

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: A Cooperative Institute for the Pacific Islands Region

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-PIFSC-2011-2002847

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.432, NOAA Cooperative Institutes

Dates: Proposals must be received by NMFS no later than May 5, 2011, 4 p.m., Hawaii Time. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication will form the basis for determining timeliness. The proposal must be validated by Grants.gov in order to be considered timely.

For those applicants not having access to the Internet, one signed original and two hard copy applications must be received by NOAA at the following address: NOAA/NMFS, Attn: Ms. Julie Whitaker, 2570 Dole Street, Honolulu, HI 96822. Use of U.S. Mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt.

No facsimile or electronic mail proposal submissions will be accepted.

Proposals submitted after 4 p.m., Hawaii Time, May 5, 2011 will not be considered. (Note that late-arriving hard copy proposals provided to a delivery service on or before 4 p.m., Hawaii Time, May 5, 2011 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 NMFS no later than 4 p.m., two business days following the closing date.)

October 1, 2011 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals.

Funding Opportunity Description: The NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service and the NOAA Office of Ocean and Atmospheric Research invite applications for the establishment of a cooperative institute (CI) in the Pacific Islands Region that will focus on the themes of:

- 1) Ecosystem Forecasting;
- 2) Ecosystem Monitoring;

- 3) Ecosystem-based Management;
- 4) Protection and Restoration of Resources;
- 5) Equatorial Oceanography;
- 6) Climate Research and Impacts;
- 7) Tropical Meteorology; and
- 8) Tsunamis and Other Long-period Ocean Waves.

The CI will be established at a research institution not only having outstanding graduate degree programs in NOAA-related sciences, but also located within a commuting distance of NOAA facilities on the Island of Oahu, HI allowing direct interactions with CI and NOAA scientists on a regular basis. The CI will provide significant coordination of resources among all non-governmental partners and will promote the involvement of students and post-doctoral scientists in NOAA-funded research. If the CI is comprised of multiple member institutions, only the lead institution applying for the award and where the CI will be established must satisfy the commuting distance requirement. This announcement provides requirements for the CI and includes details for the technical program, evaluation criteria and competitive selection procedures. Applicants should review the CI Interim Handbook prior to preparing a proposal for this announcement (available at [www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci](http://www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci) ).

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

#### A. Program Objective

The purpose of this announcement is to invite the submission of proposals to establish a cooperative institute to conduct exploration, research and technology development in support of NOAA facilities in the Pacific Islands Region; and to provide details on the application, review and selection process.

#### CI Concept/Program Background:

A CI is a NOAA-supported, non-Federal organization that has established an outstanding research program in one or more areas that are relevant to the NOAA mission "to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our Nation's economic, social and environmental needs." CIs are established at research institutions with outstanding graduate degree programs in NOAA-related sciences. The CI provides significant coordination of resources among all non-government partners and promotes the involvement of students and post-doctoral scientists in NOAA-funded research.

NOAA establishes a new CI competitively when it identifies a need to sponsor a long-term (5-10 years) collaborative partnership with one or more outstanding non-Federal, non-profit research institutions. For NOAA, the purpose of this long-term collaborative partnership is to promote research, education, training and outreach aligned with NOAA's mission; to obtain research capabilities that do not exist internally; and/or to expand research capacity in NOAA-related sciences to:

- 1) Conduct collaborative, long-term research that involves NOAA scientists and those at the research institution(s) from one or more scientific disciplines of interest to NOAA;
- 2) Utilize the scientific, education and outreach expertise at the research institution(s) that, depending on NOAA's research needs, may or may not be located near a NOAA facility;
- 3) Support student participation in NOAA-related research studies; and
- 4) Strengthen or expand NOAA-related research capabilities and capacity at the research institution(s) that complements and contributes to NOAA's ability to reach its mission goals.

The CI may partner with one or more research institutions that demonstrate outstanding performance within one or more established research programs in NOAA-related sciences. These institutions may include Minority Serving Institutions and universities with strong

departments that can contribute to the proposed activities of the CI. CIs conduct research under approved scientific research themes and Tasks (additional tasks can be proposed by the CI).

1) Task I activities are related to the management of the CI, as well as general education and outreach activities. This task also includes support of postdoctoral and visiting scientists conducting activities within the research themes of the CI that are approved by the CI Director, in consultation with NOAA, and are relevant to NOAA and the CI's mission goals;

2) Task II activities usually involve on-going direct collaboration with NOAA scientists. This collaboration typically is fostered by the collocation of Federal and CI employees; and

3) Task III activities require minimal collaboration with NOAA scientists.

#### B. Program Priorities

The CI will conduct research under research themes which support NOAA in all four of its mission goals: (1) Protect, restore and manage the use of coastal and ocean resources through ecosystems-based management; (2) Understand climate variability and change to enhance society's ability to plan and respond; (3) Serve society's needs for weather and water information; and (4) Support the Nation's commerce with information for safe, efficient and environmentally sound transportation. These long-term goals are similar to the four goals listed in NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan as well: (1) Healthy Oceans; (2) Climate Adaptation and Mitigation; (3) Weather-Ready Nation; and (4) Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies. (Copies of both plans are available at <http://www.ppi.noaa.gov> .)

The CI will also strongly support "a strategic approach that attracts and maintains a competent and diverse workforce and creates an environment that develops, encourages and sustains employees as they work to accomplish NOAA's strategic goals," as described in NOAA's 2009-2014 Strategic Plan. To this end, this CI would provide an opportunity to train the next generation of scientists by giving students and post-doctoral scientists a 'hands-on' opportunity to participate in NOAA research activities. This training is extremely important for NOAA as it works to attract a competent and diverse scientific workforce. To support this effort, the NOAA facilities in Honolulu, Hawaii, will provide office space for roughly 170 CI employees and students.

The CI will provide current capabilities and capacity to significantly broaden the intellectual capital available that can contribute to NOAA's research programs by providing access to a pool of talented undergraduates, graduate students, post-docs and faculty with diverse backgrounds, specialties, tools and approaches. For some of the research activities, the CI may need to work closely with other NOAA-funded programs, particularly other CIs and Sea Grant Colleges, as well as provide significant coordination of resources among

non-government partners and promote the involvement of students and postdoctoral scientists in NOAA-funded research.

NOAA is the primary U.S. Federal agency responsible for stewardship of the environment and living marine resources (LMRs) in the Pacific Islands Region. The Pacific Islands Region includes waters of the Hawaiian Archipelago, American Samoa, the Mariana Archipelago and U. S. Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIA), as well as vast areas of the Pacific high seas, encompassing a huge geographical area over which NOAA has responsibility for managing the LMRs (e.g., fishery and protected species), conducting the science and providing the information and science advice required to support NOAA's regional management activities. The region encompasses extensive insular marine ecosystems associated with islands, atolls, submerged banks and seamounts of American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Hawaii (including the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands) and the PRIA (Howland Island, Baker Island, Jarvis Island, Palmyra Atoll, Kingman Reef, Johnston Atoll and Wake Island). NOAA has several programmatic authorities that may be used with the Freely Associated States, as well as engagement through the Compact of Free Association (Compact) and as international partners. In addition, the Pacific Islands Region includes the oceanic habitat and pelagic ecosystems spanning the region from about 40°N latitude through the equator to 30°S latitude. The diverse Pacific Islands Region ecosystems provide a wide array of services including sustainable commercial, recreational and subsistence fisheries; sustenance of deeply rooted traditional island cultures and customs; critical habitat for threatened and endangered species of fish and wildlife; unique biota and biodiversity; education and research; and more. The marine resources and habitats of the region are vital to the well being of the Pacific island communities, the nation and the world.

NOAA actively engages and partners with numerous Pacific Rim countries (e.g., Japan, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) as well as with other independent or territorial Pacific islands throughout the Pacific Islands Region. The scope of the CI agreement will facilitate international engagement at the regional level.

In addition, NOAA collects oceanic and atmospheric observations in the region used by the agency to provide weather, water and climate forecasts and warnings for the protection of life and property, enhancement of the national economy and more. Pacific Islands Region data, a critical component of global environmental information assets, are of particular importance to NOAA's work to advance understanding of climate change and variability, particularly the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), and their effects on the Asian monsoon, Pacific tropical cyclones, floods and droughts, and sea level rise. Through the Compact with the nations of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia, NOAA provides broad marine and coastal technical assistance as well as weather services to these nations. The latter responsibility includes

operating five Weather Service Offices that provide around the clock support for their islands and atolls spread across the northwestern tropical Pacific. Through the Tsunami Warning and Education Act, NOAA is the lead agency responsible for operating the U.S. Tsunami Warning System, including the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, which provides tsunami advisories, watches and warnings for nations within the Pacific Rim.

The CI will work closely with scientists at NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC); the NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO); the NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center; NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (including the Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory, the Climate Program Office and the Earth System Research Laboratory); the National Weather Service (NWS), Pacific Region; the National Ocean Service; the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS); and the NESDIS National Climatic Data Center to support NOAA's strategic goals and missions in the areas of equatorial oceanography, climate research, tropical meteorology, fisheries oceanography, coastal research and tsunami research.

The CI must possess the capabilities and capacity to collaborate with NOAA scientists in many areas of research related to ecosystems, habitats and the effect of climate change on these systems.

The CI will contribute capabilities to the Ecosystem Goal by fulfilling gaps in the following programs:

#### Ecosystem Assessments Program

NOAA's Ecosystem Assessment Program (EAP) provides extensive data collection through NOAA monitoring and observing activities throughout the world's oceans. These data enable EAP and its partners to monitor, assess and forecast the status and trends in diverse marine ecosystems that affect our economy and culture. This information is critical for coastal and marine spatial planning. To achieve broad consideration of ecological, environmental and societal factors, EAP has adopted an Ecosystem Approach to Management (EAM). An EAM ensures that management of marine resources is based on the "entire ecosystem" instead of the too-common practice of managing one activity or one part of an ecosystem without considering the impacts on and influence of other parts. EAP encompasses five areas of expertise, or "capabilities". Current major programs within EAP include expanding fish stock assessments to help set annual catch limits; development of Integrated Ecosystem Assessments to support EAM; and creation of an information management architecture to ensure quality control of data and access to the data streams used in assessments and forecasts.

Areas of program focus include integrating physical observations at spatial/temporal

scales appropriate for ecosystem forecasting, and developing better understanding of mechanisms that influence resource distribution and abundance on federally managed LMRs in the Pacific Islands Region. Advanced tools and numerical models are to be developed to qualify and quantify ecosystem health and status. The program also conducts fishery stock assessments to help set annual catch limits, and conducts research to better understand the human dimension side, including economics, of fishing and other uses of marine ecosystems in the Pacific Islands Region.

The CI will assist the EAP in developing a fully coordinated team of scientists, specialists, and external partners contributing world-class expertise in oceanography, marine ecology, marine archeology, fisheries management, conservation biology, natural resource management, aquaculture, and environmental risk assessment to monitor, assess and forecast the status and trends in marine ecosystems that affect our economy and our culture. Much of the habitat in the Pacific Islands Region remains unmapped, and this will continue to be an active area of research.

#### Ecosystem Research Program

NOAA's Ecosystem Research Program (ERP) conducts applied research and development to provide scientific information, tools and forecasts for implementing and evaluating ecosystem management. ERP's broad-based approach relies on NOAA and its partner programs to characterize ecosystems at multiple scales and focuses on natural- and human-related influences on ocean, coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems. ERP priorities are determined by legislative and executive mandates directing NOAA to manage specific resources and ecosystems, advance regional scientific infrastructure, and support research that catalyzes the discovery, management and conservation of ocean, coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems. The research conducted focuses on fisheries, protected resources, climate impacts on ecosystems, ocean acidification, seafloor hydrothermal and volcanic activity, and many other issues. Ecosystem research enhances the understanding of physical/chemical/biological/economic/social interactions and the ability to link ecosystem capacity and models to environmental variability and change. ERP augments the understanding of multispecies relationships, particularly as they relate to environmental variability and change and distinguishes between what is optimal for an individual stock and what is optimal for a fishery or ecosystem as a whole.

Areas of program focus include the development of a suite of tools (including numerical models) for ecosystem forecasting to improve ecosystem-based management. Ecosystem models will ideally be integrated across multispecies dimensions. In addition, ecosystem research seeks to develop climate and ecosystem indicators. The program also seeks to enhance climate data and research to further understand climate variability and change in the Asia-Pacific region and meet critical regional needs for ocean, climate and ecosystem information.

Research activities conducted by the CI will include: characterization of the health of the ecosystem (including both natural and anthropogenic factors); understanding causes and consequences of ecosystem change; increasing the ability to forecast future ecosystem change; identifying new, unique, and exceptionally important ecosystems; improving the accuracy and sensitivity of present day tools and technologies to study ecosystems; and improving the capability to educate stakeholders about marine resource and ecosystem issues.

#### Protected Species Program

NOAA's Protected Species Program (PSP) is responsible for the conservation of marine and anadromous species listed under the Endangered Species Act, all marine mammals as mandated by the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and protected species identified under other statutes and international treaties and conventions. While other NOAA programs contribute to fulfillment of these mandates, PSP is the only program in NOAA whose sole purpose is the protection and recovery of marine species and their habitats. The Pacific Islands Region is home to numerous species of cetaceans, marine turtles, and the Hawaiian monk seal (the most endangered U.S. marine mammal). The status of many of these stocks remains poorly known. Thus, the PSP works to expand protected species stock assessments and, in general, conducts research to support the conservation of Hawaiian monk seals, cetaceans and sea turtles and their habitats in the Pacific Islands Region. Through its research, the CI would enhance NOAA's abilities to conduct stock assessments, determine threats to protected species, and devise and test sound mitigation and conservation strategies throughout the Pacific Islands Region.

#### Habitat Program

NOAA's Habitat Program, in collaboration with the other Ecosystem Goal Team programs, protects and restores habitats that support NOAA trust resources and are essential to the long-term health and sustainability of coastal and marine ecosystems. The Habitat Program applies the latest science and technology to help ensure that ecosystem productivity, functions and services are protected and restored. An important goal of the program is to develop a comprehensive collection of digital maps of marine habitats. Another goal is to prevent, assess and remove marine debris from Pacific Islands Region. The program also seeks to assess status of watersheds and ways to prevent or mitigate their degradation and loss. The CI's research would assist NOAA in its ability to assess marine debris occurrence, abundance, and impacts and to support effective marine debris removal and mitigation.

#### Coral Reef Conservation Program

The Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) brings together expertise from across

NOAA for a multidisciplinary approach to understanding and managing coral reef ecosystems. CRCP works with its partners to conduct coral reef mapping, monitoring, assessment and inventory of biota, oceanographic studies, socioeconomics research and modeling, outreach and education, and management and stewardship activities. The program also studies basic life history of coral reef biota, ecological interactions among species, and environmental conditions. The program collaborates with partners to implement and integrate research, monitoring, and management activities at the ecosystem level and promote public awareness and education. Integration of services helps NOAA and partners quantify and address the influence of natural and anthropogenic factors impinging on US coral reef ecosystems, including fishing, land-based runoff of nutrients and pollutants, climate change, ocean acidification, temperature variation and coral bleaching, disease, recreational use, and more. The CI will foster collaboration between its own experts, external partners, and academic specialists to address the complex nature coral reef ecosystems. This collaboration will better equip and position NOAA for more effective management and provide sound science to preserve, sustain and restore valuable coral reef ecosystems.

The CI will contribute capabilities to the Climate Goal in the following programs:

#### Climate Observations and Monitoring Program

A major objective of the Climate Observations and Monitoring Program is to provide NOAA with the capabilities and capacities to contribute to the national and global objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan for the Climate Change Science Program, the U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System Strategic Plan, the Global Climate Observing System Plan, and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems 10-Year Implementation Plan. Currently, NOAA depends heavily on its CIs to provide the scientific expertise needed to operate tide gauge stations and deploy deep-ocean observing systems, to analyze the data sets for assessment of ocean-climate change, and to analyze data for improvement of climate and weather forecast models.

The program maintains local tide gauge data sets and ensures that data quality standards are met. Research is conducted to improve understanding of physical mechanisms and processes of climate variability. Prediction of ENSO, local impacts of sea level rise, decadal variability and other climate phenomena are the subject of research. The program also seeks to improve observational and modeling techniques to better understand and forecast climate change influences on ecosystems. Integral to these efforts are the development, deployment and maintenance of global ocean climate observing systems. Some specific areas of focus include determining variable remineralization ratios for estimating the anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> inventory in the ocean, elucidating the physical mechanisms responsible for long-term changes in the tropical Pacific climate during the last millennium and collection of atmospheric mercury speciation data.

The CI will conduct research on the ocean observations needed to: (1) understand and predict climate change; (2) understand the relationship between climate and ecosystems; and, (3) understand the relationship between climate and changes in extreme weather events, tropical cyclones, and ENSO events. The CI will work with NOAA to develop and implement the tools needed to collect these observations, monitor climate signals, evaluate and improve climate models, and conduct cutting-edge research to improve the Nation's predictive capabilities at the finer spatial resolutions of interest to a wide variety of resource managers in the Pacific Islands Region. The CI will provide intellectual and infrastructural capabilities for observing system operations not currently available within NOAA. The CI will provide access by researchers to UNOLS ocean-class scientific vessels for deployment/maintenance of existing and new observing systems and arrays, as well as collaborative research efforts.

#### Climate Research and Modeling Program

The objective of the Climate Research and Modeling Program is to understand and predict climate variability and change on time scales ranging from weeks to decades to a century. An overarching objective of the Program is to develop and improve the capability to make seasonal, intra-seasonal, interannual, and decadal-scale predictions of climate and projections of future climate change on global to regional spatial scales. This achievement will enable regional and national managers to better plan for the impacts of climate variability and change and provide climate assessments and projections to support policy decisions with objective and accurate climate change information. The program accomplishes this by coupling observations with process research and earth system models and providing integrated management of climate data to develop and deliver new climate-related products for research and user applications.

The program aims to monitor oceanographic drivers of climate change and variability. Investigation of the role of oceanic, atmospheric, and terrestrial interactions in tropical Pacific variability are pursued to reduce error in simulating tropical Pacific climate. The program utilizes tracer fields to evaluate global ocean model simulations and to estimate the oceanic uptake of tracer gases, including CO<sub>2</sub>. Further, the effect of elevated CO<sub>2</sub> and associated ocean acidification on calcifying organisms in the tropical/subtropical Pacific is a focal area of research. The program also investigates the role of the stratosphere in the circulation of the troposphere to enable enhancements to current seasonal and other extended range forecasting systems. Finally, there is an ongoing effort to connect data management and preparation activities to research activities and provide one-stop shopping of climate data and products.

The CI will perform research to help understand coupled atmospheric and oceanic processes, both natural and human-related, which may be directly applied to climate projections and to policy decisions that are related to limiting unwanted effects of future

climate change. The CI will work with NOAA to provide new information on the climate roles of the radiatively important trace atmospheric species (e.g., fine-particle aerosols and ozone, as well as other chemically reactive forcing agents) that is needed to broaden the suite of non-carbon options available for policy development on the climate change issue. To this end, the CI will work with NOAA to reduce the uncertainty in the information on atmospheric composition and feedbacks that contribute to changes in Earth's climate. A reduction of this uncertainty is needed for the development and improvement of global to regional climate models.

The CI will contribute capabilities to the Weather and Water Goal by fulfilling gaps in the following programs:

#### Tsunami Program

The goal of the Tsunami Program is to improve NOAA's understanding of the three stages of tsunami evolution leading to improved forecasts of tsunamis at vulnerable coasts along oceans and inside estuaries. Research activities center on 1) accelerated transition of tsunami forecasting capability, developed through research, to forecast operations; 2) development of an integrated observation system; 3) development of integrated education and outreach; and 4) transition of research-based enhancements to integrated operations. The program seeks to enhance numerical models to describe surface water deformation. There is also an effort to develop and apply environmental remote sensing, and enhance other platforms for data observation, archival, and dissemination. The CI will conduct research to improve understanding of tsunami dynamics and to help develop tsunami resilient communities in fulfillment of stated goals. Specific activities include development of confidence intervals for tsunami forecast products based on error analysis, integrated dissemination of water level data, and education outreach planning.

#### Science and Technology Infusion Program

The objective of the Science and Technology Infusion Program is to integrate and improve weather and water information, preparedness, warnings, and forecasts in coastal and public zones to provide services as accurate, comprehensive, and responsive as possible. The program develops innovative regional- and basin-scale products, services and applications using environmental satellite data. It also develops and deploys methods supporting the highest quality observations from space for Ecosystem, Climate and Commerce and Transportation Goals. The program seeks to improve currently limited nation-specific techniques and technology available to provide forecasts and warnings to the public and to provide adequate expertise for regional collaboration. Meteorologists from World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Region V island nations also require more exposure to well-established academic and research community support, to improve intergovernmental coordination and Pacific-wide warning and forecast capability. NOAA aims to enhance its

ability to utilize existing knowledge, operational research capacity and perspectives within WMO Region V nations on the topics of applied climate and weather. Finally, NWS continues to maintain a synergistic relationship with the Pacific academic and research communities through collocation of NWS operational personnel with academic and research personnel. The CI would ensure continued close collaboration such that academia and operations are in concert, and applied research techniques are vetted for real-world decision making.

The CI will contribute capabilities to the Mission Support Goal by complementing Satellite Services, Integrated Ocean Observing Systems, Environmental Modeling, and Fleet and Aviation Services programs.

#### Mission Support Programs

NOAA's Mission Support Goal provides critical services from NOAA's satellites, ships, aircraft, land- and ocean-based observing systems, high-performance computing, and environmental modeling systems that enable research in all other NOAA Goals. The benefits of Mission Support programs are manifest in virtually all NOAA program activities. The CI will be active in the Satellite Services, Integrated Ocean Observing Systems, and Environmental Modeling. Through the partnership with NOAA Line Offices, programs and capabilities of NOAA's Fleet and Aviation Services are enabled. The CI will expand science platform capacity (e.g., UNOLS fleet, etc.). The CI will provide NOAA a vehicle to achieve greater efficiency through the research and development of new technologies for ocean and atmospheric observations, improved data management and visualization tools, enhanced modeling capabilities, and supplemental fleet services support.

([http://www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci/policy/docs/cicm4\\_vessel\\_use.pdf](http://www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci/policy/docs/cicm4_vessel_use.pdf) )

The program seeks to develop and operate in situ systems for the calibration of the Ocean Color Radiometry-Virtual Constellation. Program focus areas involve research and development of observation system technologies, including unmanned aircraft and in-water systems, and data management systems to support the planning, implementation, and operation of ocean observing systems. The program seeks to achieve finer resolution in local models (down-scaling).

#### Five-year Research Plan and 20-Year Research Vision

(<http://www.nrc.noaa.gov/plans.html> )

The CI will help NOAA achieve key research objectives identified in the Agency's 20-year research vision; including: providing the scientific underpinning for an ecosystem approach to management of coastal and ocean resources; improving severe storm and event warnings to save more lives and property; and enabling seasonal to decadal climate predictions with clearly stated levels of uncertainty.

The CI's research activities will contribute to research milestones in the 5-year research plan, including but not limited to:

- \* Meet annual targets for improving knowledge of fish stock status (i.e., whether or not they are overfished or subject to overfishing).

- \* Improve understanding of the factors affecting threatened, endangered, and protected species and the potential success of alternative remediation/management strategies.

- \* Increase NOAA's applied, non-economics social science research capacity by at least 25% to support social, cultural, and policy aspects of ecosystem-based approaches to management.

- \* Complete components of the Ocean Observing System for Climate such as tide gauge stations.

- \* Define the primary forcing factors and time and space scales that affect water quality and quantity for selected ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes regions.

- \* Forecast the ecological effects of varying weather patterns and extreme weather events.

- \* Improve NOAA's predictive capability on weekly, monthly, and seasonal time scales by involving and leveraging the external research community.

- \* Develop and support capacity to provide decadal climate predictions.

- \* Develop a capability to make sea level projections on decadal to centennial timescales, produce Arctic forecasts, and anticipate climate "surprises" through extramural "centers of excellence" grant programs.

- \* Forecast the ecological effects of sea level rise and climate change.

- \* Implement the monitoring, modeling, and impacts research of ocean acidification.

- \* Provide integrated environmental information and services, particularly watches and warnings, in industry standard formats to support partner and customer needs.

- \* Improve tsunami warnings with emphasis on run-up and inundation, and reducing false alarms.

- \* Transition field tools to operations that improve the efficiency of oil spill and marine debris assessment.

- \* Increase the number of adequate fishery and protected species stock assessments.

The lead CI institution must be located within commuting distance of NOAA facilities on the island of Oahu, HI. CI facilities are expected to complement and expand NOAA's research capacity to provide the CI and NOAA with the necessary infrastructure to study global and regional ecosystem/climate connections in areas not limited to the tropical oceans and the Indian Ocean. The CI must be capable of providing:

- \* Analytical chemistry (incl. radioisotope, water & carbon chemistry) labs
- \* Biological and microbiological labs
- \* Genetics (including mtDNA & microsatellite analysis) labs
- \* Office space to house at least 45 Federal employees
- \* Acoustics-based observations and research (passive & active) equipment
- \* Marine and electronics engineering facility
- \* Instrument repair services
- \* Access to a Class 1 research vessel
- \* Access to submersibles & support vessels
- \* Access to a supercomputer (high performance computing center) and very large data storage devices for advanced numerical modeling and data assimilation
- \* Specialized sampling instruments
- \* Local computational and communications capabilities to support transmission and receipt of environmental satellite data and information and access to data and data products by researchers and other users
- \* Integrated observing and data management systems
- \* Ocean observing systems
- \* Satellite remote sensing systems
- \* Electronic fisheries monitoring equipment
- \* Necropsy facilities
- \* Captive care animal facilities
- \* Small boats

\* Cold and dry storage facilities

The CI, when available, will provide access to scientifically equipped coastal and global ocean class research vessels, crews, and support facilities that can be chartered on both routine and project-by-project basis for climate observation operations relevant to all Programs listed above. The CI may provide access to UNOLS vessels as well as research vessels from cooperating institutions in other countries in order to deliver ship support services most economically.

The CI must possess the capabilities and capacity to conduct research under eight research themes: (1) ecosystem forecasting, (2) ecosystem monitoring, (3) ecosystem-based management, (4) the protection and restoration of resources, (5) equatorial Oceanography, (6) climate research and impacts, (7) tropical meteorology, and (8) Tsunamis and other long-period ocean waves.

#### (1) Ecosystem Forecasting

Research under this theme will lead to improved forecasting of the frequency and magnitude of ecosystem processes within the Pacific Islands Region. This research includes: monitoring and extensive use of current and past environmental, ecological and socioeconomic data; large-scale environmental and ecological studies as well as focused process studies for understanding ecosystem functions and change; and model development, parameterization and verification. Forecasting will address issues related to human health (e.g., beach closings, fish contaminants and harmful algal blooms), fish recruitment and productivity, and protected species sustainability and recovery, all of which will be used in the assessment and management of living marine resources and their habitats. Research under this theme will also improve understanding of the causes of climate variability and its effects on ecosystems. Research will often be interdisciplinary and involve the physical, natural, and social sciences. Research will identify and elucidate interactions between humans and other ecosystem components at local and regional levels.

#### (2) Ecosystem Monitoring

Research under this theme is associated with the use of coastal observing systems, deep ocean observations, air-/space-borne remote sensing (e.g., planes, satellites), and economic and social observing systems to understand and describe the present state of the various ecological environmental, economic, and social parameters in the Pacific Islands Region. Research will focus on parameters determined or hypothesized to be key to predicting the impacts of climate change, population growth along the coastal zone, natural resource use, and other factors on the ecosystem. This theme includes research on data integration techniques and geospatial technologies (GIS and remote-sensing), as well as development of tools that enable improved marine spatial planning, regional ecosystem forecasting, and

ecosystem-based management policy decisions.

### (3) Ecosystem-based Management

Research under this theme will focus on enabling an ecosystem approach to management in the Pacific Islands Region and science support for the delivery of ecosystem services. Research will enhance scientific understanding of marine ecosystem components and processes and the connections between them, ecosystem users and the services they receive, effects of land-management practices and terrestrial inputs to ecosystems, effects of climate change, and more.

### (4) Protection and Restoration of Resources

Research under this theme includes development of technology, research tools, and scientific approaches to effective protection and restoration of living marine resources, habitats, and ecosystems. The research will enable improvements in identifying, observing, forecasting, and monitoring components of ecosystems, including those in protected areas, and restoring habitats and populations to healthy, productive states consistent with societal goals for marine resource conservation and ecosystem services. Research under this theme will involve a wide range of activities such as removal of contaminants and providing new materials and techniques for protection of underwater cultural resources in the Pacific Islands Region.

### (5) Equatorial Oceanography

Research under this theme is associated with the collection and analysis of physical, biological, and chemical observations of the ocean that will yield valuable information about large-scale ocean property distributions and currents, including their variability over time scales, focused on the Pacific Ocean Basin.

### (6) Climate Research and Impacts

Research conducted under this theme is focused on understanding oceanic and atmospheric processes associated with global and regional climate change on various temporal scales and the impacts of climate variability and change. Activities under this theme include research to determine effective regional adaptation strategies, and developing and studying new climate information products and tools appropriate for evolving user needs, with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region. Research conducted under this theme is also designed to ensure that tide gauge data sets from the global network are maintained and that the data meet quality standards for climate and oceanographic research. Through training and ongoing technical support, the goal is to build capacity within each participating country or region to maintain local contributions to the global network. This activity includes assistance with maintenance and operation of 60 sea level stations, primarily in developing

countries. This theme also includes the provision of technical and scientific support for the Argo float program.

(7) Tropical Meteorology

Researchers under this theme will focus on multidisciplinary research involving atmosphere-ocean carbon dioxide exchange fluxes, water column carbon dioxide distributions and transport, and data interpretation and modeling, focused on the Pacific Ocean Basin. Special emphasis will be placed on enhancing scientists' understanding of the role of the ocean in sequestering the increasing burden of anthropogenic carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the changes that are occurring due to ocean acidification. Research under this theme will also be directed at using chlorofluorocarbons along with other anthropogenic tracers to study a variety of oceanic processes, including the global uptake of anthropogenic carbon dioxide in the ocean.

(8) Tsunamis and Other Long-period Ocean Waves

Research conducted under this theme is associated with improving the predictability of the onset, duration, and impact of tsunamis, with a focus on the Pacific Islands Region, coupled with the provision of an electronically accessible database of rapidly sampled sea level observations from existing Hawaiian coastal sea level gauges maintained by NOAA agencies. Research under this theme will also focus on the implementation of a continuum mechanics model as well as development of a non-hydrostatic model to describe seafloor deformation and tsunami generation in three dimensions. Hazard risk assessment, mitigation, and preparedness activities under this theme will implement programs and develop tools to build tsunami-resilient communities.

C. Program Authority

15 U.S.C. 1540

33 U.S.C. 883 (d)

15 U.S.C. 313

15 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.

118 Stat. 71 (Jan. 23, 2004)

49 U.S.C. 44720 (b)

## II. Award Information

### A. Funding Availability

All funding is contingent upon the availability of Federal appropriations. NOAA anticipates that approximately \$17-19M will be available annually for this CI. Of that amount, a minimum estimated amount of \$200,000 will be available per year for Task I. The final amount of funding available for Task I will be determined during the negotiation phase of the award based on availability of funding. The actual annual funding that the CI receives may be less than the anticipated amount and will depend on the actual projects that are approved by NOAA after the main CI award begins, the availability of funding, the quality of the research, the satisfactory progress in achieving the stated goals described in project proposals, and continued relevance to program objectives.

### B. Project/Award Period

The award period will be five years and may be renewed for up to an additional five years based on the outcome of a peer review in the fourth year, as described in the NOAA CI Interim Handbook. A copy of the Handbook is available at [www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci](http://www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci).

### C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for this award will be a cooperative agreement since several NOAA organizations will be substantially involved in working with the CI. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, proposals for collaboration between NOAA scientists and a CI scientist and/or assistance by NOAA personnel in developing curricula. If the CI is comprised of multiple member institutions, NOAA will issue only one award to the lead institution that applied for the award and where the CI will be established, in accordance with the commuting distance requirement.

## III. Eligibility Information

### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility is limited to non-Federal public and private non-profit universities, colleges and research institutions that offer accredited graduate level degree-granting programs in NOAA-related sciences and that are within commuting distance to the NOAA facilities on the island of Oahu, HI thereby allowing direct interactions with CI and NOAA scientists on a regular basis. If the CI is comprised of multiple member institutions, only the lead institution applying for the award (and where the CI will be established) must satisfy the commuting distance requirement.

### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

To stress the collaborative nature and investment of a CI by both NOAA and the research institution, cost sharing is required. There is no minimum cost sharing requirement; however, the amount of cost sharing will be considered when determining the level of the CI's commitment under NOAA's standard evaluation criteria for overall qualifications of applicants. Acceptable cost-sharing proposals include, but are not limited to, offering a reduced indirect cost rate against activities in one or more Tasks, waiver of indirect costs assessed against base funds and/or Task I activities, waiver or reduction of any costs associated with the use of facilities at the CI, and full or partial salary funding for the CI director, administrative staff, graduate students, visiting scientists, or postdoctoral scientists.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Not Applicable.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application package is available at <http://www.grants.gov> . For applicants without Internet access, an application package may be secured by contacting NOAA/NMFS/ Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, 2570 Dole Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, Attn: Ms. Julie Whitaker; telephone (808)983-5300.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals must adhere to the provisions under "Proposals" and the requirements under "Required Elements" in this section.

1) Proposals

a. Proposals must include elements requested on the Grants.gov portal. If a hard copy application is submitted, NOAA requests that the original and two unbound copies of the proposal be included.

b. Proposals, electronic or paper, should be no more than 75 pages (numbered) in length, excluding budget, investigators vitae, and all appendices. Federally mandated forms are not included within the page count. No email or facsimile proposal submissions will be accepted.

2) Required Elements

a. Title page. The title page should clearly indicate the name of the CI, principal investigators, total amount of Federal funds being requested, and award period. Applications submitted by a CI consortium should include the name of each institution and associated

principal investigator.

b. Abstract. An abstract must be included and should contain a brief description of the CI, research themes, and proposed activities. The abstract should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, institution's investigators, total proposed cost, and budget period.

c. Results from prior research. The results of related projects supported by NOAA and other agencies should be described, including their relation to the currently proposed work. Reference to each prior research award should include the title, agency, award number, Principal Investigators, period of award, and total award. The section should be a brief summary and should not exceed two pages.

d. Project Description. The information provided in this section will be used to evaluate the proposal according to NOAA's standard evaluation criteria described in Section V of this document. The project description includes several sections:

i. The Goals Section should clearly describe the mission and vision of the CI, and what the CI expects to accomplish during the award.

ii. The Research Theme Section includes information that will help NOAA determine the quality of the CI's capabilities and the expertise at the CI needed to conduct outstanding research in each of the research themes described in Section I.B. This Section also includes project descriptions of research projects that could be conducted by the CI under each theme (or combination of themes), if sufficient funding during the five year award is provided. The selection of this proposal does not preclude the CI from proposing additional research projects after the award has been made as long as they fit under one of the research themes, nor does it obligate NOAA to fund the projects proposed in this application. Following the selection of the award, the CI will be required to provide a complete proposal and budget for each research project funded under the CI award after consulting with the NMFS CI Program and the NOAA program(s) that provide funding for the project.

iii. The Education Section includes information on NOAA-related education programs offered at the CI's institution(s), including a complete list of terminal degrees in these programs. This Section should also describe how the CI will integrate students and post-docs into the research projects at the CI, as well conduct outreach and education activities in support of the research themes.

iv. The Business Plan should be well-developed and include details regarding fiscal and human resource management, as well as strategic planning and accountability. It must describe the organizational structure of the CI, how it will operate, the responsibilities of the participants from multiple institutions, and how the CI will use the Executive Council and Council of Fellows described in the CI Interim Handbook. The Business Plan must describe

how the CI chooses projects, reviews its progress, as well as how the CI will support enhanced communication and collaborations with NOAA.

v. The Performance Measures Section must include proposed measures to be used by the CI to gauge, quantify, and/or evaluate progress on projects and the overall performance of the CI. After the award is made, NOAA will work with the CI to finalize a set of performance measures that are acceptable to the CI and NOAA.

vi. Immediately after the CI award has been established, the CI must produce an annual research plan that provides specific information about the research projects described in the Research Themes Section that will be accomplished during the first year. The plan will be developed after consultations with the NMFS CI Program and the NOAA programs that will provide project funding to the CI. This plan must state the goals and objectives of each project, along with a description of the research that the CI expects to accomplish and a detailed budget for these projects. CI funding for the projects described in this plan will be released upon NOAA's approval of the annual research plan. Funding for subsequent years of the award will require additional annual research plans.

e. Budget. Applicants must submit a Standard Form 424 "Application for Federal Assistance," including a detailed budget using the Standard Form 424A, "Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs." These and other forms, including Commerce Department Form CD-511 "Certification Regarding Lobbying" and if applicable Standard Form SF-LLL "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," are provided in the Grants.gov application package. Additionally, the CD-512 "Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions and Lobbying" is required to be submitted with the application package. To do this, download the form from <http://www.cop.noaa.gov/opportunities/grants/pdf/cd512fll.pdf> . Fill out, sign, scan, and attach the form to the application package.

The proposal must include total and annual budgets corresponding to the descriptions provided in the project description not to exceed \$19M annually. NOAA uses the proposed annual budgets to establish a funding limit used by NOAA during the entire award. After award selection, annual funding will be provided only after approval by the NOAA Grants Officer of an annual research plan or any other proposal submitted to NOAA that includes a detailed budget. While this level of funding is not guaranteed, this amount will allow for the possibility of funding for projects that were not originally planned for in the Cooperative Institute Award. Annual and total budgets should be stratified by Task and Institution, particularly if the Cooperative Institute Award has proposed a reduced indirect cost rate for certain tasks. A budget justification should include information described in the budget guidelines provided in the Grants.gov application package.

f. Vitae. Abbreviated curriculum vitae are sought with each proposal. Reference lists

should be limited to all publications in the last 3 years with up to five other relevant papers.

g. Current and pending support. For each investigator, submit a list which includes project title, supporting agency with grant number, investigator months, dollar value, and duration. Requested values should be listed for pending support.

#### C. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by NMFS no later than May 5, 2011, 4 p.m., Hawaii Time. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication will form the basis for determining timeliness. The proposal must be validated by Grants.gov in order to be considered timely.

For those applicants not having access to the Internet, one signed original and two hard copy applications must be received by NOAA at the following address: NOAA/NMFS, Attn: Ms. Julie Whitaker, 2570 Dole Street, Honolulu, HI 96822. Use of U.S. Mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt.

No facsimile or electronic mail proposal submissions will be accepted.

Proposals submitted after 4 p.m., Hawaii Time, May 5, 2011 will not be considered. (Note that late-arriving hard copy proposals provided to a delivery service on or before 4 p.m., Hawaii Time, May 5, 2011 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 NMFS no later than 4 p.m., two business days following the closing date.)

October 1, 2011 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals.

#### D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

#### E. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

#### F. Other Submission Requirements

To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and be registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Allow a minimum of five days to complete the CCR registration. [Note: your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.] Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline data to

begin the application process through Grants.gov.

All applications must be received by <http://www.grants.gov> by the due date established herein. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant will receive an acknowledgment of receipt and a tracking number from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicants should print this receipt and save it as proof of timely submission. When NOAA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt to the e-mail address of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Proof of timely submission shall be the date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by NOAA. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to two business days after your submission. Please consider the Grants.gov validation/rejection process in developing your application submission time line.

NOAA suggests that applicants submit their applications during the operating hours of the Grants.gov, so that if there are questions concerning transmission, operators will be available to walk you through the process. Submitting your application during the Contact Center hours will also ensure that you have sufficient time for the application to complete its transmission prior to the application deadline. Applicants using dial-up connections should be aware that transmission of applications will take a longer time than when using high speed broadband before Grants.gov receives it. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission message. Grants.gov reports that some applicants abort the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application. Uploading and transmitting many files, particularly electronic forms with associated XML schemas, will require more time to be processed. Important: All applicants, both electronic and paper, should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicant schedules for delivery of the application. Electronic applicants are advised that volume on Grants.gov is currently extremely heavy, and if Grants.gov is unable to accept applications electronically in a timely fashion, applicants are encouraged to exercise their option to submit applications in paper format. Paper applicants should allow adequate time to ensure a paper application will be received on time, taking into account that guaranteed overnight carriers are not always able to fulfill their guarantees.

## V. Application Review Information

### A. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the standard NOAA evaluation criteria. Various questions under each criterion are provided to ensure that the applicant includes information that NOAA will consider important during the evaluation, in addition to any other information provided by the applicant.

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (25 percent): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities.

a. Does the proposal include research goals and projects that address the critical issues identified in NOAA's 5-year Research Plan, NOAA's Strategic Plan, and the priorities described in the program priorities (see Section I.B.)?

b. Is there a demonstrated commitment (in terms of resources and facilities) to enhance existing NOAA and CI resources to foster a long-term collaborative research environment/culture?

c. Is there a strong education program with established graduate degree programs in NOAA-related sciences that also encourages student participation in NOAA-related research studies?

2. Technical/scientific merit (30 percent): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

a. Does the project description include a summary of clearly stated goals to be achieved during the five year period that reflect NOAA's strategic plan and goals?

b. Does the CI involve partnerships with other universities or research institutions, including Minority Serving Institutions and universities that can contribute to the proposed activities of the CI?

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (30 percent): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

a. If the institution(s) and/or Principal Investigators have received current or recent NOAA funding, is there a demonstrated record of outstanding performance working with NOAA and/or NOAA scientists on research projects?

b. Is there nationally and/or internationally recognized expertise within the appropriate

disciplines needed to conduct the collaborative/interdisciplinary research described in the proposal?

c. Is there a well-developed business plan that includes fiscal and human resource management, as well as strategic planning and accountability?

d. Are there any unique capabilities in a mission-critical area of research for NOAA?

e. Has the applicant shown a substantial investment to the NOAA partnership, as demonstrated by the amount of the cost sharing contribution?

f. Does the applicant possess the necessary facilities and resources to accomplish the project activities?

4. Project costs (5 percent): The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

5. Outreach and education (10 percent): 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.

## B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review/screening is conducted to determine compliance with requirements/completeness. All proposals will be evaluated and individually ranked in accordance with the assigned weights of the above-listed evaluation criteria by an independent peer review panel. At least three experts, who may be Federal or non-Federal, will be used in this process. If non-Federal experts participate in the review process, each expert will submit an individual review and there will be no consensus opinion. The merit reviewers' ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals. The Selecting Official selects proposals after considering the peer reviews and selection factors listed below. In making the final selections, the Selecting Official will award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the selection factors.

## C. Selection Factors

The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. 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) Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies.

4) Program priorities and policy factors.

5) Applicant's prior award performance.

6) Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups.

7) Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

#### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

October 1, 2011 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals. The announcement of the award is expected by the beginning of June 2011.

## VI. Award Administration Information

### A. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is provided by electronic notification or postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization. The NMFS will notify unsuccessful applicants in writing either electronically or by postal mail. Those proposals that are not ultimately selected for funding will be destroyed.

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 and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010), [http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25\\_main\\_0](http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_0)

[2.tpl](#) ,  
[http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170\\_main02.tpl](http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main02.tpl) .

## B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

2. Limitation of Liability. Funding for this program is contingent upon congressional appropriations. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are 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.

3. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by NEPA, for each project seeking NOAA funding. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: [www.nepa.noaa.gov](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov), including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf) , and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc\\_ceq.htm](http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm) . After the award has been made, the recipient is 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) for each project proposed under this award. In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, the recipient may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines such assessment is required. The recipient will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of its proposal. The failure to cooperate with NOAA shall be grounds for not funding a particular project. In cases where additional information is required after a project is selected, funds can be withheld by the NOAA Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to assess any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

4. 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> ).

### C. Reporting

Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer and Performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer annually. Near the end of each award year, NOAA will provide the CI with guidance on what information should be submitted as part of the annual performance report. This information will be used by NOAA to assess the quality of the research and provide NOAA with general information about the quality of activities at the CI, including how many students are participating, scientific output, and number of employees associated with the CI receiving NOAA support. Reports should be submitted electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system or on paper if no computer access is available.

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](http://www.FSRS.gov) on all subawards over \$25,000.

## VII. Agency Contacts

NOAA/NMFS/ Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, 2570 Dole Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, Attn: Ms. Julie Whitaker; telephone (808)983-5300; email: [Julie.Whitaker@noaa.gov](mailto:Julie.Whitaker@noaa.gov) .

## VIII. Other Information

### A. Freedom of Information Act

U.S. Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, "Public Information." These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or

Financial Information." Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

#### B. Permits and Approvals

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary Federal, state and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work to be conducted are obtained and effective before any research begins. Permits for proposed projects can be held by any formally and substantially involved collaborator, including a NOAA collaborator, provided the collaborator is receiving or providing resources associated with this announcement and related awards. Failure to apply for and/or obtain Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analysis, when necessary, will eliminate any further consideration of a proposed project for funding.