. Each task should be titled and assigned a separate project or task number. Sufficient detail should be provided to enable reviewers to evaluate the relevance and applicability of proposed work to program priorities described in Section I.B. of this announcement; to determine the technical/scientific merit of the proposed work; to adequately review the qualifications of the applicants; and to assess whether the proposed scope of work raises any concerns with regard to Federal policy considerations, such as those related to the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Historic Preservation Act, etc. Applicants should clearly describe how each activity or project will directly benefit the coral reef management efforts of State and Territorial Coral Reef Management agencies. Each task description in the proposal narrative should include:
a. Introduction - Provide a brief summary of relevant background information that justifies the need for the proposed project or task. Clearly describe or explain: the relationship of the proposed project to previous efforts; how the project fits into the jurisdictions' strategies for addressing the issue; how the project would complement coral reef conservation activities of local governmental agencies, and, if applicable, other relevant CRCP-sponsored coral conservation activities.
b. Task Description and Methodology - Provide a project description that describes the scope and detail of the project and the work to be accomplished. Clearly describe or explain: project goals and objectives, proposed activities, methods, procedures, any special equipment that will be used in support of the project goals, and how project outcomes will directly result in improved management of coral reef resources.
c. Task Outcomes or Products - Identify and describe the anticipated project products or outcomes, explain how they will benefit local management of coral reef resources, and describe performance measures that will be used to evaluate project success. The narrative should include information on dissemination of the findings/results to resource managers, local communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate. The project narrative also needs to include information on how the project will be evaluated for success. If the goal of the

project is to build capacity for improved conservation, describe proposed plans to ensure the activities continue into the future.
d. Schedule - Indicate when each task or project is expected to begin (month and year) and include a timeline for completing tasks in narrative or table format.
e. Project Management/Personnel - Identify the project manager or Principal Investigator. Identify other individual(s) responsible for completing the projects and tasks proposed in the application. Describe how the project will be organized and managed, and include the qualifications of the principal investigator(s) by providing curricula vitae or resumes. The Principal Investigator may or may not be the applicant organization. However, if the applicant is not the principal investigator, there should 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). Please also include information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including the technical and administrative points of contact as appropriate.
f. Data Sharing Plan – Provide a Data Sharing Plan of no more than two pages as described in Section of IV.B.13 of this Announcement.

4. Budget Narrative and Justification (15-20 pages)
In order to allow reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of all costs, applications should include a detailed budget narrative and a budget justification broken out by individual task. The budget narrative submitted with the final application should match the dollar amounts included on all required forms and clearly link to the project narrative. Please explain each calculation and provide a narrative justification to explain expenditures for each budget category. The budget narrative should describe, by category of expenditure, the total funding needed to accomplish the objectives described in the project narrative for the entire award period. Please explain how categorical costs are derived in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to determine if costs are 'allowable and reasonable' according to the cost principles referenced in Section IV.E.2. Budget narrative categories should correspond to the standard object class categories listed in Section B of the SF-424A. For additional details, please review the budget guidance provided at: http://coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/forms/budget-narrative-guidance-GMD-04.09.2015.pdf

Applicants should include detailed budget information regarding all subawards, and indicate the basis for the cost estimates in the narrative. Describe project activities to occur and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Each identified subaward should include form SF-424A. Detailed budget information includes:

- Name of identified qualified subrecipient, subrecipient affiliation, contact information, and method of selection. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection.
- Period of Performance. Include the dates for the performance period. If it involves a

number of tasks, include the performance period for each task.

- Scope of Work. List and describe the specific activities or tasks to be performed.
- Criteria for Measuring Accountability. Include reporting schedule.
- Itemized Budget. Include categories used in program budget.

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. Equipment purchases also require a lease vs. purchase assessment. Note that equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or $5,000. See 2 C.F.R. 200.33 Equipment. Equipment purchases are not a priority under this funding competition.

Non-federal applicants shall identify, if this information is known when submitting the grant application, who they plan to request that NOAA transfer equipment or property ownership titles to after the project ends. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process.

The cost or price, purpose, and method of selection for identified and planned acquisition contracts should be thoroughly justified in the Budget Narrative. Describe products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Procurements are subject to policies described in 2 C.F.R. 200.317-326. For “to be determined,” describe plans for selection.

The budget narrative should also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, the number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If actual trip details are unknown, applicants should state the basis for the proposed travel charges. Applicants should allocate travel funds for any coordination meetings at regional or national levels.

If a foreign air carrier is anticipated to be used for any portion of travel, prior approval is required under the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section K.03.c., http://go.usa.gov/3zVu9, and therefore, such travel should be included in the proposal to avoid having to request prior approval after the project starts.

Applicants may factor in travel costs for participation in an annual NOAA Grants Management Division workshop for recipients. See http://go.usa.gov/3zVeH.

Refer to paragraph 12 below in this Section regarding treatment of Indirect Costs in the Budget Narrative.

5. Standard Form 424: Application for Federal Assistance (7/2003 version or newer)

Applicants requesting Federal funding in this program must submit a copy of Standard Form SF-424, 'Application for Federal Assistance'. If a hard copy final application is submitted, it must be signed and dated by the organization's authorized representative, and used as the

cover page for the final application. An electronic signature and date stamp will automatically be included on SF-424 forms submitted via Grants.gov.

6. Standard Form 424A: Budget Information for Non-construction Programs (include a separate form for each year of funding and for each proposed sub-award of $25,000 or more)
Applicants are required to submit a SF-424A Budget Form to summarize the budget for the proposed scope of work. The first column of sections A and B shows the Federal funds requested, while the second column of sections A and B shows the non-Federal matching funds provided for the project. Total award funding is shown in the final column of section B. Non-federal funding is broken out by source in section C. Forecasted cash needs in Section D should be inclusive of all funding for the project. Both Federal and non- Federal funds should be expended at a similar rate throughout the course of the project. Section E may be left blank. Section F summarizes the direct charges in line 21 and lists the indirect charges requested; please show the rate used in line 22. Please note that completion of the SF-424A form as described above represents NOAA's preference and may not be consistent with the instructions that accompany the SF-424A form. All budget figures should match the funding requested on the application cover sheet and correspond with the descriptions contained in the project and budget narratives.
Consistent with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note (FFATA; https://www.fsrs.gov/), all subawards should also be accompanied by a separate SF-424A form to fully document the proposed subaward budget. See section IV.B.4. for more detail.

7. Standard Form 424B: Assurances for Non-Construction Programs
Applicants are required to submit a signed SF-424B, 'Assurances for Non-Construction Programs'.

8. Standard Form CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying
Applicants are required to submit a form CD-511, 'Certifications Regarding Lobbying’.

9. Standard Form LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)
If applicable, applicants may be required to disclose certain lobbying activities described in form SF-LLL.

10. Permits and Approvals
It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work. Applicants must provide a list of all known 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. You should include this required element even if permits are not required.
Failure to apply for and/or obtain Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA environmental assessment) will delay or prevent the award of funds for projects that have been preliminarily selected for funding.
For work proposed within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Seashores, and other Federally designated managed areas, it is the responsibility of the applicant to request and obtain any necessary permits or letters of agreement from the appropriate government agencies prior to commencement of an award. For applicants who propose to conduct research or monitoring activities that may affect any coral species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act, you will likely need a ESA Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit. For more information see: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/corals.htm.

11. Match waiver request (if applicable)
Preference under this competition will be given to applicants who provide a 1:1 or greater ratio of matching funds to Federal funds in accordance with the provisions of the Coral Reef Conservation Act. If the proposal lacks sufficient matching funds, the applicant may include a separate document in which the applicant requests a waiver to the matching funds requirement as described in Section 6403(b)(2) of the Act. Although the CRCP will consider these requests, in most cases, waivers of matching funds will not be provided for applicants to this competition. Please address all waiver requests to Jennifer Koss, Acting CRCP Manager, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East West Highway, 10th Floor, SSMC4, N/ORM, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver, the total amount of matching funds requested to be waived, attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other circumstances preventing the availability of match. For more details see Section III.B.

12. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)
The proposed budget may include an amount for indirect or Facilities and Administrative costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., utilities, rent, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. See 2 C.F.R. 200.56-.57 and 200.412-.415.
A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal Government should be included with the final application package. If an award recipient has never established an indirect cost rate with any Federal agency, the recipient may request to

use the de minimus rate described at 2 CFR 200.414. Non-federal entities that have never received a negotiated indirect (F&A) cost rate elect to charge a de minimis rate at 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). The de minimis indirect cost rate should be used for all federal awards. Non-federal entities may use this rate indefinitely, but may choose to negotiate an indirect (F&A) cost rate at any time. This de minimis rate option is not available to state and local governments, and Indian tribes.
If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to establish a new negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award. See Section III.C. for more information on establishing a new indirect cost rate with the Department of Commerce.

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

a. A Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as part of the Project Narrative. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The Data/Information Sharing Plan will be reviewed as part of the Evaluation Criteria.

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

c. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.
Principal Investigators must indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.
Information on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Policy is available under:
http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.pdf

14. National Environmental Policy Act and Environmental Compliance
As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of Federally funded awards.
Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize potential adverse

impact on the environment. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they have sufficient environmental documentation to allow NOAA to determine whether the proposal is categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis or whether an environmental assessment is necessary to conform to the requirements of NEPA. Consequently, as part of the application package, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitats that may be affected, construction activities, and all other environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, etc.).

Applicants are encouraged to review the Coral Program's Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) to confirm that proposed activities fall within the scope of the PEA in advance of formal NEPA review and approval; the Coral Program PEA is available at: http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/workwithus/funding/grants/resources/coral_pea_final_05.pdf.

Applicants proposing coral reef conservation activities that cannot be categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis or that are not covered by the Programmatic Environmental Assessment for the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program (PEA; http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/workwithus/funding/grants/resources/coral_pea_final_05.pdf) will be requested to assist in the preparation of an environmental assessment and required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any potential adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for rejection of an application.

For those applications needing an environmental assessment, applicants will be informed of the requirement after the peer review stage and will be requested to assist in the preparation of the assessment. Final approval of the award and authorization for expenditure of funds are dependent on the applicant obtaining the necessary permits and approval of the NEPA analysis by NOAA.

In some cases, if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds may be withheld by the NOAA Grants Officer under a special award condition to require the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to assess any potential impacts that a project may have on the environment.

The applicants selected for funding must complete sections A, B, C, D, E, and F of the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Financial Assistance Applicants accessible at: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf 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).Sections G,

and H are not required with the initial application because NOAA anticipates that most projects funded through this competition would not have impacts related to damage assessment and restoration or fisheries sampling and analysis.
Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/ including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/ceq_regulations/regulations.html or http://www.csc.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/CEQ%20Regulations%20for%20Implementing%20the%20Procedural%20Provisions%20of%20NEPA.pdf.
In addition to the fourteen (14) standard elements described above, applicants may upload additional supporting documentation, such as the resumes and qualifications of applicants, and letters of support or statements of collaboration, by using the 'Optional Form' box under 'Other Attachments' in Grants.gov during the application submission process.
For applications submitted in electronic format, acceptable formats are limited to Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) or Microsoft Word files.

C. Submission Dates and Times

If use of Grants.gov is not feasible, one original set of the complete application and related SF-424 with original ink signature or valid electronic signature and date by the applicant’s authorized representative shall be mailed to the attention of Jenny Waddell at the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC4, 10th floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Mailed applications must include documentation to demonstrate that the application was submitted prior to the application deadline, such as an official U.S. Postal Service postmark; private metered postmarks are unacceptable. No email or fax copies will be accepted. Paper applications received more than 3 business days after the deadline will not be reviewed; applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their applications. Proposal application packages, including all letters of collaboration and letters of support, shall be submitted together in one package.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this competition are subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs”. It is the applicant’s responsibility to contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the state's process under EO 12372. To assist the applicant, the names and addresses of the SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's website <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc>.
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 established as a result of EO

12372. The following states and territories have elected to require review of applications by a Single Point of Contact: American Samoa, CNMI, the District of Columbia, Florida, Guam, Puerto Rico, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This list is not meant to be exhaustive and only includes the locations where most coral reef projects occur; applicants proposing work in alternate locations are advised to establish whether their application is subject to the EO 12372 prior to submission by reviewing the list of contacts provided at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

E. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Costs

Applicants are permitted to request indirect costs if their organization has an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a Federal agency that covers the period of the award. Applicants requesting indirect costs should submit a copy of their current and signed indirect cost rate agreement with their application package.

If an award recipient has not previously established an indirect cost rate with any Federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimus rate described at 2 CFR 200.414, as described in Section IV.B.12 of this Announcement. Alternatively, the negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section B.06., require that recipients within 90 days of the award start date, submit to the address listed below documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review.

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

2. Ineligible projects:

The following projects will not be eligible for funding: (1) Activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by state or Federal law; (2) Activities that constitute mitigation for natural resource damages under Federal or state law; and (3) Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation.

3. Cost Principles:

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are limited to costs necessary and reasonable to achieve the approved goals and objectives and are determined by reference to

relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, adopted by the Department of Commerce at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as the costs are determined to be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the award.

F. Other Submission Requirements

The standard NOAA funding application package is available at www.grants.gov (Grants.gov); and application packages, including all letters of collaboration, shall be submitted through the "Apply" function on Grants.gov. Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, applicant must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), and periodic renewals are required. Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. Allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration. (Note: Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form). An organization's one time registration process may take up to three weeks to complete. In addition, it may take two days until the applicant is notified as to whether NOAA received the application, so allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date.

The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, the application package (forms), and is also where the completed application is submitted. Applicants using Grants.gov must locate the downloadable application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.482). Applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site.

After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two email messages from Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their application. The first email will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive a third email when the application has been downloaded by the Federal agency.

If use of Grants.gov is not feasible, one original set of the complete application and related SF-424 with original ink signature and date by the applicant's authorized representative shall be mailed to the attention of Jenny Waddell at the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC4, 10th floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Mailed applications must include documentation to demonstrate that the application was submitted

prior to the application deadline, such as an official U.S. Postal Service postmark; private metered postmarks are unacceptable. No email or fax copies will be accepted. Paper applications received more than 3 business days after the deadline will not be reviewed; applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their applications. Proposal application packages, including all letters of collaboration and letters of support, shall be submitted together in one package.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to build the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, 16 U.S.C. 6106 Note, to the extent applicable, any applicant 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 and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Part 25, 170 (2013), which may be accessed online at: http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl .?

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 or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. A 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.

If an applicant does not have Internet access, one set of originals (signed) and an electronic copy (on CD or DVD) of the proposals and related forms shall be mailed to the attention of Jenny Waddell at the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC4, 10th floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910. No email or fax copies will be accepted. Proposal application packages, including all letters of collaboration and letters of support, shall be submitted together in one package.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria in this program and weights for each criterion are below.
1) Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the CRCP goals (25%): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities."
Proposals will be evaluated based on the potential of the project(s) to meet goals and objectives stated in section 6403(g) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act, the project's relevance to the goals and priorities of NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program and/or established jurisdictional goals and priorities, and whether the proposed work will result in direct benefit to coral reef resources and ecosystems. In addition, the proposal should demonstrate that the proposed coral reef management activities are part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to address established coral reef conservation goals of the jurisdiction and/or national program.
2) Technical and scientific merit (30%): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.
Project proposals should: (a) Incorporate an assessment of project success in terms of meeting the proposed objectives; (b) Demonstrate that the conservation activity will be sustainable and long-lasting; and (c) Provide assurances that implementation of the project will meet state and local environmental laws and Federal consistency requirements by obtaining all necessary permits and consultations.
3) Overall qualifications of the funding applicants (25%): This criterion ascertains whether the funding applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
Based on the information contained in the application, reviewers will be asked to evaluate whether the applicant possesses the resources necessary to accomplish the project and administer the award. For this competition, the proposal should also demonstrate knowledge of and coordination with applicable ongoing coral reef management activities.
4) Project costs (15%): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.
The budget should reflect the applicant's ability to complete the work within the constraints of the funding and time period proposed in the application. Proposals will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate that significant benefit to U.S. coral reefs will be generated for a reasonable cost, and on their ability to precipitate partnerships and leverage other sources of funding in an effort to achieve the priority coral reef conservation objectives referenced in Section I.B. of this announcement.
5) Outreach and education (5%): This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to understand and protect the Nation's natural resources.
Reviewers will assess whether this project provides an effective education and outreach

component that supports established CRCP and Jurisdictional coral reef conservation efforts. Because awards made under this competition are intended to benefit the state and territorial government agencies with primary responsibility for managing U.S. coral reef ecosystems, applicants should describe how proposed activities and project results will be disseminated to the local coral reef management community and how data and information will be transmitted in accordance with the application's Data and Information Sharing Plan, which is described in Section IV.B.13.

B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to assure that it is timely, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Applications that meet the minimum requirements will be reviewed by at least three independent peer reviewers with coral reef and/or fisheries management experience during a merit-based review and ranking process. Appropriate mechanisms will be implemented to avoid potential conflicts of interest during the proposal review process. Each reviewer will be asked to individually evaluate and rank proposals using the weighted evaluation criteria above. Proposal evaluations will be based exclusively on information included in the application. Merit reviewer ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals. Once the peer review process has been completed, a committee of CRCP representatives will meet to discuss the applications, pursuant to the criteria described above and in Section X of the Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program Implementation Guidelines (http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/workwithus/funding/grants/welcome.html). The committee will consider the proposal rankings, the comments of the merit reviewers, the program's objectives, and selection factors described below. Based on this process, the committee will assign a preliminary funding recommendation for each application and forward the top ranked proposal(s) to the Selecting Official or their designee, for final recommendation. The Selecting Official or their designee may negotiate the funding level or other major aspects of the proposal, and the Selecting Official will make the final recommendation for award based on the rank order and selection factors below to the Grants Officer, who is authorized to obligate Federal funding and execute the award.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. If no proposal is funded in the current fiscal period, a proposal may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without NOAA repeating the competitive process outlined in this announcement.

Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as

appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives and activities, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in submission of a revised application before final funding decisions are made. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, NOAA GMD, and CRCP staff. Applicants should also note that modifications to projects may be necessary as a result of NOAA's efforts to comply with NEPA and other legislation.

The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.205. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive Federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be timely addressed in order to receive a new award. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.207. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final and there is no right of appeal. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), anonymous copies of mail merit review comments or summaries of panel deliberations, can be made available to the applicant upon request.

C. Selection Factors

The review and selection process shall provide a rank order of proposals that will be presented to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The CRCP competition manager may make recommendations to the Selecting Official applying the selection factors below. The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless there is justification for selecting a proposal out of rank order based upon one or more of the

following factors:
1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
a. Geographically;
b. By type of institutions;
c. By type of partners;
d. By research areas;
e. By project types;
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
4. Program priorities and policy factors as stated in Section I of this funding opportunity;
5. Applicant's prior award performance;
6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA Grants Officer.

The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Successful applicants will be notified in approximately September 2016. The anticipated start date for cooperative agreement awards made under this competition is October 1, 2016, dependent on funding availability, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA and environmental compliance analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail that their application was not recommended for funding after the final section package has been approved by the NOAA Grants Management Division, which is expected to be approximately September 2016. Unsuccessful applications submitted to this competition will be retained for a period of up to 12 months and then destroyed.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by email that their application was recommended for funding and remains under consideration. The applicant should be aware that the notification by the

program office is not the official award notice and funding is not assured. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer electronically.

The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer Electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online. The CD-450 award cover page is available at http://go.usa.gov/SNMR. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at http://go.usa.gov/hKbj. These terms will be provided in the award package in Grants Online at http://www.ago.noaa.gov.

In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements and may lead to modification of the project's scope of work. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award to ensure they are fully aware of the relevant terms that have been placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Pre-Award Notice

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 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, applies to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4.

3. Limitation of Liability

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for the competition 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. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award funding for specific projects or obligate available funds. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by the NOAA, Grants Management Division, Grants Officer, it does so at its own risk of not receiving an

award or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for any proposal preparation costs.
Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards.
Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project, obligate any available funds, or provide special fishing privileges.
Funded awards are subject to enforcement and termination provisions under 2 C.F.R. 200.338-.342.
4. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
See the NEPA information in Section IV.B. of this announcement.
5. Unpaid or delinquent tax liability
In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representative making a certification regarding whether the corporation has any Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.
6. Confidentiality and Access to Information
Application materials may be considered public documents and may be released to individuals outside the agency pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. The CRCP reserves the right to share application materials with relevant individuals and organizations as authorized for the purposes of improved coordination and collaboration. However, the Office for Coastal Management will not ordinarily release the names of applicants submitting proposals unless ordered by a court or requested to do so by an appropriate NOAA official and administrative protocol. Applicants can use a NOAA public search feature to find out information about NOAA awards < https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/publicSearch/begin.do > or go through the Freedom of Information Act process to request more information about grant competitions. More information about the NOAA FOI process is online at http://www.noaa.gov/foia/.
Department of Commerce regulations implementing FOIA are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA.
Applications submitted in response to this FFO 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.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical)

progress reports consistent with 2 C.F.R. 200.327-.329 and Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions electronically through NOAA’s electronic grants management system, Grants Online. Performance reports must be submitted on a semi-annual schedule no later than 30 days following the end of each 6- month period from the start date of the award. Financial reports must be submitted every 6 months by the end of April and October during the period of the award in accordance with the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. NOAA will provide instructions for submitting financial and progress reports upon request.

A comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration date along with copies of all products developed under the award. Copies of all materials (including but not limited to brochures, posters, videos, DVDs, publications, reports, management plans, public service announcements, workshop proceedings, etc.) produced through the award, along with copies of any reports submitted by subcontractors as part of the award, must be provided to the program office within 90 days of the end of the award. All products must be of publishable quality, and include a citation and appropriate acknowledgement of the support provided by NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program as described at: http://coralreef.noaa.gov/aboutcrcp/whoweare/graphic/. Because products may be made available to the public via the Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS, http://coris.noaa.gov), it is the recipient's responsibility to ensure that products are professionally written and edited; they do not contain sensitive financial information; and that media products are 508 compliant (http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?fuseAction=stdsSum). Except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security, recipients are requested to include a statement on the front page of all products to indicate the material is "Approved for pubic release; distribution is unlimited." If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publications must be made available to the public free of charge.

Successful applicants will be requested to ensure that all interim progress reports indicate whether financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and are up-to-date. In their final progress report, applicants will be asked to (a) clearly state the resulting impact of their project with respect to coral reef conservation; and (b) certify that "Final financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and a final funding draw-down has been made through the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP)."

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall

submit an inventory in accordance with relevant OMB requirements. The program office recommends that if the equipment is no longer needed, recipients are encouraged to request disposition instructions for equipment approximately 150 days before the project period ends to allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests addressed before a project ends. Equipment disposition instructions typically require that recipients complete an "other" award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200.
As applicable, the recipient must report on real property annually and at award closeout, by completing Form SF-429 (Real Property Status Report).

VII. Agency Contacts

The Federal Program Officer and technical point of contact for this competition is Jenny Waddell. She can be reached by phone at 301-713-3155, extension 150 or by email at Jenny.Waddell@noaa.gov. Her mailing address is: Jenny Waddell, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC4, 10th floor, Silver Spring, MD, 20910.

VIII. Other Information

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for this Federal funding opportunity or that any proposal will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, they do so at their own risk of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for any proposal preparation costs. In addition, NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for proposal or project costs if this program fails to receive funding. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards. Applicants must be in good standing with all existing NOAA grants and/or cooperative funding agreements in order to receive funds under this announcement.

The NOAA program office reserves the right to immediately halt activity under the award if the recipient fails to fulfill the requirements of the project as described in the final negotiated application submitted to the agency. Non-compliance may result in termination of the award.

The Office for Coastal Management will not release the names of applicants submitting proposals unless ordered by a court or requested to do so by an appropriate NOAA official and administrative protocol. Applicants can use a NOAA public search feature to find out

information about NOAA awards < https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/publicSearch/begin.do > or go through the Freedom of Information Act process to request more information about grant competitions. More information about the NOAA FOI process is online at http://www.noaa.gov/foia/

Department of Commerce regulations implementing FOIA are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this FFO 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.