

Public-Private Partnership for Coral Reef Conservation and Marine Debris Programs

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Funding Opportunity Description	4
A. Program Objective	4
B. Program Priorities	6
C. Program Authority	7
II. Award Information	8
A. Funding Availability	8
B. Project/Award Period	8
C. Type of Funding Instrument	8
III. Eligibility Information	9
A. Eligible Applicants	9
B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement	10
C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility	12
IV. Application and Submission Information	12
A. Address to Request Application Package	13
B. Content and Form of Application	13
C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)	24
D. Submission Dates and Times	25
E. Intergovernmental Review	26
F. Funding Restrictions	26
G. Other Submission Requirements	27
V. Application Review Information	29
A. Evaluation Criteria	29
B. Review and Selection Process	29
C. Selection Factors	31
D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates	31
VI. Award Administration Information	32
A. Award Notices	32
B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements	32
C. Reporting	35
VII. Agency Contacts	37
VIII. Other Information	37

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: Public-Private Partnership for Coral Reef Conservation and Marine Debris Programs

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCM-2018-2005474

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

Dates: Proposals must be received through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, February 28, 2018. For proposals submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication by Grants.gov will be the basis of determining timeliness. 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. Applicants with technical access issues may apply through postal mail provided the application package is postmarked no later than Wednesday, February 28, 2018. Applications submitted via U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. In any event, applications sent by surface mail and received more than 10 business days following the postmarked closing date will not be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to solicit proposals for a single cooperative agreement to implement the public-private partnership with both the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) as authorized in the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.) and the NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) as authorized in the Marine Debris Act (MDA) (33 U.S.C. 1951 et seq.). The public-private partnership provides a mechanism for NOAA to collaborate with a single external non-Federal partner in order to promote investment in coral reef and marine conservation efforts, marine debris prevention, and removal of derelict fishing gear, in the U.S. and abroad. The public-private partnership involves administration of subawards made through multiple competitions including the Coral Reef Conservation Fund, which was established by statute to leverage NOAA CRCP resources with investments made by private donors, foundations and other Federal government agencies. Funding awarded through the partnership is intended to provide support for priority coral reef conservation projects, administration of the Fishing for Energy partnership, and marine debris prevention and removal of derelict fishing gear projects. Eligible applicants for this public-

private partnership are limited to non-profit organizations. Applicants should have significant experience working in partnership with NOAA program offices to be competitive.

Funding for this program is subject to the availability of Fiscal Year 2018 and future appropriations and other programmatic considerations and is expected to range between approximately \$800,000 and approximately \$2,000,000 per year.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The purpose of this notice is to solicit proposals for a single cooperative agreement to implement the public-private partnership with both the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) as authorized in the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.) and the NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) as authorized in the Marine Debris Act (MDA) (33 U.S.C. 1951 et seq.). The public-private partnership provides a mechanism for NOAA to collaborate with a single external non-Federal partner in order to promote investment in coral reef and marine conservation efforts, marine debris prevention, and removal of derelict fishing gear, in the U.S. and abroad. The public-private partnership involves administration of subgrant awards made through multiple competitions including the Coral Reef Conservation Fund, which was established by statute to leverage NOAA CRCP resources with investments made by private donors, foundations and other Federal government agencies. Funding awarded through the partnership is intended to provide support for priority coral reef conservation projects, administration of the Fishing for Energy partnership, and marine debris prevention and removal of derelict fishing gear projects.

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, build tropical islands, contain an array of potential pharmaceuticals, and provide essential services like food security, livelihood, and culture, among other benefits.

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, destructive fishing practices, sedimentation, recreational overuse and misuse, and impacts from climate change and ocean acidification.

To address these threats, Congress passed the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (Act), which established the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program and provided guidance for allocation of federal funding toward efforts to conserve coral reef ecosystems in the United States and internationally. As required 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 is currently undergoing a strategic planning process that will result in a new CRCP National Goals and Objective document and

priorities. For this application, the existing CRCP priorities outlined in the CRCP National Goals and Objectives 2010-2015 (https://ocmcoralreef.blob.core.windows.net/coralreef-prod/conservation/resources/3threats_go.pdf) and the CRCP International Strategy 2010-2015 (https://docs.lib.noaa.gov/noaa_documents/CoRIS/intl_strategy_2010-2015.pdf) should be used. Jurisdictional priorities for the seven U.S. states, territories, and commonwealths that have primary authority for managing coral reefs are outlined in their respective Jurisdictional Management Priority Setting Documents (https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/management_priorities). All applicants should demonstrate a willingness to adjust to these new priorities either during negotiations or post-award as they become available.

Section 205 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.) authorized the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program to enter into an agreement with a nonprofit organization in order to establish the Coral Reef Conservation Fund, whose purpose is “solely to support partnerships between the public and private sectors that further the purposes of this Act and are consistent with the national coral reef action strategy.”

The NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP), a division of the Office of Response and Restoration, leads national efforts to address marine debris. The NOAA MDP mission is to investigate and solve the problems that stem from marine debris through research, prevention, reduction, and removal activities, in order to protect and conserve our nation’s marine environment and ensure navigation safety.

Marine debris is defined as "any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes" (15 CFR Part 909).

Specifically, this effort should support the NOAA MDP in meeting its mandates in the Marine Debris Act of 2012 to “identify, determine sources of, assess, prevent, reduce, and remove marine debris, with a focus on marine debris posing a threat to living marine resources and navigation safety” and to “identify and undertake efforts to reduce adverse impacts of lost and discarded fishing gear on living marine resources and navigation safety, including:

- (A) Research and development of alternatives to gear posing threats to the marine environment and methods for marking gear used in certain fisheries to enhance the tracking, recovery, and identification of lost and discarded gear; and
- (B) The development of effective non-regulatory measures and incentives to cooperatively reduce the volume of lost and discarded fishing gear and to aid in gear recovery.”

Applications will be accepted from recipients that propose to manage and support the Fishing for Energy public-private partnership developed in 2008 to facilitate prevention and removal of derelict fishing gear. The Fishing for Energy initiative seeks to prevent inappropriate dumping of retired fishing gear and to facilitate state and local government, non-governmental organizations and fishing industry involvement in removal of derelict gear in priority areas. Information on Fishing for Energy can be found at <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/prevention/fishing-energy>.

In FY 2018, the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program and Marine Debris Program intend to initiate a new multi-year cooperative agreement to establish a public-private partnership that will implement Section 205 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act and support the mandates of the Marine Debris Act focusing on prevention of lost and discarded fishing gear through the Fishing for Energy public-private partnership. All of the following information pertains only to this funding announcement.

B. Program Priorities

NOAA will accept applications that propose to implement the public-private partnership authorized by Congress in the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 and support the implementation of priorities related to Marine Debris removal, monitoring and assessment as described in the Marine Debris Act (MDA).

With regard to Coral Reef Conservation Program, proposals submitted should address the following programmatic priorities, which coincide with the major themes related coral reef conservation recognized by the CRCP (and expected to be included in the new CRCP priorities documents):

1. Land-based sources of pollution;
2. Fishing impacts;
3. Climate change and ocean acidification;
4. Coral restoration; and
5. Emerging management issues.

Proposals submitted should also address the following Marine Debris programmatic priorities focusing on the reduction and prevention of derelict fishing gear as described in the Marine Debris Act:

1. Through administering the Fishing for Energy partnership, preventing inappropriate dumping of retired fishing gear by coordinating with fishing ports to provide a space for gear

disposal. Ports should be selected by working with the NOAA Marine Debris Program as well as local state and federal fisheries managers and fishing industry representatives.

2. By providing seed funding to ports with the intent that the disposal of gear become sustainable over time. Selection of new local partners to help with disposal of gear should be considered through the Fishing for Energy Partnership,

3. By working with state and federal resource managers and the fishing industry to identify solutions to prevent gear from becoming derelict and to provide a measureable conservation benefit to marine communities by removing direct threats to species and habitats that are killed or damaged as a result of derelict gear.

The single selected proposal, written as a cooperative agreement, will:

1. Provide for close collaboration with the staff of NOAA.

2. Demonstrate the availability of suitable support personnel, facilities, and infrastructure, including:

- a. Office space, facilities, and communication equipment;
- b. Grants administration infrastructure, software, checks and controls;
- c. Administrative processes aligned with federal financial assistance rules and regulations.

3. Support objectives and priorities consistent with all of the following: the current Coral Reef Conservation Program's Goals and Objectives 2010-2015

(https://ocmcoralreef.blob.core.windows.net/coralreef-prod/conservation/resources/3threats_go.pdf) and coral restoration activities; the CRCP

International Strategy 2010-15

(https://docs.lib.noaa.gov/noaa_documents/CoRIS/intl_strategy_2010-2015.pdf); and other activities that further the coral reef conservation objectives of the Act and the marine debris mandates in the MDA.

4. Include a continuing review of the grant program administered under this award and a written assessment of progress towards meeting the goals and objectives of the public-partnership and attracting private investment in coral reef conservation and marine debris initiatives.

C. Program Authority

Authority for the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program and the public-private partnership is provided by Sections 6403 and 6404 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of

2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq).

The Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C. 1951 et seq.) authorizes the NOAA Administrator to provide cooperative agreements to address the adverse impacts of marine debris on the United States economy, the marine environment, and navigation safety through identification, determination of sources, assessment, prevention, reduction, and removal of marine debris.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Funding for this program is subject to the availability of FY 2018 and future appropriations and other programmatic considerations and is expected to range between approximately \$800,000 and approximately \$2,000,000 annually. The intent is to make a single award for a 48-month performance period. 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.

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. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for any proposal preparation costs. In addition, NOAA and the Department of Commerce will not be responsible for any incurred project costs if this program fails to receive funding. Recipients and subrecipients 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 awards in order to receive funds.

B. Project/Award Period

An award funded in FY 2018 or a subsequent fiscal year shall have a performance period of 48 months and an award start date of the first day of any month, August through October, 2018. Successful applicants may be selected as an institutional award recipient and asked to revise the performance period to 60 months during negotiations (see Section II.C. below).

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Successful applicants will enter into a cooperative agreement with NOAA's National Ocean Service, Office for Coastal Management, Coral Reef Conservation Program. Applications must be written as cooperative agreements and the proposal should clearly identify this funding instrument in the proposal abstract and cover sheet. 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 program officers, other OCM staff in project development, planning and implementation; technical monitoring of award activities; and coordination of funded projects with other NOAA-funded efforts as needed. NOAA's substantial involvement may include collaboration, guidance, and direction during performance, review and approval of milestones, and other actions described in Office of Management and Budget Guidance at 43 Fed. Reg. 36860-65 (Aug. 18, 1978) and in Sec. 5.C. of the Department of Commerce Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual, available at http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Grants%20Manual%20-%202024%20October%202016.pdf. NOAA will determine the substantial Federal involvement appropriate for a project, but applicants may suggest anticipated federal roles and responsibilities in their proposals. Applicants tentatively selected for potential funding are expected to discuss the federal involvement in the project during project negotiations.

Successful applicants may be considered for an institutional award if approved by the Coral Reef Conservation Program, the Marine Debris Program, and the NOAA Grants Office. Institutional awards are made with the intent to maintain a long-term partnership between DOC and the recipient for those projects established under long term planning goals and objectives common to the research and programmatic needs of both parties. The applicant may be asked to revise their application to lengthen the period of performance by an additional 12 months with an additional year of funding. Institutional awards may also be eligible for at least one non-competitive continuation grant for up to 60 months with a successful periodic review.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible funding applicants are limited to non-profit organizations. Applicants should have demonstrated experience in coral reef conservation and marine debris issues, as well as the organizational and administrative resources necessary to administer merit-based competitive grant programs, to be competitive. Refer to the Evaluation Criteria in Section V.

Federal agencies and employees are not allowed to receive funds under this announcement

but may serve as collaborative project partners and may contribute resources or in-kind goods or services. Federal agencies' and employees' 'in-kind' services cannot be considered as part of an applicant's match on shared costs unless authorized by a specific legal authority. 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.

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

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

All awards of financial assistance provided by the NOAA Marine Debris Program under the authority of the Marine Debris Act require a 1:1 contribution of non-federal matching funds. In addition, all financial assistance awards made by the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program under the authority of the Coral Reef Conservation Act are also subject to the same 1:1 matching funds requirement, which stipulates that federal funding may account for no more than 50% of the cost of an award.

"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)." Any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third party in-kind contributions, will be accepted as part of an applicant's cost sharing or matching when the contributions meet the criteria listed in 2 C.F.R. 200.306. For example, match can come from a variety of public and private sources and can include third party in-kind goods and services (e.g., private boat use, volunteer labor, etc.). To meet the 1:1 match requirement, applicants are permitted to combine contributions from multiple non-federal project collaborators, as long as such contributions are not being used to match any other funds and are available within the project period stated in the application. As previously noted - federal sources cannot be considered for matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage. Applicants may also choose to designate part or all of their federally-

negotiated indirect costs as match, since the valuation of such costs has already been federally approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to Section IV. E. 2. "Indirect Costs." Applicants should also note that the following activities, in general, will not be considered as match under project awards: (1) activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state or federal law; (2) activities that constitute restoration for natural resource damages under federal, state or local law; and (3) activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation.

Applicants must specify in their proposal the source(s) of match and may 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 and the recipient organization. Applicants must be prepared to document matching contributions for each project selected for funding.

With regard to the Coral Reef Conservation portion of an application, applicants should identify any additional public and private sources of funds or third party in-kind contributions outside of the non-federal matching requirement that may be available to the Coral Reef Conservation Fund in order to further leverage federal and non-federal matching funds. Applicants may request a waiver to the matching requirement as described below. Section 6403(b)(2) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 gives the NOAA Administrator the authority to waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets the following two requirements:

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 must 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, must be submitted as part of the final application package.

With regard to the marine debris portion of the application, a major goal of the NOAA MDP

is to fund projects that leverage funds and other contributions from a broad public and private sector. To this end, the Marine Debris Act requires applicants to demonstrate a minimum 1:1 ratio of non-federal matching contributions to NOAA funds requested to conduct the proposed project. In addition to formal match, NOAA strongly encourages applicants to leverage additional investment to the extent feasible. However, selected proposals will be held to this amount for financial reporting as described below.

If the match requirement cannot be met, the Marine Debris Act allows the NOAA Administrator to waive all or part of the matching requirement if the applicant can demonstrate the following:

1. No reasonable means are available through which applicants can meet the matching requirement, and
2. The probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement.

The Marine Debris Act also allows the NOAA Administrator to authorize, as appropriate, the non-federal share of the cost of a project to include money paid pursuant to, or the value of any in-kind service performed under, an administrative order on consent or judicial consent decree that will remove or prevent marine debris.

Any applicant wishing to request a match waiver must provide a match waiver request letter or provide other language in the required budget narrative as a part of the application package being submitted. The request must contain a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver, descriptions of 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 incorporation or local availability of matching contributions. However, if available, the inclusion of matching contributions is encouraged.

If applying for a match waiver for both CRCP and MDP, separate letters are required. For more information, refer to Section IV.B.11.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

This section intentionally left blank.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Standard application packages are available through the apply function on Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>). If an applicant does not have effective internet access, application packages may be requested from Craig Reid at 301-533-0783 or via e-mail at craig.a.reid@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

A complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document.

All application materials should use a legible 11- or 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides.

The complete application package should include the following forms and documents and should be grouped in two separate files:

A project narrative (proposal), as described in the application component section below, should be limited to no more than a total of 30 pages, single spaced. The project narrative should also include a title page and a table of content but these pages (title and table of content) will not count towards the project narrative 30-page limit.

Project narratives that exceed the 30-page limit will be shortened by removing pages at the end of the proposal narrative (see element 2 of the component section below) before being 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.

Federal forms from the SF-424 Form family should include the following forms as applicable:

- Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424
- Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A (prior to award, a Form SF-424A for each year of funding will be required)
- Assurances for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
- Certification Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable)

Appendices should be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (e.g., resumes, references, lists of relevant work products or reports, detailed methodologies, data sources, detailed budget narrative, letters of collaboration, letters of support, lists of data sources, and maps). Applicants should paginate their proposal and any appendices. Appendices should not total more than 30 total pages excluding forms, information to complete forms, detailed budget narrative, Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and environmental compliance information.

Federal forms, Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, and NEPA and environmental compliance information can be separately submitted or combined and submitted in one PDF document.

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.

In addition to the required forms, all funding application packages must contain the following 12 components:

1. Application Cover Sheet, which includes:
 - a) Project title;
 - b) Applicant organization (must match registered name in Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS));
 - c) Recipient DUNS number (must match applicant information in SAM.Gov)
 - d) Primary and alternate points of contact regarding the application (contact information including address, phone number, and email address);
 - e) Principal and other investigators (names, organization, and contact information);
 - f) Financial representative (names, organization, and contact information);
 - g) Geographic location(s) of the proposed project;
 - h) Amount of federal funding requested;
 - i) Amount and source(s) of matching funds provided;
 - j) Requested award start date (which must be the first day of the month), end date (which must be the last day of the month) and an award period of 48-months duration. Proposals to this competition may include an award start date of the first day of any month, August through October 2018;
 - k) Application summary: please provide a brief, one-paragraph description of the application including an overview of the types of activities that are proposed for funding.

2. Project Narrative. The project narrative comprises the majority of the application and must include a clear and thorough description of the proposed work, including key milestones. The narrative must be composed of two sections: CRCP and MDP. The applicant may choose to distribute funding between CRCP and MDP at their discretion, however, these totals may need to be negotiated based on available funding per respective program. Each task within these sections must be completely and accurately described.

Elements of a good project narrative include:

a) Identification of issue(s): Identify the problem/issue the project intends to address and describe its significance.

b) Project Objectives: Identify the specific objective, listed under Section I (B.) Program Priorities, to which the project's objective(s) corresponds. Objectives must be simple and understandable, as specific and quantitative as possible, and attainable within the proposed timeframe, the described budget, and the human resources available. Projects must be accomplishment-oriented and identify obtainable goals, outcomes, and products. Describe expected outcomes, results, or products resulting from the specific activities undertaken during the project period.

c) Project Narrative: The project narrative is the scientific or technical plan of activities that are to be accomplished. Project narratives must include detailed descriptions of each activity, including the rationale for the activity, how it will be accomplished, specific milestones, who will do the work, and expected products. The narrative must include information on dissemination of the findings/results to resource managers, local communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate. The project narrative also must include information on how the project will be evaluated for success.

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, Endangered Species Act, Historic Preservation Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act.

d) List the programs (federal, state, territorial or local governmental activities) this project may affect and describe how the project coordinates with relevant state, territorial, or local governmental and non-governmental agencies, and if applicable, NOAA activities.

e) Describe how the project will be organized and managed, and include the qualifications of the principal investigator(s) through a summary of professional backgrounds, curricula vitae, or resumes. The principal investigator may or may not be the applicant. However, if the applicant is not the principal investigator, there must be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and principal investigator (e.g., the applicant may be

responsible for managing the grant funds and the principal investigator will be responsible for completing the work). Applicants must include information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including the technical and administrative points of contact as appropriate.

f) Anticipated benefits. Identify the users of the information derived from the work, and the benefits that will be achieved for those users, as well as society as a whole. Document how beneficiary needs are guiding the proposed work. Describe how the information from the project will be delivered to beneficiaries, and any special considerations or requirements for ensuring or improving the delivery of information.

g) Milestone Schedule. Identify time for major tasks and target milestones for important intermediate and final products and key project outcomes.

3. Table of Products and Outcomes. Please provide a table to summarize the specific products/outputs and outcomes that will be produced under the award. All products resulting from the award must be provided to NOAA within 90 days of the end of the award period and must be of publishable quality. NOAA may make award products available to the public, so recipients are encouraged to omit sensitive information (i.e., budget or salary information) from products submitted to NOAA. All products must explicitly acknowledge the support of NOAA. For the Coral Reef Conservation Program elements, more specific acknowledgement guidance and logos are available at:

<https://coralreef.noaa.gov/about/graphicid.html>.

The information in the table must include all products and outputs that will be developed in conjunction with the award. For each entry, please provide a description of the product, a working title for the product, the type or format of the product (e.g., journal publication, public service announcement, watershed management plan, presentation, newsletter, metadata record, annual monitoring summary), and the expected date(s) when the product will be submitted to NOAA. NOAA will use this information to ensure that products are submitted to the agency in a timely manner and made available to the public whenever possible.

4. Budget Narrative and Justification. 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 2 CFR 200, Subpart E. 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: https://coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/forms/budget-narrative-guidance-for-NOAA-grants.pdf

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

- Name of identified qualified subrecipient or contractor, affiliation, contact information, and method of selection. Information must include the name and location (city, state, and Congressional district) of the entity receiving the funds and the location of the primary place of performance under the contract or sub award. 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 an itemized line item breakdown as well as total contract/award amount. If applicable, include any indirect costs paid under the contract/award and the indirect cost rate used.
- Itemized Budget. Include categories used in program budget for subrecipients or cost-based contractors. If applicable, include any direct cost paid under the subaward or contract and the indirect cost rate used.

All subawards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.330-200.332 for subawards, and 200.317-200.326 for procurements.

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs or price is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. 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 CFR 200.33 Equipment, 2 CFR 200.313, and 2 CFR 200.317-326.

Non-federal applicants should 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 CFR 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 DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section G.05.c.,

http://www.osc.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2031%20March%202017.pdf, 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 (GMD) workshop for recipients.

Refer to item 12 below in this Section regarding treatment of Indirect Costs in the Budget Narrative. NOAA will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, or 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 funds.

5. Appendices. Only material submitted as a single appendix package will be reviewed. Appendices must be paginated and limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (e.g., detailed budget information, letters of collaboration, resumes, references, data sources, maps, NEPA information).

a) Mandatory Detailed Budget Information, including budgets and separate SF424As of subawards. Information should include the name of the entity receiving funds, the location of the entity receiving the funds (e.g., city, state, and Congressional district), the location of the entity receiving funds (city, state, and Congressional district), and the location of the primary place of performance under the award.

b) Resumes. Provide curriculum vitae (CV) for the Principal Investigator, and abbreviated CVs for other key personnel critical to the success of the project. Ensure that CVs address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work. For other than the Principal Investigator, publication, presentation, and fieldwork listings should be limited to those in the last five years with up to five other relevant publications.

c) Letters of Collaboration. All supporting letters from partner organizations that are instrumental to the project shall be included in the application package. Letters must clearly indicate the level of commitment and/or collaboration. Letters of collaboration do not need original signatures.

d) Data Management Plan:

1. 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 Coral Reef Conservation or Marine Debris Programs. 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.

2. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to three pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by both NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program and Marine Debris Program in the Announcement (see Section IV.B.5-6 below). 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.

3. 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.

NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available under:

http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.html. Principal Investigators should indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.

More information about the NOAA Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Committee website at:

www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php. Refer also to Section VIB. of this announcement.

5. Coral Reef Conservation Program Data Management Guidance to Proposal Writers: Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Craig Reid, Federal Program Officer, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, craig.a.reid@noaa.gov, 240-533-0783.

Data Accessibility: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program requires that public access to grant/contract-produced data be enabled. Funding recipients are expected to submit data to NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI), which will provide public access and permanent archiving. The NOAA Program has held preliminary consultation with NCEI regarding these pending data.

Technical Recommendations: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program is not offering specific technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

Resources: NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program resources for data sharing or archiving have already been identified; proposals should not include such costs (unless data volume is expected to exceed 20GB). 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.

6. Marine Debris Program Data Management Guidance to Proposal Writers:

Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Tom Barry, Federal Program Officer, Marine Debris Program, tom.barry@noaa.gov, 240-533-0425.

Data Accessibility: Funding recipients are responsible for establishing their own procedures and hosting capabilities for collected environmental data in order to ensure that public access to grant-produced data is enabled to the maximum extent practical. The NOAA Marine Debris Program does not require any specific data format, access method, or other technical guidance beyond what is described in this section, however the use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

Technical Recommendations: The NOAA Marine Debris Program is not offering specific technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

Resources: The proposal budget may include reasonable costs associated with compliance with this guidance.

e) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental Compliance -- Under (NEPA), NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of projects or proposals seeking funding from NOAA. Refer to Section VI.B.4 of this announcement.

After the application is submitted, NOAA may require additional information to fulfill NEPA and other compliance requirements. If NOAA determines that an environmental assessment is required, applicants may also be requested to assist in drafting the assessment. Applicants may also be required to cooperate with NOAA in providing additional information about the project needed for an environmental assessment, and/or identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so may be grounds for the denial of an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

The applicants selected for funding must complete questions 1 - 19 of the Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Financial Assistance Applicants accessible at 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). Questions 20 - 53 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 or fisheries sampling and analysis.

Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA websites: <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 under https://www.coast.noaa.gov/funding/_pdf/CEQ%20Regulations%20for%20Implementing%20the%20Procedural%20Provisions%20of%20NEPA.pdf

f) Other appendices such as support letters, references, lists of data sources, and maps.

6. Standard Form 424 (SF-424): Application for Federal Assistance (7/2003 version or newer). At the time of final application submission, all applicants must submit a signed and dated copy of Standard Form SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance," to indicate the total amount of federal funds and non-federal matching funds proposed for the project period. Original signatures and dates are required on all hard copy SF-424 forms submitted by mail; an electronic signature is applied automatically when an application is successfully submitted via Grants.gov.

7. Standard Form 424A (SF-424A): Budget Information for Non-construction Programs (includes 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. 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.

All known subawards should also be accompanied by a separate SF-424A form to fully document the proposed subaward budget.

8. Standard Form 424B (SF-424B): Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.

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

9. Form CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying. Applicants are required to submit a Form CD-511, 'Certifications Regarding Lobbying

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 and 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 an Endangered Species Act 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 and the Marine Debris Act. However, if the proposal lacks sufficient matching funds for the application, the applicant may include a separate document requesting a waiver to the matching funds requirement as described in section 6403(b)(2) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act or in the Marine Debris Act. Although NOAA 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 for Coral Reef Conservation Program elements to Ms. Jennifer Koss, CRCP

Manager, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East West Highway, 10th Floor, SSMC4, N/ORR, Silver Spring, MD 20910; address waiver requests for Marine Debris Program elements to Ms. Nancy Wallace, MDP Manager, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East West Highway, 10th Floor, SSMC4, N/ORR, Silver Spring, MD. All waiver requests must 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 CFR 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 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 minimis rate described at 2 CFR 200.414. Non-federal entities that have never received a negotiated indirect (F&A) cost rate may 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 IV.F for more information on indirect cost rates and establishing a new indirect cost rate with the DOC.

In addition to the 12 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. 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 (DUNS), as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25 at <http://go.usa.gov/x9PYd>.

Applicants should: (1) Be registered in the federal SAM before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid DUNS number on an application; and (3) 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. The federal awarding agency may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

Applicants should allow a minimum of seven days to complete the SAM registration, although complete registration for SAM may take several weeks if problems arise.

Registration is required only once but must be renewed once a year.

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through www.grants.gov.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by and validated by Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern time on Wednesday, February 28, 2018 (one or the other - hard copy or electronic, but not both).

If for any reason applicants are unable to submit their application through Grants.gov or are concerned about possible problems associated with the Grants.gov system, they may provide a paper copy of their full application by mail. Applications submitted by mail must include all relevant application elements described above, must include a SF-424 form with original ink or valid electronic signature and date from an authorized recipient organization representative, and must be stamped with an official U.S. Postal Service postmark or provided to a commercial carrier with tracking number and receipt on or before 11:59 pm Eastern on Wednesday, February 28, 2018; private metered postmarks are unacceptable. Please address all mailed applications to: Craig Reid, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC4, 10th floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Paper

applications received more than 10 business days after the deadline will not be reviewed, and applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their applications.

Applicants should be aware that localized hazardous weather or other situations beyond their control impacting their ability to submit packages before deadlines may not result in changes to the application deadline. If a major disaster has recently been declared in your area that will or has prevented a timely submission, please contact Craig Reid at the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (301-533-0783 or via e-mail: craig.a.reid@noaa.gov) immediately for extension or waiver consideration within 5 business days of the due date.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Funding Applications are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." It is the state agency'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>.

F. 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 minimis 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 DOC. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions 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

Indirect-cost-rate-agreement documentation is not required for subawardees; however indirect cost rates at the negotiated levels should be paid by the primary awardee. Under 2

CFR 200.414 “Indirect (F&A) Costs,” any applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs which may be used indefinitely. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both pursuant to 2 CFR 200.403 “Factors affecting allowability of costs.” If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all federal awards until such time as a cooperator chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-federal entity may apply to do at any time. The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the DOC Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06.

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.

Recipients are subject to the 2 CFR 200, Subpart E “Cost Principles” and as well as any DOC implementing regulations that may be in effect at the time of award. 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.

4. Other

Expenditures on large equipment and/or infrastructure are not a priority for funding under this program.

G. 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 Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (www.dnb.com) and be registered in the SAM.Gov, 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.Gov 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 application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.482). 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 Craig Reid, 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 10 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.

Attn: Craig Reid
NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program
1305 East West Highway
SSMC4, 10th floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (30 percent): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.
2. Technical and scientific merit (30 percent): 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.
3. Overall qualifications of the applicants (15 percent): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
4. Project costs (15 percent): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and timeframe.
5. Outreach and education (5 percent): 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 and whether the applicant has proposed sufficient mechanisms for sharing project information and results with relevant stakeholders and the interested public.
6. Data management plan (5 points): This criteria assesses whether the project includes a thorough and effective data management plan. Applications will be evaluated on the following:
Project includes a data management plan that ensures that environmental data will be visible, accessible, and independently understandable to users. Application includes a clear explanation if a data management plan is not required for this project (no environmental data produced) or if data is not publicly accessible due to law, regulation, policy (such as those applicable to personally identifiable information or protected critical infrastructure information or proprietary trade information) or by security requirements.

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposal Review and Selection Process: An initial administrative screening is conducted to determine compliance with requirements/completeness. All proposals that meet the minimum requirements will be evaluated and individually ranked in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by at least three independent peer reviewers

through a merit review process. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Appropriate mechanisms will be established to avoid conflicts of interest during the proposal review process. Merit reviewer ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

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, may ask applicants to work together or combine projects, may defer applications to the future, or may 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, e.g., FY 18 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 Office for Coastal Management officials. 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.

Risk Review: After applications are proposed for funding by the selecting official, the Grants Office will perform administration reviews. 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. NOAA reserves the right to impose specific conditions or 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, consistent with requirements in 2 C.F.R. 200.205, 200.207, and 200.212. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be made by the NOAA Grants Officer.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official, an official within the Office for Coastal Management (or their designee) anticipates recommending applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following selection factors:

- (1) Availability of funding;
- (2) Balance/distribution of funds: a) by geographic area, b) by type of institutions, c) by type of partners, d) by research areas; or 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 set out in Sections I.A. and I.B.;
- (5) An applicant's prior award performance;
- (6) Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
- (7) Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA GMD.

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

Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not among those recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications submitted in hard copy will be kept on file in accordance with NOAA records requirements and then destroyed.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Successful applicants will be notified at least 30 days prior to the award start date. The anticipated start date for cooperative agreement awards made under this competition is the first day of any month, August through October, 2018, 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 selection package has been approved by the NOAA

GMD, which is expected to be approximately September 2018. Unsuccessful applications submitted to this competition will be retained for three years and then destroyed.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the NOAA 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 Commerce Form 450 (CD-450), Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer Electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online.

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

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. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXC7A>.

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at 2 C.F.R. 200, implemented by the Department of Commerce at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXCJQ>.

3. Terms and Conditions

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will

apply to awards in this program. These terms will be provided in the award package in Grants Online. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions, including those limiting the use of funds for compliance activities such as outstanding environmental compliance requirements, which will be applied on a case-by-case basis, and requirements for submitting progress reports.

4. NEPA Requirements

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts for individual projects as required by NEPA. 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, and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) implementation regulations.

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

5. Data Management Requirements

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.

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement 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 Section IV.B. of this 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.

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.

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.

NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available under:

http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.html

Principal Investigators should indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past.

More information about the Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Committee website at: www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php

6. Certifications Regarding Federal Felony and Federal Criminal Tax Convictions, Unpaid

Federal Tax Assessments and Delinquent Federal Tax Returns.

When applicable under federal appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) may be required to provide certain pre-award certifications regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns.

7. Limitation of Liability

Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of continuing Congressional appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for the programs listed in this notice. 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 any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

NOAA reserves the right to halt activity under the award through enforcement procedures under 2 C.F.R. 200.338-.342, Remedies for Non-compliance, if the recipient is not fulfilling the requirements of the project as outlined in the grant award. Non-compliance with a federally approved project may result in termination of the award as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.339.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports consistent with 2 CFR 200.327 - .329 and DOC 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 DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. NOAA will provide instructions for submitting financial and progress reports upon request. CRCP is currently preparing new performance progress report templates for OMB approval. Should these templates become approved before the award is issued, CRCP may incorporate their use for every report requirement.

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. 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 public release; distribution is unlimited." If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publications must be made available to the public free of charge.

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

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall conduct an inventory at least once every two years and in award closeout in accordance with OMB guidance that Commerce adopted by regulation at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, which shall be incorporated under the award. The equipment requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance are set out at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.313.

As necessary, SF-428 property forms may be attached as an appendix to the final progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

Recipients must submit reports at least annually and at award closeout on the status of real property in which the federal government retains an interest, unless the federal interest in the real property extends 15 years or more. As necessary, SF-429 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

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 "Submit Additional Closeout Documents" as an award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with OMB requirements.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards issued. 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. See 2 CFR 170 at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl.

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative and technical questions regarding this announcement, contact the competition manager: Craig Reid at the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, SSMC4, N/ORM1 1305 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or contact him at 301-533-0783 or via e-mail: craig.a.reid@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out an award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, codified by the Department of Commerce at 1327.101. All cost reimbursement sub-awards (e.g. subgrants, subcontracts) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflicts of interest and nondisclosure agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, 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 Federal Funding Opportunity 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 that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged,

Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

If an applicant submits multiple electronic versions of the proposal, the applicant should advise the federal agency of the tracking number that should be withdrawn.

Applicants shall not electronically submit packages with files embedded within files as any such files may not be reviewed or factored into the merit review process.

The paper copy submission process is an option for applicants in remote island or office locations and for those who do not have access to the Internet.

The federal program office has a process to review for completeness. Administrative reviews generally take place after deadlines because the majority of applicants apply just before deadlines. If there are no time constraints and available resources, the federal agency may reach back to applicants who have submitted incomplete packages.