

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service (NESDIS), National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Scientific Data Stewardship Project Office for 2009

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NESDIS-NESDISPO-2009-2001589

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.440, Environmental Sciences, Applications, Data, and Education.

Dates: Letters of Intent should be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, October 31, 2008. Full proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, December 15, 2008.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Scientific Data Stewardship (SDS) Project seeks to support the development and stewardship of Climate Data Records (CDRs) for the atmosphere, cryosphere, oceans, and land surface. The Project follows the National Research Council's 2004 distinction between Fundamental and Thematic Climate Data Records, and is initially focused on Fundamental CDRs and lower complexity Thematic CDRs. The SDS Project is managed by NOAA, but is informed by other government agencies such that its results represent a government-wide contribution to climate change detection, assessment, understanding, adaptation and/or mitigation.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

As part of its climate mandate, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has a responsibility to provide the Nation with objective data and tools to help characterize, understand, predict, mitigate and adapt to climate change and variability. To help fulfill that responsibility, NOAA has begun coordinating its Climate Data Record (CDR) activities with other agencies through the U.S. Climate Change Science Program (CCSP). The National Research Council defines a CDR as "a time series of measurements of sufficient length, consistency, and continuity to determine climate variability and change."

NOAA's National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) initiated the Scientific Data Stewardship (SDS) Project (hereafter referred to as the Project) to lead the Agency's CDR activities and to coordinate with the partner agencies. Given that early algorithm development is supported elsewhere, the Project is focused on the generalization and application of mature algorithms to multiple satellites and sensors which together span climate-relevant time periods. It also supports development of Climate Information Records (CIRs), defined as time series derived from CDRs and related long-term measurements that provide specific information (e.g., drought area, hurricane trends) about complex environmental phenomena in a manner useful to a variety of applications and user communities. Together, the various SDS products serve a wide range of scientific, commercial, decision support and policy-making needs.

Various CDRs have been developed in the past, most notably through the NOAA-NASA Pathfinder Program in the 1990s. NOAA intends to leverage lessons from such efforts into a more systematic, comprehensive and sustained program. To help achieve this, the Project plans to execute its responsibilities in partnership with the larger scientific community through regular NOAA Announcements of Opportunity as well as through community reviews and working groups. The Project represents one of NOAA's primary contributions to the CCSP's climate data goals.

B. Program Priorities

The SDS Project provides fundamental and geophysical CDRs per the recommendations of the CCSP, the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS), and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report. The Project organizes CDRs according to the parameter contributions to major environmental phenomena (e.g., water cycle, carbon cycle, energy budget). The

Project systematically addresses different phenomena over time, such that a contemporaneously developed CDR suite is coherent and complementary. The Project expects that this approach will facilitate timely integrated analyses of key climatic systems.

To date, many robust and validated algorithms have been developed elsewhere to quantitatively retrieve these parameters - often for a single satellite instrument. In many cases, these algorithms are now appropriate for generalization and application to a longer time series of observations and execution in a sustained production environment. The Project will provide both support and a formalized framework within which to achieve algorithm generalization, routine production, ongoing maintenance, validation and product analysis.

The Project intends to develop CDRs using applicable data from current and heritage satellites (research and operational), including some of the earliest space platforms. Further, the Project seeks to ensure that its algorithms and tools are extendable to future satellite observations, especially those from the Nation's forthcoming NPP, NPOESS and Jason missions. In many cases, mature satellite CDR algorithms are augmented by non-satellite data. The Project's goal is to extend proven algorithms to a sufficiently large set of observations that near-seamless long-term aggregate records are obtained. Application of same or similar algorithms across different satellites, when practical, allows development of homogeneous error structures - a key Project goal. The SDS expects rigorous error analysis in all of its products.

To meet the Nation's diverse climate product needs, two unique production contexts are typically required. Many algorithms must be executed within weeks of the observations to provide ongoing inputs to intraseasonal applications and research. However, these "initial production" climate products typically do not meet the more rigorous uncertainty specifications of retrospective climate data analysis. Therefore, more accurate and precise climate products are generated through data reprocessing following significant time lapses (typically years). The longer latency allows for incorporation of improved spacecraft, instrument, and algorithm knowledge, as well as for improved ancillary and auxiliary data. The Project supports both production contexts.

The Project will conduct most initial CDR algorithm activities through competed Product Development Teams. This Announcement requests proposals to provide or support the Teams. The Teams will be responsible for developing an algorithm and production framework that achieves Project goals. In the near term, the Project expects many or most Development Teams to generate and validate their products at their home institutions or in partnership with federal laboratories. Over the longer term, NOAA may seek to consolidate some or all routine production activities around its operational Centers and/or NOAA Cooperative Institutes. Applicants should consider any CDR, proposed in response to this Announcement, as eligible for such migration and transition. However, no funds awarded under this competition can be used for CDR migration and transition to NOAA.

After an initial grants period, the Project anticipates competing algorithm maintenance contracts to ensure continuing algorithm reliability, improvement and production success. It also anticipates routinely competing product validation and analysis grants to maintain high quality results. Product approach and maturity will be regularly reviewed by an independent community-based Climate Record Working Group composed of outstanding climate science leaders and other stakeholders.

NOAA's SDS Project is strongly focused on building a well-conceived and durable approach to the CDR information preservation. To ensure maximum societal benefit, the Project puts significant emphasis on the quality and transparency of its processes and products. To meet these and others objectives associated with an operational agency, the Project's codes, products and tools adhere to and/or extend best practices as developed through heritage research and operational programs, including NASA's Earth Observing System (EOS). The disciplined use of such practices will help ensure maximum scientific value, information preservation and long-term societal benefit at reasonable lifecycle costs.

Scientific Data Stewardship FY 2009 Project Focus Areas

The President's FY 2009 budget identifies initial dedicated funding for NOAA's CDR efforts as addressed by the Project. The present NOAA SDS Announcement of Opportunity was developed in response to this budget, and is the first of what may be a series of funding opportunities. For FY 2009, the Project seeks proposals in two areas: 1) CDR Product Development Teams, and 2) Processes, procedures, standards and tools that facilitate coherent, sustainable and scientifically defensible results across the Project. These areas are discussed in more detail below.

1) CDR Product Development Teams

The Project is initially focused on Fundamental CDRs (FCDRs, i.e., calibrated and quality-controlled long term sensor data records that have been improved over time). Therefore, the Project seeks Product Development Team proposals for the initial priority FCDRs listed below. FCDR proposals should address NOAA's desire to efficiently and economically reprocess CDRs from complete data records in the future.

Initial Priority FCDR Parameter Sets

Multispectral Imager(s) Solar Reflective SDR
Mutispectral Imager(s) Thermal Emissive SDR
Total Ozone Sensor(s) (Nadir) SDR
Ozone Profile Sensor(s) (Limb) SDR
Microwave Sounder(s) SDR
Thermal Infrared Sounder(s) SDR
Radiation Budget Sensor(s) SDR

Note: SDR=Sensor Data Record, or climate-quality calibrated and geo-located

radiances, reflectances, temperatures and/or radar return, as appropriate for the sensing technology.

As funding permits, the Project will address a small set of lower complexity Thematic CDRs (TCDRs, i.e., geophysical variables, such as sea surface temperature, that are derived from FCDRs). The Project's current phenomenological focus is on the Earth's energy and water cycles. Therefore, the Project seeks Product Development Team proposals for TCDRs whose parameters comprise or impact these cycles. For the purposes of this Announcement, these TCDRs and the FCDRs listed above comprise the FY 2009 Priority CDRs. Proposers may address related parameters if such parameters can be retrieved from variants of these algorithms, or if they are used for validation of an FY 2009 Priority CDR.

The Project anticipates challenges in generalizing and transitioning research developments into an operational framework. Therefore, it is initially focused on supporting a relatively small group of pathfinding efforts from investigator teams demonstrating experience and an understanding of routine processing. Priority will be given to CDRs that can be directly linked to outstanding challenges identified in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report or other specific societal benefit areas (e.g., those identified in the Global Earth Observation System of Systems - GEOSS framework). Moreover, priority will be given to CDRs whose source data will include those from planned NPP/NPOESS or Jason-series platforms in addition to heritage and current platforms.

To address the diverse skills needed for a Product Development Team, proposers may wish to assemble traditional Principal Investigator teams focused on one CDR or activity, or organize into larger teams that address a production chain of FCDR(s) and one or more downstream TCDR(s) and related activities. The larger Product Development Team proposals must clearly identify the Team Leader, the team organization and its interaction approach. Such efforts would likely require collaboration among experts in the climate, remote sensing and data management communities, and should be informed by user feedback on the accessibility and usability of the produced CDRs. Investigators addressing FCDR work exclusively are encouraged to partner or identify with one or more TCDR Product Development Teams such that contemporaneous FCDR and TCDR evaluation, validation and iterative improvement are possible. The Project will seek a balance in supporting existing teams that can extend their current activities and develop CDR approaches in the very near term, as well as those that require longer development and testing time.

To help ensure stakeholder trust and support, the Project expects each Product Development Team to conduct an early community workshop (year 1 of funding) in which it will explain the theoretical basis of its algorithm and its proposed CDR development approach. The Team is expected to consider all suggestions and requests for action, and to develop a workshop report outlining its responses and consequent algorithm modifications. If the Team chooses not to incorporate a community-recommended modification, it must explain and defend its decision.

To ensure resulting CDRs are scientifically-defensible, traceable and transparent, Project developments must be open to public inspection and scrutiny, as well as independent generation of repeatable results. Therefore, products and supporting information (including source codes) should be made available to NOAA Data Center(s) for public accessibility, preservation and stewardship. Proposers are encouraged, but not required, to seek partnerships with NOAA Centers or NOAA Cooperative Institutes at the onset.

Note that, as part of an operational agency, the SDS Project is not soliciting or supporting early or high-risk satellite retrieval algorithm development, as those contributions will be solicited through more research-focused programs and agencies. Therefore, to be considered for funding, proposers to this Announcement should show that the proposed CDR algorithms have reached a critical level of maturity in science and data preservation and are of demonstrable societal benefit. In cases where related algorithm development, production or validation activities are already funded (locally or elsewhere in the community), proposers should explain how the proposed work complements, extends or exploits the other funded efforts.

2) Processes, procedures, standards and tools

The Project also seeks proposals offering to help develop and demonstrate effective approaches to Project goals beyond CDR algorithm development. Product Development Team proposals or independent proposals may offer to help define and transition "best practice" tools, toolsets, systems and procedures into the Project. These might include coding standards, metadata schemes, quality analysis approaches, configuration management (CM), provenance tracking schemes, guidelines for process portability, and information preservation (including documentation), among others. It may also include specific product or climate instrument activities, including pre-launch, post-launch or post-mission instrument (inter-) calibration and characterization (for future platforms), product evaluation and validation, and scientific and societal benefit demonstrations and applications with CDRs, among others. As appropriate, investigators should specify how their climate-oriented work would complement activities funded elsewhere, such as by research agencies, other NOAA programs and offices, and the NPOESS Integrated Program Office.

For further information, investigators should contact Jeff Privette (jeff.privette-at-noaa.gov, 828-271-4331) or Ed Kearns (ed.kearns-at-noaa.gov, 828-350-2410).

C. Program Authority

49 U.S.C. 44720(b) and 33 U.S.C. 883d

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

The total anticipated federal funding in FY 2009 is \$2.6M for new awards. The anticipated number of new awards, pending adequate proposals of merit, is from 5 to 15. Please be advised that actual funding levels will depend upon the final FY 2009 budget appropriations. Current plans assume that 100% of the total resources provided through the present FY 2009 SDS Announcement will support extramural efforts that include the broad academic, non-profit, federal and commercial communities.

In FY 2007, the first year of SDS grants, the Project made eight awards totaling approximately \$800K. In FY 2008, the Project expanded total funding to nearly \$1,000K, which included funding for three new starts. Past or current grantees funded under this announcement are eligible to apply for a new award, which builds on previous activities or areas of research not covered in the previous award. Current grantees should not request supplementary funding for ongoing research through this announcement.

The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Awards are to be up to three years in length except where noted otherwise by the Project.

B. Project/Award Period

The duration of awards will be one to three years, with funding for multi-year awards contingent on satisfactory progress in prior years and funding availability.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards for non-Federal applicants will be a grant unless it is anticipated that NOAA will be substantially involved in the implementation of the award, in which case the funding instrument should be a cooperative agreement. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, proposals for collaboration between NOAA or NOAA scientists and a recipient scientist or technician and/or contemplation by NOAA of detailing Federal personnel to work on proposed projects. Proposals selected for funding from NOAA applicants shall be effected by an intra-agency fund transfer. Proposals selected for funding from non-NOAA Federal agencies will be funded through an inter-agency transfer. NOAA will make decisions regarding the use of a cooperative agreement on

a case-by-case basis. Funding for contractual arrangements for services and products for delivery to NOAA is not available under this announcement.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education; other nonprofits; for profits; commercial organizations; international organizations; state, local and Indian tribal governments; and Federal agencies. Applications from non-Federal and Federal applicants will be competed against each other. PLEASE NOTE: Before non-NOAA Federal applicants may be funded, they must demonstrate that they have legal authority to receive funds from another Federal agency in excess of their appropriation. The only exception to this is governmental research facilities for awards issued under the authority of 49 U.S.C. 44720(b). Because this announcement is not proposing to procure goods or services from applicants, the Economy Act (31 U.S.C. 1535) is not an appropriate legal basis.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

This competition does not have Cost Sharing requirements. However, applicants are welcome to describe applicable cost-sharing when relevant.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Not applicable

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Applications are available at www.grants.gov. If the applicant does not have Internet access, please contact the SDSPO Grants Manager, Linda S. Statler, NOAA Scientific Data Stewardship Project Office, 151 Patton Ave, Asheville, NC 28801, by phone at 828-271-4657, or E-mail: Linda.S.Statler-at-noaa.gov.

Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system prior to submitting an application. This registration process can take several weeks, involving multiple

steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, applicants should register as soon as possible, even if they are not yet ready to submit their proposal. If an applicant has problems downloading the application package from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at (800) 518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the requirements listed below. Failure to heed the requirements will result in proposals being returned without review.

Letters of Intent (LOI)

The purpose of the LOI process is to provide information to potential applicants on the relevance of their proposed project to the SDS Project and the likelihood of it being funded in advance of preparing a full proposal. While it is in the best interest of the applicants and their institutions to submit an LOI, it is not a requirement; applicants who do not submit an LOI are allowed to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will be encouraged only for LOIs deemed relevant.

LOIs may be submitted by e-mail to the SDS Project Manager, Jeff.Privette-at-noaa.gov.

The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the Project's FY 2009 Priority CDR(s) or activities. The LOI should be no more than two pages in length and should include the components listed below. If these components are not included, the LOI risks a delayed response and may not be considered by the Project Manager.

- (1) Identification of the FY 2009 Priority CDR(s) or activities that are being targeted in the LOI.
- (2) Specification of a tentative project title in the LOI.
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of all principal investigator(s), and specification of which individual is the Lead Principal Investigator. LOIs for larger Product Development Team proposals (addressing a production chain of FCDR(s) and one or more downstream TCDR(s) and related activities) should indicate the proposed Team Leader. If a proposed Product Development Team wishes to partner with particular NOAA subject matter expert(s) or Center(s), those persons or facilities should be stated.
- (4) Statement of the problem.
- (5) Brief summary of work to be completed, methodology to be used, data sets needed or to be collected, and approximate cost of the project.

The SDS Project Manager will review each LOI to determine whether the LOI is responsive to the Project goals as advertised in this notice. An LOI response (e-mail

or letter) will be sent back to the investigator encouraging or discouraging a full proposal. The final decision to submit a full proposal will be made by the investigator.

Full Proposal Application

The following forms and elements are required in each application. Failure to comply with these provisions will result in proposals being returned without review.

PI proposals must be limited to 20 pages (numbered using Times font at 12 point minimum), including budget, investigators vitae, and all appendices, and should be limited to funding requests for 1 to 3 year duration. Larger Product Development Team proposals (addressing a production chain of FCDR(s) and one or more downstream TCDR(s) and related activities) are limited to 20 pages plus up to 3 additional pages for each CDR parameter set (i.e., a group of related CDRs produced from a single algorithm) addressed. Appended information may not be used to circumvent the page length limit. Federally mandated forms and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Statement are not included within the page count.

If the proposal is from a NOAA Cooperative Institute, it would be helpful (but is not required) to include the current NOAA cooperative agreement award number and the name of the NOAA contact for the agreement.

1. Required Elements (all full proposals must include the following):

(1) Title Page: The title page shall identify the Principal Investigator (PI) and the institutional representative and should clearly indicate which FY 2009 Priority CDR(s) or activities are being addressed. If more than one investigator is listed on the title page, please identify the lead investigator. The PI and institutional representative should be identified by full name, title, organization, telephone number and address. For paper submissions, the title page must be signed by the PI and the institutional representative. The total amount of Federal funds being requested should be listed for each budget period.

(2) Abstract: An abstract must be included and should contain an introduction of the problem, rationale and a brief summary of work to be completed. The abstract should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, institution(s), investigator(s), total proposed cost and budget period.

(3) Results from Prior Research: The results of each prior or ongoing research or development projects (during the last 3 years) relevant to the proposed effort should be summarized in brief paragraphs. This section should not exceed two pages.

(4) Project Description: The proposed project must be completely described, including identification of the problem, scientific objectives, proposed methodology, and the SDS FY 2009 Priority CDR(s) or activities given earlier in this announcement. Benefits of the proposed project to the Project, the general public

and the scientific community should be discussed. The project description, including references, but excluding figures and other visual materials, must not exceed 10 pages of text. Proposals from larger Project Development Teams may include a project description containing up to 10 pages of the overall project description plus up to three additional pages for each CDR parameter set (i.e., a group of related CDRs produced from a single algorithm) addressed. Investigators wishing to partner with particular NOAA subject matter expert(s) or Centers should clearly state their requests (include contact information). Because various CDR-related activities are currently funded by NOAA and other federal agencies, all proposers should state how the proposed work extends, leverages or complements those activities.

(5) Budget Justification: A brief description of the expenses itemized on the budget and how they address the proposed work. Item justifications must include salaries, equipment, publications, supplies, tuition, travel, etc. Note that a representative(s) from each successful proposal team will be expected to participate in one SDS Project meeting per year in Asheville, NC.

(6) Budget: The proposal must include total and annual itemized budgets corresponding with the descriptions provided in the project description. Travel must be itemized to include destination, airfare, per diem, lodging and ground travel.

(7) Vitae: Abbreviated curriculum vitae are sought with each proposal. Reference lists should be limited to all publications in the last three years with up to five other relevant papers.

(8) Current and Pending Support: For each investigator, submit a list that includes project title, supporting agency with grant number, investigator months per year, dollar value and duration. Requested values should be listed for pending support.

(9) DUNS Number: All applications must have a DUNS (Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System) when applying for Federal grants on or after October 1, 2003. No application is deemed complete without the DUNS number and only OMB may grant exceptions. This section is not applicable to NOAA applicants, but is applicable to other Federal applicants whose funds will be transferred via an inter-agency transfer.

(10) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Questionnaire: Applicants do not need to provide answers to the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire at this time. However, NOAA may require additional information from the applicant regarding potential environmental impacts prior to reviewing the application.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Letters of Intent (LOI) should be received at the Scientific Data Stewardship

Project Office no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time, October 31, 2008. Applicants who have not received a response to their LOI within four weeks should contact the SDSPO Grants Manager. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to submit LOIs.

Full proposals must be received no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time, December 15, 2008. Proposals received after that time will not be considered for funding. A date time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness for applications submitted through Grants.gov. Hard copy applications will be date and time stamped when they are received.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under the SDS Project are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

E. Funding Restrictions

None

F. Other Submission Requirements

(1) Location for LOI Submission: LOIs are encouraged to be submitted by E-mail to the SDS Project Manager, Jeff Privette. If an applicant does not have Internet access, LOI hard copies should be sent to the Project Manager (see Section VII below for contact information).

(2) Location for Application Submission: Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>), unless an applicant does not have Internet access or is a Federal agency. If an applicant does not have Internet access, please contact the SDSPO Grants Manager, Linda S. Statler, for hard copy instructions (see Section VII below for contact information). Federal agencies must submit applications by E-mail to the SDSPO Grants Manager, Linda S. Statler (see Section VII below for E-mail address).

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (40%)

This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, State, or local activities. For the SDS competition, this includes relevance to the SDS Project, NOAA and CCSP CDR goals, and if the work is applicable to the FY 2009 Priority CDRs or activities.

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (40%)

This 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 Applicants (10%)

This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

4. Project Costs (10%)

The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

5. Outreach and Education (0%)

NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For the SDS competition, this criterion is not scored.

B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full application has been received by SDSPO, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

Independent peer mail reviewers, and/or independent peer panel reviewers consisting of Federal, or a combination of both Federal and non-Federal experts, will evaluate full proposals in accordance with the evaluation criteria.

If peer mail review and peer panel review are both conducted, the mail reviews will be provided to the panel for use in its deliberations prior to providing its ratings.

If only a peer mail review is conducted, the Project Manager will use the rank numerical order of the mail reviews to determine funding recommendations. If only a

peer panel review or both a peer panel review and a peer mail review are conducted, the Project Manager will use the numerical rank order of the peer review panel to determine funding recommendations.

Occasionally a reviewer may, due to lack of familiarity in a particular area, choose not to score a particular proposal. The scores from remaining peer panel reviewers for that proposal will be averaged to produce a single numerical score for the proposal. The average score for each proposal will be used to determine rank of proposals.

The Project Manager will recommend proposals to the Selecting Official in numerical rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon additional documented requirements of any selection factor listed in Section C. below. The Project Manager will review the amounts requested for each selected proposal (including costs for computing and networking services) and recommend the total duration and the amount of funding, which may be less than the proposal and budget requested. The Selecting Official will review the recommendations.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless a proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon any of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research area
 - e. By project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies
4. SDS Project priorities and policy factors
5. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Partnerships with/participation of targeted group
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 Grants Officer.

The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for award to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the 3 months following the full proposal due date. We anticipate that funding decisions on proposals will be made by April 2009. Funding for successful applicants is expected to begin during spring 2009 for most approved projects. Proposals should use June 1, 2009, as the Start Date unless otherwise directed by the Project Manager.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notifications will be issued to the Authorizing Official and the Principle Investigator of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements
The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696) are applicable to this solicitation.

Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if the Project fails to receive funding or is cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals that are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, with a link to NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/nepanet.htm>. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their project 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 of 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. The 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.

Compliance With Department of Commerce Bureau of Industry and Security Export Administration Regulations

(a) This clause applies to the extent that this financial assistance award involves access to export-controlled information or technology. (b) In performing this financial assistance award, the recipient may gain access to export-controlled information or technology. The recipient is responsible for compliance with all applicable laws and regulations regarding export-controlled information and technology, including deemed exports. The recipient shall establish and maintain throughout performance of the financial assistance award effective export compliance procedures at non-NOAA facilities. At a minimum, these export compliance procedures must include adequate controls of physical, verbal, visual, and electronic access to export-controlled information and technology. (c) Definitions (1) Deemed export. The Export Administration Regulations (EAR) define a deemed export as any release of technology or source code subject to the EAR to a foreign national, both in the United States and abroad. Such release is "deemed" to be an export to the home country of the foreign national. 15 CFR 734.2(b)(2)(ii). (2) Export-controlled information and technology. Export-controlled information and technology is information and technology subject to the EAR (15 CFR parts 730 et seq.), implemented by the DOC Bureau of Industry and Security, or the International Traffic I Arms Regulations (ITAR) (22 CFR parts 120-130), implemented by the Department of State, respectively. This includes, but is not limited to, dual-us

items, defense articles and any related assistance, services, software or technical data as defined in the EAR and ITAR. (d) The recipient shall control access to all export-controlled information and technology that it possesses or that comes into its possession in performance of a financial assistance award, to ensure that access is restricted, or licensed, as required by applicable Federal laws, Executive Orders, and/or regulations. (e) Nothing in the terms of this financial assistance award is intended to change, supersede, or waive any of the requirements of applicable Federal laws, Executive Orders or regulations. (f) The recipient shall include this clause, including this paragraph (f), in all lower tier transactions (subawards, contracts, and subcontracts) under the financial assistance award that may involve access to export-controlled information technology.

NOAA Implementation of Homeland Security Presidential Directive--12

If the performance of a financial assistance award, if approved by NOAA, requires recipients to have physical access to Federal premises for more than 180 days or access to a Federal information system, any items or services delivered under a financial assistance award shall comply with the Department of Commerce personal identity verification procedures that implement Homeland Security Presidential Directive--12, FIPS PUB 201, and the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-05-24. The recipient shall insert this clause in all subawards or contracts when the subaward recipient or contractor is required to have physical access to a Federally controlled facility or access to a Federal information system.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This document contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, 424C, 424D, and SF-LLL has been approved by OMB under the respective control numbers 4040-0004, 0348-0044, 4040-0007, 0348-0041, 4040-0009, and 0348-0046. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer identified in the award and performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the Federal Program Officer. Unless otherwise specified by terms of the award, performance and financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually. Progress reports should include progress on identified milestones. Unless otherwise specified by the terms of the award, reports must be submitted electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system.

VII. Agency Contacts

SDSPO Grants Manager: Linda S. Statler, NOAA Scientific Data Stewardship Project Office, 151 Patton Ave, Asheville, NC 28801; Phone: 828-271-4657; E-mail: Linda.S.Statler-at-noaa.gov.

SDSPO Project Manager: Jeff Privette, NOAA Scientific Data Stewardship Project Office, 151 Patton Ave, Asheville, NC 28801; Phone: 828-271-4331; E-mail: Jeff.Privette-at-noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

None