

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Alaska Native Organization Co-Management Funding Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-AK-2012-2003223

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.439, Marine Mammal Data Program

Dates: Applications or proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov by 5:00 p.m., Alaska Standard Time (AST), March 19, 2012. Applications/proposals received after the established deadline will be rejected and returned to the sender without consideration. Applications submitted through Grants.gov are automatically stamped with the date and time submission, which will be the basis for determining timeliness. The application must be validated by Grants.gov in order to be considered timely.

PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please consider this when developing your submission timeline. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all required elements have been appropriately submitted.

For those not having access to the internet, one signed original and two hard copy applications must be postmarked or received at the NMFS Alaska Regional Office (AKR) by 5:00 p.m., Alaska Standard Time (AST), March 19, 2012 at the following address: NOAA Federal Program Officer for the Alaska Native Co-Management Funding Program, National Marine Fisheries Service, 709 W. 9th Street, Juneau, Alaska 99801. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. (Note that late-arriving hard copy proposals provided to a delivery service on or before 5:00 p.m. AST on the closing date for applications will be accepted for review if the applicant can document that the proposal was provided to the guaranteed delivery service by the specified closing date and time and if the proposal is received by AKR no later than 5:00 p.m. AST, two business days following the closing date.)

No facsimile or electronic mail proposals will be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Marine Fisheries Service (hereinafter, "NMFS") recognizes the unique importance of marine mammals to Alaska Native Organizations (hereinafter, "ANOs") and values ongoing efforts by Alaska Native Tribes and ANOs to conserve and protect subsistence species under NMFS' jurisdiction. Pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 1388, NMFS may provide Federal assistance to ANOs to conserve marine mammals and to promote co-management of Alaska Native subsistence use of such mammals under NMFS' jurisdiction. This assistance, provided in the form of cooperative agreements, can be used to support conservation of marine mammals utilized for subsistence purposes by Alaska Natives. Funded activities may include development and implementation of species management, subsistence harvest monitoring, subsistence harvest sampling, scientific research, and public education and outreach. Proposed activities should address priority actions identified in an Endangered Species Act Recovery Plan or Marine Mammal Protection Act Conservation Plan where applicable and the priorities identified within this federal funding opportunity. Tribally-Authorized ANOs with a signed agreement for co-management with NMFS are eligible to apply under this solicitation.

Proposals focusing on marine mammals under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will not be considered for funding under this grant program. This document describes how to prepare and submit proposals for funding in fiscal year (hereinafter, "FY") 2012 and how NMFS will determine which proposals will be funded. This announcement should be read in its entirety, as some information has changed from the previous year.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The objective of the FY12 Alaska Native Co-Management Funding Program is to provide technical and financial assistance for the development and implementation of programs that:

- * facilitate the equitable participation by Alaska Natives in the management of marine mammals for subsistence use;
- * provide for sustainable use of marine mammals for subsistence purposes;
- * benefit marine mammals and their habitat; and
- * encourage local participation in marine mammal science and management.

B. Program Priorities

Applicants should ensure that their applications address one or more of the following priorities, which are listed in no particular rank order of preference (i.e., no one factor carrying a higher priority than any other). If a project meets more than one of the listed priorities, applicants should list first the priority that most closely reflects the objectives of the proposed project. Each project must list the priority being addressed.

The Marine Mammal Co-Management priorities for Fiscal Year 2012 are as follows:

1. Collect and disseminate harvest information that may include harvest numbers, struck and lost, age class and sex of harvested animals, and hunting regions;
2. Collaborate with managers, scientists, and subsistence users to develop traditional ecological knowledge and wisdom that directly supports co-management decisions;
3. Design and implement sampling, survey, or other field programs to address local or federal management and research needs;
4. Assess impacts of climate change on subsistence species and use practices;
5. Develop methods to eliminate wasteful hunting practices;
6. Develop hunting, cultural and scientific education, outreach, and mentoring programs and materials;
7. Develop programs that support the US Government in international reporting efforts and negotiations directly affecting subsistence harvest quotas;

8. Develop mitigation plans for commercial uses identified to have potential adverse impacts on the availability of marine mammals intended for subsistence uses; and

9. Organize and liaise between Alaska Native hunters and NMFS for the cooperative management and conservation of marine mammals in Alaska waters, consistent with signed co-management agreements.

NOAA will consider only applications that address the priorities identified in this section. All proposed projects should be clearly linked to the program objectives and priorities addressed in this section.

NOAA recognizes the importance of full participation of all eligible ANO's in the Alaska Native Co-Management Funding Program.

C. Program Authority

16 U.S.C. § 1388

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total funding available under this notice is anticipated to be approximately \$2.0M. Actual funding availability for this program is contingent upon FY2012 Federal appropriations. Award amounts will be determined by the proposals and the availability of funds. Applicants are hereby given notice that these funds have not yet been appropriated for this program. Given this, there is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this notice does not obligate NOAA to make an award to any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

If an application is selected for funding, NOAA has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years beyond the award period. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, the applicant would do solely at his/her own risk of these costs not being included under the award. Pre-award costs are not allowed under the award unless approved by the NOAA Grants Officer in accordance with 15 C.F.R. § 14.28.

B. Project/Award Period

The project budget period is recommended to be 12 months in duration. The requested award start date must begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month. NMFS expects the majority of projects to have one year project periods.

If an applicant would like to continue work on a project funded through this program beyond the approved award period and obligated award funds have not been

expended by the end of this period, the applicant must notify the assigned Federal Program Officer 60 days prior to the end of the period to determine eligibility for a no-cost extension. The Federal Program Officer will make the determination 30 days prior to the end of the period if the project is eligible for a no-cost extension. If a proposal is selected for funding, NOAA/NMFS has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Proposals selected for funding will be funded through a cooperative agreement. There will be substantial involvement by NOAA in the management of the project. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, assisting in the development of outreach materials; collaboration between NOAA scientists and a recipient scientist; input into organizational structure, mode of operations, and programmatic activities; review and revision of draft deliverables; regularly-scheduled monitoring; and/or operational involvement during performance. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the successful application and NOAA representatives.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible ANO applicants must have an existing marine mammal agreement for co-management with NMFS and be in "good standing" with NMFS. An applicant is considered to be in "good standing" if the ANO meets the following criteria:

- 1) No pending enforcement actions under the MMPA or ESA.
- 2) Progress and financial reports on current Federal assistance awards are up-to-date and/or completed in a timely manner.
- 3) Satisfactory past performance. This includes completion of proposed projects in a timely manner or as stated in previous proposals. Unsatisfactory performance under prior or current Federal awards, including delinquency in submitting progress and financial reports and inability in meeting proposal objectives and tasks within the project period, may result in proposals not being considered for funding or affect the final funding recommendation under the 2012 Alaska Native Co-Management Funding Program.
- 4) Ability to operate within the purpose and goals described within the agreement for co-management with NMFS.

ANOs meeting the eligibility criteria above may choose to apply under another entity acting as a fiscal agent for the ANO, provided the application contains a thorough description of the relationship between the ANO and the fiscal agent entity and the responsibilities undertaken by each party. The ANO will be the lead

entity/organization as named in the application.

Any ANO not holding an existing agreement for co-management with NMFS may collaborate with and apply as a sub-recipient under an eligible applicant (i.e., another ANO) for this program.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or matching is required under this program.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

In order to be considered for an award in this funding cycle, the applicant must provide a proof of eligibility document. Proof of eligibility will be a copy of the signed agreement for co-management between NMFS and the ANO. Any proposal that does not provide a copy of all pages of the signed agreement will not be considered eligible and will not be considered for further review.

2. Permits and Approvals

Pursuant to Section 1374 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407, as amended) and Section 1539 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544, as amended), permits may be issued that authorize the taking of marine mammals and threatened and endangered species, respectively, for purposes of scientific research or enhancing the survival of the species. Interested parties are required to submit an application in accordance with the Acts and the implementing regulations found at 50 C.F.R. part 216, subpart D, and 50 C.F.R. part 222.

For further information on permit requirements and applications procedures for Federal natural resource permits, contact the NMFS Office of Protected Resources (see Section VII, Agency Contact(s) or see the following website: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/>.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available through the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>. Delays may be experienced when registering with Grants.gov near the end of a solicitation period. Therefore, NMFS strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application deadline to begin the registration/application process through the Grants.gov website.

B. Content and Form of Application

NOAA employees (whether full-time, part-time, or intermittent) are not permitted to assist in the preparation of an application, except that staff may provide

information on program goals, funding priorities, application procedures, and completion of application forms. Since this is a competitive program, NOAA employees will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for a proposal.

Applications must adhere to the requirements under the Applications and Required Elements sections by the application deadline. Failure to follow these provisions will result in proposals being rejected and returned to the applicant without review.

1. Applications

A complete standard NOAA grant application package must be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document. These forms are available through the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>. Each application must include:

- Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424
- Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs: SF-424A
- Assurances - Non-Construction Programs: SF-424B
- Certification Regarding Lobbying: CD-511
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL (if applicable)
- " Project Summary (described below)
- " Project Narrative Description (described below)
- " Detailed Narrative Budget Justification (described below)
- " Other supporting Documentation and Relevant Attachments the applicant deems important to the overall understanding and evaluation of the proposed project

In addition to the required sub-project of administrative costs, applicants must identify the specific priority or priorities to which they are responding. If the proposal addresses a program priority, it should state the priority as a sub-project title. If a sub-project reflects more than one priority, those priorities should be listed in the sub-project title. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NMFS as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

2. Required Elements

Proposals should be limited to 20 pages. The format may vary, but must include:

A. Title Page

This page shall provide the project title, project duration, applicant name(s), name(s) of the Principal Investigator (or Project Manager) and any Co-Investigators (or Co-Managers), complete contact information (address, telephone, fax, email, and

phone number) of the applicant(s), and a statement regarding the Federal, non-Federal, and total costs of the project.

B. Project Summary

Provide a brief summary of the project goals and objectives, the proposed activities and connection to specific funding priority being identified, the geographic area where the project would occur, and expected outcomes and benefits of the proposed activities. This summary may be posted on our website if the project is funded.

C. Project Description

Each project must be completely and accurately described, and include project and administrative objectives. Project objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible; clear as to the "what and when," but avoiding the "how and why;" and attainable within the time, funding, and resources available. Administrative objectives should be described in a similar fashion. Applications should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific performance measures. Project performance measures could be due dates for draft and final technical and monitoring reports, dates for field seasons/data collection, and percentage of harvest sampled. Administrative performance measures could be dates, agendas, or minutes of board of directors, council, or commissioners meetings, quarterly website updating, or outreach and education materials from camps. The main body of the narrative should clearly state how the administrative and project work will be undertaken to meet the priorities and include:

(1) Project Design and Management: Describe how the project will be organized and managed and who will be responsible for carrying out project or administrative activities. The lead organization/individual and person listed as the technical contact should be identified as the Project Manager (PM) or Principal Investigator (PI). Use of sub-contractors or volunteer staff time to complete project activities and oversight of those individuals should be discussed. The PM/PI is responsible for all technical oversight and implementation of the approved work plan as delineated in the proposal. One PM or PI must be designated on each project, but the PM/PI may or may not be the applicant. However, if the applicant is not the PM/PI, there must be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and PM/PI (e.g., applicant will be responsible for managing the grant funds and the PM will be responsible for completing the project milestones on time and within budget, etc.). Project participants or organizations that will have a significant role in conducting the project should be listed as Co-investigators or Co-Managers. Organizations or individuals that support the project, for example, researchers contributing data or materials, should be referred to as Cooperators. Copies of the PM's or PI's and all Co-investigator's/Co-Manager's current resumes or curricula vitae must be included as appendices. If you are applying to continue a project we previously funded under the Alaska Native Co-Management Funding Program, describe in detail your projects to date and explain why you need additional funding. We will consider this information in evaluating your current application.

The project narrative is the technical or scientific plan of activities that are to be accomplished during each budget period of the project. This description should include detailed descriptions of the specific plan and/or methods that will be employed. Project milestones and the timeliness (i.e., the number of months) necessary to meet them should be discussed. The narrative should respond to the following questions:

" What is the project design? What specific work, activities, procedures, statistical design, or analytical methods are being undertaken?

" Who will be responsible for carrying out the various activities?

" What are the major products and how will project results be disseminated? Describe products of the project, such as a manual, video, handbook, newsletter, technique, or piece of equipment. Indicate how project results will be disseminated to potential users.

" What are the project milestones? List the milestones, describing the specific activities and associated time lines to conduct the scope of work. Describe the time lines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2), rather than by specific dates. Identify the individual(s) responsible for the various specific activities.

(2) Project duration: Starting on the first day of the month and ending on the last day of the month.

(3) Goals and Objectives: Identify the specific program priority the project intends to address and describe its significance. Identify the problem/opportunity you intend to address and describe its significance. Identify the administrative and/or project objectives, which should be simple and understandable, as specific and quantitative as possible and attainable within the specified time, money and human resources available. State what you expect the project to accomplish.

(4) Benefits or results expected: Identify the outcomes, results and benefits. Describe how these expected outcomes, results, or products will be applied and/or made available to any appropriate user groups.

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

(6) Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant: Describe how government and non-government entities, particularly members of the ANO communities, will participate in the project, and the nature of their participation.

(7) Project Management: 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 the principal investigator (e.g., the applicant may be responsible for managing the grant funds and the principal investigator will be responsible for completing the work). Please also include information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including technical and administrative points of contact as appropriate.

Include copies of any agreements between you and the participants describing the specific tasks to be performed. Provide a statement no more than two pages long of the qualifications and experience (e.g., resume or curriculum vitae) of the principal investigator(s) and any consultants and/or subcontractors, and indicate their level of involvement in the project.

If any portion of the project will be conducted through consultants, subcontracts and/or subawards, you must follow guidance in 15 C.F.R. part 24, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements to State and Local Governments," or 15 C.F.R. part 14, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, Other Non-Profit, and Commercial Organizations" as applicable. If you select a consultant, subcontractor and/or subawardee prior to submitting an application, indicate the process that you used for selection and provide a statement of his/her qualifications or background.

(8) Federal, State and local government activities: List any plans or activities (Federal, State, or local government activities) this project would affect and describe the relationship between the proposed project and those plans or activities. Provide a list of all applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work and an indication of the status of any permits needed, or a statement indicating that no permits are necessary.

D. Total Project Costs and Budget Justification

The budget justification narrative should include a detailed breakdown of total project costs by category of cost (i.e., object class) with appropriate narrative justification. Total project costs are the amount of funds required to accomplish what is proposed in the Project Description. Each proposal must include clear and concise budget information, both in the required Federal forms and in the narrative detail of this section. Each application must have a detailed budget narrative and corresponding spreadsheet describing the total project costs. Funding detail should be broken down by sub-project. Proposals should contain a detailed breakdown of personnel hours and costs associated by task/project as well as contractual hours and costs by task/project.

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

On a separate sheet or spreadsheet, list itemized costs per category and the

corresponding Federal and non-Federal share and direct and indirect cost totals. Describe and justify the requested budget. For the non-Federal share, the itemized costs should be separated into cash and in-kind contributions. If in-kind contributions are included, describe briefly the basis for estimating the value of these contributions. Non-Federal share is not required.

If the applicant currently has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government, indirect costs can be included in the budget. Indirect costs are overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, insurance) that are incurred for common and joint objectives and cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. If indirect costs are included, the application must include a copy of the current, approved, negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal Government. This copy will not be included in the page limit requirements. If the applicant does not currently have a negotiated indirect cost rate with the Federal government, indirect costs may not be included in the budget.

NOAA/NMFS will not consider fees, fundraising 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. A project begins on the effective date of an award agreement between the applicant and the Grants Officer and ends on the date specified in the award. 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.

E. Appendices or Supporting Documentation

This section should include the supporting documentation such as: qualifications (i.e., curricula vitae or resumes) of the primary project personnel (PM/PI and any Co-Managers/ Co-Investigators) agreements with key partners, a copy of established indirect cost rate agreement, letters of support received from relevant representatives, partners or communities supporting the project, and letters of cooperation between the Principal Investigator and all named participants in the project, describing and agreeing to the specific activities each participant would perform (e.g., participants/collaborators receiving marine mammal samples/specimens). Applicants requiring scientific research permits must also include evidence of such a permit (i.e., the permit number) or evidence they have submitted a permit application. Additional material, documents and information necessary or useful to the description of the project will help us to understand the project and the priority you seek to address. Letters of support and/or cooperation are strongly recommended.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications/proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov by 5:00 p.m., AST, March 19, 2012. Applications/proposals received after the established deadline will be rejected and returned to the sender without consideration.

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PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please consider this when developing your submission timeline. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all required elements have been appropriately submitted.

For those not having access to the internet, one signed original and two hard copy applications must be postmarked or received at the NMFS Alaska Regional Office (AKR) by 5:00 p.m., AST, March 19, 2012 at the following address: NOAA Federal Program Officer for the Alaska Native Co-Management Funding Program, National Marine Fisheries Service, 709 W. 9th Street, Juneau, Alaska 99801. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. (Note that late-arriving hard copy proposals provided to a delivery service on or before 5:00 p.m. AST on the closing date for applications will be accepted for review if the applicant can document that the proposal was provided to the guaranteed delivery service by the specified closing date and time and if the proposal is received by AKR no later than 5 p.m. AST, two business days following the closing date.)

No facsimile or electronic mail proposals will be accepted.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC's are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

This information will assist applicants in providing either a Yes or No response to Item 16 of the Application Form, SF-424, entitled "Application for Federal Assistance."

E. Funding Restrictions

Eligibility is limited to Alaska Native Organizations with an existing marine

mammal co-management agreement with the NMFS and who are in "good standing" with NMFS. See Section III.A.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Permits, Pre-approvals, and Clearances: The applicant is required to obtain the necessary permits, approvals and/or clearances that authorize the actions and activities required to carry out the project as proposed. This shall include meeting the requirements of applicable Federal law and all local regulations. To ensure that such permits, approvals, and clearances, where required, are obtained prior to the release of funds to the recipient, specific requirements in the form of Special Award Conditions may be attached to the NOAA award documents.

When requested, the applicant must also be available to respond to questions during all phases of review and evaluation of applications.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Technical/Merit reviewers will evaluate applications by assigning scores based on the following standard evaluation criteria, associated questions, and respective weights specified below. Written comments are required to justify provided scores in each section of the review. Applications that best address these criteria and associated questions will be most competitive.

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of the proposed project to the program objectives (30 points). Proposals will be evaluated on clear identification of proposed project objectives and the applicant's ability to link those objectives to their co-management agreement and priorities within the ANCFP. Reviewers will carefully consider the likelihood of meeting milestones and achieving anticipated results specified in the statement of work.

Are the activities, tasks, objectives and/or projects listed in the proposal appropriate under the ANCFP?

2. Technical/scientific merit (20 points): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project objectives. Proposals should provide a clear identification of objectives, clear definition of the project design, strengths or weakness, and the means to measure and evaluate performance. Special emphasis will be given to proposals that foster and improve cooperative interactions with NMFS. Successful past performance will be considered during evaluation regarding the applicant's ability to meet their proposed objectives and tasks within the project period.

Are the objectives in the proposal clearly defined and focused? Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives are realistic and can be reached within the proposed project period? Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider ways to resolve the issues or implement alternative tactics? Is sufficient detail provided in the proposal about the methods proposed for monitoring and evaluating the success of the project? Are they appropriate?

3. Overall qualifications of the applicant (20 points): This criterion assesses whether the applicant, and team members, possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Reviewers will consider previous related experience and qualifications of the project's PM or PI, Co-Manager(s) or Co-Investigator(s) and other personnel, including designated contractors, consultants, and cooperators. Reviewers will also consider past award performance of the applicant(s) and PM/PI.

Does the applicant have adequate administrative capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Does the proposal include resumes of the PM or PI?

4. Project costs (30 points): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. Applicant must clearly differentiate between proposed administrative and projects costs as specified under section B, Program Priorities. The itemized costs and the overall budget must be justified, clear to the reviewer, cost-effective, and appropriately allocated. The proposed costs and overall budget of the project will be evaluated according to the proposed work. Note project costs including administrative costs must be limited to NMFS species.

Is the budget cost-effective and realistic based on the applicant's stated objectives, time frame, and amount of overall project budget? Is the proposed budget sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of costs by object class?

B. Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 3 steps: initial screening, technical/merit panel review, and final selection by the Selecting Official (i.e., the Regional Administrator, NMFS Alaska Region). An initial screening and evaluation of applications will be conducted to ensure that application packages have all required forms and application elements, clearly relate to the 2012 Alaska Native Co-management Funding Program, and meet all of the eligibility criteria.

NMFS will screen applications to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see IV.C. Submission Dates and Times); include a SF 424 authenticated by an authorized representative, as well as other required federal forms; were submitted by an eligible applicant; address one of the funding priorities; include a budget,

statement of work, and milestones; and identify the principal investigator. NMFS does not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause your application to be rejected so that you would have an opportunity to correct them. However, should we do so and provide you information about deficiencies, or should you independently decide it is desirable to do so, you may correct any deficiencies in your application before the deadline. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it.

If your application does not conform to the requirements listed above, and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will be returned without further consideration.

Applications meeting the requirements of this solicitation will then undergo technical/merit panel review. Each I will be reviewed by reviewers that evaluate and discuss the application in a panel setting, followed by an individual scoring using the evaluation criteria provided in section V.A. (Evaluation Criteria) above. Technical/merit reviewers will be individuals with appropriate subject-matter expertise and may be from Federal or state agencies, or other organizations. The merit reviewers' scores will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals. In an effort to ensure that the review and selection process is fair and objective the identity of individual reviewers will remain anonymous, to the extent permitted by law.

After applications have undergone merit review, the Selecting Official will make the final decision regarding which applications will be funded based upon the rankings, funding amount recommendations, and evaluations of the applications.

If the Selecting Official accepts an application for a project not in accordance with the rank given or the recommendation of the reviewer panel, the Selecting Official will consult with the Federal Program Officer and provide a detailed written explanation of the reasons for the action based on the selection factors below. The authority for approving a grant award for projects rests solely with NOAA.

Not all activities, tasks, objectives or projects submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding; as such, the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate. For an application to be selected for funding the applicant may be required to modify objectives, work plans, budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award.

We will notify you in writing whether your application is selected or not. Successful applications will be incorporated into the grant/cooperative agreement award documentation. (See VI. Award Administration Information, A. Award Notices)

C. Selection Factors

The NMFS Regional Administrator, Alaska Region will be the Selecting Official. The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The Selecting Official will review the rank order, funding

recommendations and comments from all reviewers and determine the recipients to be funded and how much funding shall be awarded to each selected recipient. A program officer may first make recommendations to the Selecting Official after applying the selection factors below. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding

2. Balance/distribution of funds:

(a) geographically,

(b) by type of institutions,

(c) by type of partners,

(d) by research areas, and

(e) by project types.

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies.

4. Program priorities and policy factors.

5. Applicant's prior or current award performance (including progress and financial reporting, and ability to meet proposed objectives and tasks within project period in a timely manner).

6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups.

Key program policy factors (see 4 above) to be considered by the Selecting Official are:

(1) the time of year the research activities are to be conducted;

(2) The ability of the proposal to meet the applicable requirements;

(3) redundancy of research projects.

Therefore, the highest scoring projects may not necessarily be selected for an award.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, the competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications being considered for funding are expected to be completed four months following the date given in this announcement. July 1, 2012 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the Program Officer.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification from the Alaska Native Co-Management Funding Program Office that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Office. This notification is not an authorization to begin project operations, and is not a guarantee of funding. Official notification of selection, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows a project to begin. Notifications will be issued to the Authorizing Official of the project electronically. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposals were not selected for recommendation. If an application is not selected, NOAA will return the proposal and related documents to the applicant.

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA/NMFS program staff. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of federal funding until an official notice of award document is received from the NOAA Grants Officer.

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

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 of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS number) and be subject to reporting requirements as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. Parts 25, 170 (2010) http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl, http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements.

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award

Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696). You may obtain a copy of this notice by contacting the agency contact, or by going to the website at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>. Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact should furnish information requested to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

2. Limitation of Liability.

Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of FY 2012 Federal 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 if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not require NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. You should not initiate your project in expectation of Federal funding until you receive a grant award document signed by an authorized NOAA official. If you incur any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, you do so solely at your own risk of these costs not being included under the award. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

3. Universal Identifier.

Applicants should be aware that, they are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number during the application process. See the October 30, 2002 Federal Register, Vol. 67, No. 210, pp. 66177-66178 for additional information. Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or via the internet (<http://www.dunandbradstreet.com>).

4. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

If recommended for funding, applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact will be asked to furnish sufficient information to assist NOAA in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for each project which seeks NOAA funding. Detailed information on NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA web site: www.nepa.noaa.gov, including our NOAA Administrative order 216-6 for NEPA, www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.hhs.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm.

If needed by NOAA for NEPA assessment, applicants will be asked 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. 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.

5. Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).

If recommended for funding, applicants whose proposed projects may take marine mammals will be asked to furnish sufficient information to assist NOAA in assessing the applicant's compliance with the relevant provisions of the MMPA. Section 1361(b) provides an exemption for Alaskan Natives from the prohibition on taking if it is for subsistence purposes, creating authentic native articles of handicrafts or clothing, and not accomplished in a wasteful manner.

6. Endangered Species Act (ESA).

If recommended for funding, applicants whose proposed projects may take threatened or endangered marine mammals will be asked to furnish sufficient information to assist NOAA in assessing the applicant's compliance with the relevant provisions of the ESA. Section 1539 (e) provides an exemption for Alaskan Natives from the prohibition on taking if it is for subsistence purposes, creating authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing, and not accomplished in a wasteful manner.

C. Reporting

All performance and financial reports shall be submitted through the recipient's NOAA Grants Online account in accordance with the Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Progress on each award is communicated to NOAA in the form of performance progress reports, which is outlined in 15 C.F.R. Part 14, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Non-Profit Organizations, or 15 C.F.R. Part 24, Grants and Cooperative Agreements with State and Local Governments, as applicable.

Recipients will be required to submit the following financial and performance (technical) reports. These reports must be submitted electronically through the Grants Online system.

Financial Status Reports (SF-425) are required to be submitted to the Grants Officer semi-annually, or as outlined in the award conditions. Financial Status Reports must be entered directly into the Grants Online system.

Semi-Annual performance reports will be required to address progress and performance in six-month intervals, beginning from the award start date. Reports are due no later than 30 days following the end of each reporting period. In addition, a comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration date along with copies of all products that are developed under the award. Copies of all materials (such as but not limited to brochures, posters, videos, DVDs, publications, reports, management plans, workshop proceedings etc.) produced through the award, along with copies of any reports submitted by subcontractors as part of the award, must be submitted within 90 days of the end of the award. All such products should acknowledge the support provided by the NOAA/NMFS Alaska Region, Alaska Native Co-Management Funding Program.

The format of the semi-annual performance report may vary, but must contain:

1. A brief description of the program/research purpose and/or underlying need for the work. Include enough detail to acquaint the reader with the project specifics without having to reread proposal;

2. Summary of progress and results - State each project objective scheduled for the reporting period. For each project objective, describe each of the tasks planned to complete the objective. Describe activities undertaken to achieve each of the planned tasks. Please provide a separate response for each task. If there were changes to the project objectives or tasks during the reporting period, detail the circumstance and nature of each change. Describe results and/or specific products (e.g., publications, data, technology, web site updates) prepared during the reporting period. Attach copies of publications or research products completed during the period.

3. Identify any problems or issues - Explain circumstances or problems that prevented completion of any one or more of the project objectives or tasks. Please provide a separate response for each objective or task not completed. Describe what

actions will be taken to resolve the above problem(s) for each project objective or task not completed. Please provide a separate response for each objective or task. Explain any significant differences between budgeted and actual expenditures and/or line item transfers.

The format of the final report may vary, but must contain:

1. A brief summary of overall project purpose, key activities and results;
2. A detailed description of the issue/problem that was addressed. Describe specific goals/objectives of the project/program;
3. A detailed description of how work was undertaken to accomplish project objectives i.e., sampling protocol, data collection methods, analytical methods.
4. Describe project results and/or findings, including a discussion of extent to which the goals and objectives were achieved. Specifically detail which objectives were achieved, partially achieved, and which were not achieved. For the objectives partially or not met, describe the circumstances preventing successful completion of the objective;
5. Describe significant modifications made to the original goals/objectives and why the change was necessary;
6. A discussion of results and any relevant conclusions presented in a format that is understandable to a non-technical audience. This should include benefits and/or contributions to management decision-making;
7. A list of entities, firms, or organizations that actually performed the work, and a description of how the work was accomplished;
8. Data from research projects must be submitted in electronic format with appropriate documentation to NMFS as requested;
9. Describe products/publications (journal articles, pamphlets, videos, etc.) prepared during the project period. Provide copy of publication or title pages of grant funded products with sufficient information (author, title, publisher, etc.) to

facilitate cataloguing or information sharing, as soon as they are available. Describe activities undertaken to disseminate project results/publications/product; and

10. Cite literature references

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over \$25,000.

VII. Agency Contacts

If you have any questions regarding this solicitation, please contact Jenn Hall-Brown, at the Alaska Regional Office, 709 9th Street, Juneau Alaska 99801; Phone: (907) 586-7273; or Email: jenn.hall-brown@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

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