

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: A Cooperative Agreement for Climate Adaptation and Mitigation.

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-CPO-2011-2002920

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.431, Climate and Atmospheric Research

Dates: Proposals must be received no later than April 1, 2011, 5:00 p.m., E.T. Applications are to be submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication will form the basis for determining timeliness. Proposals 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/OAR, Attn: Eric Locklear, 1315 East West Highway, Room 12726, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.

Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or other electronic mail proposal submissions will be accepted. Proposals submitted after 5:00 p.m., E.T., April 1, 2011 will not be considered. (Note that late-arriving hard copy proposals provided to a delivery service on or before 5 p.m., E.T., April 1, 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 no later than 5 p.m., two business days following the closing date.)

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

Funding Opportunity Description: The NOAA Climate Program Office invites applications for a collaborator to partner in the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the ocean, atmosphere, and related ecosystems; and the communication of data, information, and knowledge to others for use in their businesses, communities, and daily lives. The collaborator will focus on the themes of 1) Climate Adaptation and Mitigation: The impacts of a changing climate on the Nation's ocean and coastal ecosystems, which include living marine resources, salt and freshwater resources, as well as coastal communities; 2) Improved Scientific Understanding of the Changing Climate system and its Impacts: The need to advance understanding of the climate system and climate impacts, improve climate predictions and projections, and better inform adaptation and mitigation strategies; 3) Assessments of Current and Future States of the Climate System: Stakeholders and the general public need a clear understanding of the best

available science that describes the state of the climate and the likely impacts of climate change. Scientific assessments at the global, national, regional, and local levels integrate knowledge from many disciplines to provide decision makers with authoritative information on climate impacts, identify gaps in understanding, and help prioritize future research and service development efforts to fill those gaps.

The recipient will provide significant coordination of resources among all partners including government, non-government, academia, and international.

This announcement provides requirements and details for the technical program, evaluation criteria, and competitive selection procedures.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The vision is "an informed society that uses a comprehensive understanding of the role of the oceans, coasts, and atmosphere in the global ecosystem to make the best social and economic decisions." The Climate Program Office cannot fulfill this vision alone and the recipient is expected to possess unique capabilities to meet the following four objectives:

1. Improved scientific understanding of the changing climate system and its impacts
2. Assessments of current and future states of the climate system that identify potential impacts and inform science, service, and stewardship decisions
3. Mitigation and adaptation efforts supported by sustained, reliable, and timely climate services
4. A climate-literate public that understands its vulnerabilities to a changing climate and makes informed decisions

B. Program Priorities

The Climate Program Office expects the recipient to address the following four priority areas:

1. Improved scientific understanding of the changing climate system and its impacts.

The need to advance understanding of the climate system and climate impacts, improve climate predictions and projections, and better inform adaptation and mitigation strategies is urgent. Key scientific uncertainties limit scientists' ability to understand and predict changes in the climate system. This is particularly true for monthly-to-decadal timescales and at the regional and local levels for which scales are highly relevant to planning and decision making. Research on the connections between weather and climate, for instance, is necessary to understand how a changing climate may affect precipitation patterns and severe weather events, including hurricanes. On decadal-to-centennial timescales, research is needed to understand feedback between atmospheric greenhouse gases and the rate of global-to-regional climate impacts, such as changes in sea level, heat waves, droughts, and air and water quality. Adaptation and mitigation strategies must be informed by a solid scientific understanding of the climate system. Research is required to understand how changes in the global ocean circulation affect the climate system and their subsequent impacts on coastal regions, including sea level rise, ocean acidification, and living marine resources.

2. Assessments of current and future states of the climate system that identify potential impacts and inform science, service, and stewardship decisions.

Stakeholders and the general public need a clear understanding of the best available science that describes the state of the climate and the likely impacts of climate change. Scientific assessments at the global, national, regional, and local levels integrate knowledge from many disciplines to provide decision makers with authoritative information on climate impacts, identify gaps in understanding, and help prioritize future research and development efforts to fill those gaps. When pursued on a sustained basis, assessments build relationships between researchers and users that are critical for communities and governments to take action.

3. Mitigation and adaptation efforts supported by sustained, reliable, and timely climate assessments.

Human-induced changes in Earth's climate, as well as natural climate variability, complicate the ability to effectively plan for the future, manage resources, support national and food security, meet international and other intergovernmental agreements, and sustainably develop the economy. Resource managers, Governments, public and private businesses and organizations recognize that a changing climate complicates their ability to achieve their goals. Existing information is not readily available to those who need it or formatted in a way that makes it easy to use. The Nation needs a comprehensive, authoritative, and coordinated source of climate information to support adaptation and mitigation strategies and to incorporate into risk and vulnerability assessments and related decision-making processes.

4. A climate-literate public that understands its vulnerabilities to a changing climate and makes informed decisions.

The success or failure of climate adaptation and mitigation in the United States and around the world will depend on the ability of leaders, organizations, institutions, and the public to understand the challenges and opportunities climate change presents. The routine incorporation of climate information into decisions requires an awareness of how a changing climate may affect individuals, families, businesses, and communities. A society educated about climate change and actively engaged in dialogue about its causes and effects will better address today's problems and plan for tomorrow.

C. Program Authority

49 U.S.C. 47720(b), 15 U.S.C. 2904, 15 U.S.C. 2931-2934

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

All funding is contingent upon the availability of Federal appropriations. Over a 5-year period, NOAA expects to award \$80.0 million dollars with \$10.0 million In FY 2011

B. Project/Award Period

The award period will be 5 years and may be renewed for up to an additional 5 years based on the outcome of a peer review in the fourth year.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for this award will be a cooperative agreement since it is expected that many NOAA organizations will be substantially involved in working with the recipient. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, proposals for collaboration between NOAA scientists and the recipient, and/or assistance by NOAA personnel in developing education and outreach materials.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility is limited to non-Federal public and private non-profit universities, colleges, non-profit corporations, and research institutions.

Applications will only be accepted from single institutions. Multi-institute proposals will not be accepted.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available at Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). For applicants without Internet access, please contact the CPO Administrative Services Division Chief Eric Locklear by mail at NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room

12726, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 to obtain an Application Package. Please allow two weeks after receipt for a response.

B. Content and Form of Application

Full applications are limited to 60 pages using 12-font type with one-inch margins on standard 8.5 by 11 inch paper. The page limit includes figures, itemized budget, vitae, abstract, references, current and pending support and appendices. Appended information may not be used to circumvent the page length limit. Federal Forms (SF424, SF424A, SF424B, CD511), the NEPA Statement and other Federally mandated forms are not included within the page count.

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

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

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

(3) Results from prior research and work: The results of each prior research project by the Principal Investigators (during the last 3 years) relevant to the proposed effort should be summarized in brief paragraphs. This section should not exceed two pages.

(4) Statement of work: The proposed project must be completely described, including identification of the scientific objectives, proposed methodology, relevance to the goal of NOAA and the priorities of the Next Generation Strategic Plan. Benefits of the proposed project to the general public and the scientific community and data sharing procedures should be discussed. The proposal, including references, but excluding figures and other visual materials, must not exceed 30 pages of text.

(5) Budget Justification: A brief description of the expenses listed on the budget and how they address the proposed work. Item justifications must include salaries, equipment, publications, supplies, tuition, travel, etc. Note that these justifications are considered part of the 60-page limit, while the required SF424 and SF424A are not part of the page limitation.

(6) Budget: Budget numbers corresponding with the descriptions contained in the statement of work must be included. In addition to including the total budget on the SF424, the application must include the total budget and budgets for years 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in separate columns in Section B on page 1 on the SF424A. (Note that this revised 424A Section B format is a NOAA requirement that is not reflected in the Instructions for the SF 424A). A copy of the institutions current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, a detailed itemized budget for all years and a total itemized budget must also be included. Travel must be itemized to include destination, airfare, per diem, lodging and ground travel if applicable.

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

(8) Current and pending support: For each Principal Investigator and Co-Principal

Investigator(s), submit a list of all current and pending Federal support that includes project title, supporting agency with grant number, investigator months per year, dollar value and duration. Requested values should be listed for pending support.

(9) DUNS Number: All applications must have a DUNS (Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System) number when applying for Federal Grants. No application is deemed complete without the DUNS number and only the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) may grant exceptions.

10) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Questionnaire: The Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research has determined that applicants do not need to provide answers to the NEPA Questionnaire at this time."

C. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals for all competitions must be received by 5 p.m. EDT on April 1st, 2011. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by a time and date indicator as to when they are received. Hard copy submissions will be time and date stamped when they are received. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered, and hard copy applications will be returned to the sender.

Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system prior to submitting an application. This registration process can take several weeks and involves multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, you should register as soon as you decide you intend to apply, even if you are not yet ready to submit your application.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372,

Intergovernmental Review of federal programs.

E. Funding Restrictions

Fees and profit are disallowed.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Applications are to be submitted to Grants.gov. For those organizations without internet access, hard copy applications may be sent to: Eric Locklear, Chief, Administrative Services Division, NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room 12726, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

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 considers 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.

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.

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.

* 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?

* Is there nationally and/or internationally recognized expertise within the appropriate disciplines needed to conduct the collaborative/interdisciplinary research described in the proposal?

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

4. Project costs (0%): The Budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. This competition is not using this criterion.

5. Outreach and education (15 percent): NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy .

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 will be used in this process. If non-Federal experts participate in the review process, each expert will submit an individual merit review. 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. The Selecting Official makes the final award recommendation to the Grants Officer authorized to obligate funds.

C. Selection Factors

The Competition Manager shall select award in rank order unless a selection out of rank order is justified based upon any of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research area
 - e. By project types

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

4. Program priorities and policy factors
5. Applicants prior award performance

6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups.

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

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

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

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

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

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

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_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

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

Executive Order 12906

The recipients must comply with Executive Order 12906 regarding any and all geospatial data collected or produced under grants or cooperative agreements. This includes documenting all geospatial data in accordance with the Federal Geographic Data Committee Content Standard for digital geospatial data. The Program uses only the existing NOAA Federal financial assistance awards package requirements per 15 CFR parts 14 and 24.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

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

Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required by the Administrative Procedure Act or any other law for rules concerning public property, loans, grants, benefits, and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comments are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared. It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

Limitation of Liability

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. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This notification involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0043, 0348-0044, 0348-0040 and 0348-0046 and 0605-0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Executive Order 12866

It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

Executive Order 13132 (Federalism)

It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

C. Reporting

Award recipients are required to submit financial and progress reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically via grants.gov unless the recipient does not have Internet access, in which case hard copy submissions will be accepted. All hard copy financial reports shall be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies) to the NOAA Grants Officer. All hard copy technical progress reports shall be submitted to the identified Competition Manager. The first technical progress report covering the first 9 months of a multi-year award is due 10 months after the start date of the award. Each subsequent technical progress report covering a period of 12 months is due 12 months after the previous report. The comprehensive final technical progress report is due 90 days after the expiration date of the award.

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

Please visit the CPO website for further information <http://www.climate.noaa.gov/> or contact the Administrative Services Division Chief, Eric Locklear by mail (see address above). Please allow up to two weeks after receipt for a response.

VIII. Other Information

None.