

## 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: Research Partnerships in Support of Regional Climate Adaptation

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-CPO-2012-2003304

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

Dates: Full applications for all Competitions must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, May 23, 2012.

Funding Opportunity Description: Regions have been an organizing influence for both decision makers and scientists working on climate adaptation. Recognizable climate patterns, such as the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO), emerge at the regional level where our understanding of observations and models coalesce. Critical resources for society are managed in a context of regional systems, such as water supply and human populations. Multiple scales of governance (local, state, and federal) with complex institutional relationships can be examined across a region. Climate information (i.e. data, science, research etc) developed within these contexts and working across spatial and temporal scales resonates with people making decisions on the ground.

Recognizing the importance of regions and the interests of Congress, the President's Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force (ICCATF) recommends that regional climate science and service efforts of the Federal government should be better coordinated to most effectively support regional-to-local decision makers facing the impacts of climate change. Congress and the Administration want to ensure that trust between scientists and decision makers who are already working to manage climate risks is not compromised by duplicative or conflicting information.

The NOAA Climate Program Office's (CPO) Regionally Integrated Science and Assessments (RISA) program supports research teams that conduct innovative, interdisciplinary, user-inspired, and regionally relevant research that informs resource management and public policy. The eleven RISA teams are nationally and internationally recognized for their innovations in providing support to decision makers on the ground who are managing risks associated with

climate variability and change. NOAA's RISA program is a part of CPO's Climate and Societal Interactions (CSI) division and an active partner in the National Climate Data Center's (NCDC) efforts to build an integrated regional climate services partnership.

Central to the RISA approach are commitments to process, partnership, and trust building; assessments of stakeholder decision-making needs and contexts; and evaluation of institutional and political constraints to using climate knowledge. RISA teams are effective because they have been able to create strong, long-term relationships with stakeholders from the public and private sectors, including local, regional, and state governments, federal agencies, tribal governments, utilities, the business community, national and international non-profit organizations, and educational institutions.

After 15 years of regional capacity building and research, a key finding from the RISA program is that trust building between partners is best accomplished when using shared resources to collaborate on common goals, objectives or outcomes. Working together to solve problems brings people together to innovate lasting solutions. Furthermore, capacity (tools, information, knowledge, etc) is best sustained when the developers of capability or knowledge are working hand-in-hand with those entities who will apply that capability or knowledge over time. This announcement is designed to stimulate partnerships by bringing people together around specific projects related to regionally relevant issues addressing climate adaptation.

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

#### A. Program Objective

Regions have been an organizing influence for both decision makers and scientists working on climate adaptation. Recognizable climate patterns, such as the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO), emerge at the regional level where our understanding of observations and models coalesce. Critical resources for society are managed in a context of regional systems, such as water supply and human populations. Multiple scales of governance (local, state, and federal) with complex institutional relationships can be examined across a region. Climate information (i.e. data, science, research etc) developed within these contexts and working across spatial and temporal scales resonates with people making decisions on the ground.

Two motivating factors have recently spurred rapid growth in the climate adaptation community including, particularly, the regional level. In 2009, the Obama Administration (the Administration) issued Executive Order 13514 (EO-13514) focusing on “Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance,” which required agencies to develop adaptation plans. Concurrently, the Administration convened the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force (ICCATF), co-chaired by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The ICCATF includes representatives from more than 20 Federal agencies, many of which were interested in tackling climate adaptation at the regional level.

In response to these activities and the interests of Congress, the ICCATF recommends that regional climate science and service efforts of the Federal government should be better coordinated to most effectively support regional-to-local decision makers facing the impacts of climate change. Congress and the Administration want to ensure that trust between scientists and decision makers who are already working to manage climate risks is not compromised by duplicative or conflicting information. The ICCATF recommends that coordination would be best supported by a shared strategy for strengthening regional climate science and services.

#### **What is NOAA doing to support regional climate science and services?**

The NOAA Climate Program Office’s (CPO) Regionally Integrated Science and Assessments (RISA) program supports research teams that conduct innovative, interdisciplinary, user-inspired, and regionally relevant research that informs resource management and public policy. CPO funds eleven different RISA teams across the United

States and Pacific Islands, many of which are a model for interdisciplinary science and assessment. RISAs have been nationally and internationally recognized for their innovations in providing support to decision makers on the ground who are managing risks associated with climate variability and change.

NOAA's RISA program is a part of CPO's Climate and Societal Interactions (CSI) division and an active partner in the National Climate Data Center's (NCDC) efforts to build an integrated regional climate services partnership. CSI provides leadership and support for decision support research, assessments and climate services development activities in support of adaptation. In addition to RISA, CSI's programs include the International Research and Applications Project (IRAP), the Sectoral Applications Research Program (SARP), the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), and the Coastal and Ocean Climate Applications (COCA).

NOAA NCDC hired six Regional Climate Services Directors (RCSDs) to coordinate and lead this partnership bringing together NOAA offices and close external partners such as RISA teams, Regional Climate Centers, State Climatologists, and Sea Grant. The partnership will help make climate information relevant and accessible to people across the US. The partnership seeks to marshal NOAA's climate assets and partners towards the common goal of assessing regional needs and vulnerabilities and then supporting the development and delivery of timely climate services that aid adaptation and mitigation choices.

CSI and NCDC activities address the societal challenges identified in NOAA's Next-Generation Strategic Plan (NGSP): i) climate impacts on water resources; ii) coasts and climate resilience; iii) sustainability of marine ecosystems; and iv) changes in the extremes of weather and climate. These efforts support NOAA's vision to create and sustain enhanced resilience in ecosystems, communities, and economies, as outlined in the NGSP. CSI houses both US- and internationally-focused projects in order to facilitate community-building and learning about the challenges and solutions associated with understanding and meeting the climate-related needs of decision makers.

RISAs support CSI and the integrated regional climate services partnership by meeting the following objectives:

- Communicate and collaborate with a diversity of decision makers to understand and evaluate how they use or could use climate information
- Conduct interdisciplinary science and assessment on how climate impacts the resources of a region
- Innovate knowledge, products, or services to enhance the capacity of decision makers to adapt to climate variability and change
- Transition knowledge, products and services to entities such as government agencies, extension networks, and the private sector

## **Why is regional capacity building important?**

Central to the RISA approach are commitments to process, partnership, trust building; assessments of stakeholder decision-making needs and contexts; and evaluation of institutional and political constraints to using climate knowledge. RISA teams are effective because they have been able to create strong, long-term relationships with stakeholders from the public and private sectors, including local, regional, and state governments, federal agencies, tribal governments, utilities, the business community, national and international non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. These relationships provide mutually beneficial opportunities to:

- Increase stakeholder understanding of climate, climate impacts, and their relevance to the day-to-day management of resources and communities;
- Better understand the research needs of the stakeholder community;
- Develop and evaluate new decision-support products that help integrate climate information into decision making; and
- Increase the awareness and use of existing climate products from NOAA and other climate organizations.

On September 29 – October 1, 2010, NOAA CPO hosted a three-day workshop primarily focusing on current and future research related to RISA and integrated regional climate services partnerships. Participants included three or four researchers from each of the eleven RISA teams, as well as representatives of NOAA and over ten different internal and external NOAA partners. Other participants included representatives from the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), International Research Institute (IRI) for Climate and Society (IRI) at Columbia University, United States Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), Department of the Interior – Climate Science Centers (CSC), Joint Global Change Research Institute (JGCRI), Computer Science Corporation (CSC), Sea Grant, NOAA Regional Climate Service Directors (RCSD), Regional Climate Centers (RCCs), American Association of State Climatologists (AASC), NOAA National Climatic Data Center (NCDC), and the NOAA Coastal Services Center (NCSC).

A key finding discussed at the workshop, related from years of regional capacity building on the issue of climate, is that trust building between partners is best accomplished when using shared resources to collaborate on common goals, objectives or outcomes. Working together to solve problems brings people together to innovate lasting solutions. Furthermore, capacity (tools, information, knowledge, etc) is best sustained when the developers of capability or knowledge are working hand-in-hand with those entities who will draw on that capability or knowledge over time. This announcement is designed to stimulate

partnerships by bringing people together around specific projects related to regionally relevant issues addressing climate adaptation.

### **What expertise do RISAs develop and enhance?**

Climate predictions and projections can inform decisions to adapt to a changing environment or to mitigate climate change, but only if the climate research community and decision makers work together to understand each other's needs and limitations. Decision makers require timely, accessible, and authoritative science to help them assess vulnerability and risks from a plausible range of climate change scenarios including potential surprises, to understand and envision a range of potential impacts, to inform adaptive actions and mitigation decisions, and to evaluate the effectiveness of response options. To help protect infrastructure, communities, and ecosystems from the impacts of climate change, the NOAA research community is providing a research-based portfolio of information and approaches within constructs that are useful and meaningful to decision makers to better enable adaptation decision making at all levels.

Many of those approaches employ data and information sources to characterize climate extremes, variability and change. These include analogs from paleoclimatic records, instrumental data, and high resolution climate projections including but not limited to downscaling. Each method or analytical technique in this portfolio brings its set of uncertainties and particular deficiencies, some of which are large or only partly characterized and poorly quantified. Integrating information across this mixed portfolio produces a more comprehensive characterization of a changing climate including the potential for extreme events outside the range of climate change models.

Government agencies, industry, and communities currently lack best practice guidelines for helping them assess, integrate and choose the most appropriate approaches and techniques for their particular sets of adaptation decisions.

CSI, NCDC, and RISA teams have repeatedly demonstrated the importance of drawing on the full range of climate science to support decision-making. The National Research Council noted this point in its 2009 report *Informing Effective Decisions* (NRC 2009):

“Providing data at appropriate time scales can also present a major challenge. Decision makers' time horizons differ, and the time scales for which they require information may vary from the scales for which climate and other forms of data are currently available. For those planning long-term infrastructure investments, decadal and longer-term climate projections, combined with other long-term trend information, such as data on population growth, may be sufficient. In contrast, ranchers, farmers, fisheries managers, and emergency managers may require information on a seasonal scale. In sectors such as public health and disaster management services, information on climate trends, climate variation (e.g., El

Niño/Southern Oscillation [ENSO] cycles), and weather may be needed and may need to be integrated with other relevant data...”

CSI and RISA teams have also demonstrated the importance of multiple approaches for building capacity to adapt. Through their expertise, RISAs innovate and enhance capabilities that can be incorporated into practice and into decision making, including but not limited to:

- Use of climate information (paleoclimate records, observational analysis, and projections)
- Vulnerability, Impacts, and Adaptation assessment
- Integrated scenario development
- Decision support tools and processes
- Climate communications
- Information systems (e.g. drought early warning systems)

### **Who are regional climate partners?**

To date, NOAA CSI (RISA, NIDIS, SARP, and COCA) has discussed opportunities for RISAs to work on regional priorities relevant to local, state, and federal offices, and their constituents. Through its role in USGCRP, the NCA, and the ICCATF, NOAA CSI has been reaching out to its intra- and inter-agency federal partners to help lay foundations for building these regional partnerships. These partners include, among others: NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), NOAA National Weather Service’s Climate Prediction Center (CPC), NOAA CPO’s Modeling, Analysis Predictions and Projections (MAPP) program, NOAA Earth Systems Research Laboratory (ESRL), NOAA Coastal Services Center, NOAA Sea Grant, US Forest Service, Department of Defense, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA), US Department of Agriculture, US Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of the Interior - Bureau of Reclamation, United States Geological Survey, and US Fish and Wildlife Survey.

RISA teams interact with a diversity of decision makers, scientists, and practitioners, including federal representatives, at local, state and federal scales. The aim of this announcement is to build on these partnerships through research projects. NOAA CPO intends to invite participation from several federal partners to evaluate program relevance and to seek leveraging opportunities to support the proposed projects.

### **B. Program Priorities**

#### **B. Program Priorities**

NOAA's RISA program helps build long-term capacity for making climate knowledge useful for action and for supporting on-the-ground decisions that are affected by climate variability and change. Other programs within CSI are more germane for advancing climate or interdisciplinary knowledge for specific decision contexts (e.g. specific locations or users). We aim to encourage expansion of regional capacity for climate knowledge to action by enhancing or initiating partnerships for research. Proposals for this competition should have at least one lead investigator be a RISA scientist. Projects applicable to only one location and/or one user are not relevant to this announcement. Applicants must show how the proposed project will influence broad regional networks and/or multiple user groups across a RISA region or across multiple RISA regions.

i. Develop regional capacity for coastal and marine climate adaptation

Climate variability and change present challenges for coastal and ocean resource managers and other decision makers working to enhance the resilience and sustainability of coastal and marine systems. Climate information needs are emerging across a diversity of critical marine decision contexts, such as fisheries management, place-based spatial planning and management, design and management of protected areas, environmental stewardship, and ecosystem restoration. However, relatively little is currently known about potential climate impacts on marine systems, as well as associated consequences for the humans that depend on these environments. In addition, identification and implementation of adaptation options are only just beginning to emerge.

To advance the knowledge and capacity of coastal and marine decision makers necessary to address climate extremes, variability, and change, priority areas of research include (but are not limited to):

- Improving understanding of impacts and responses of coastal and marine environments, ecosystem services, and associated human communities to climate change
- Addressing interactions between climatic and non-climatic stressors in marine environments
- Coupling regional-scale climate and ecosystem information, models, and/or projections
- Improving understanding of the climate-related connections and feedbacks between coastal (i.e. nearshore) and marine (i.e. offshore) environments
- Advancing the development and application of approaches for assessing vulnerability of fisheries and other key ocean-related economic sectors

- Identifying potential adaptation options and trade-offs for vulnerable coastal and marine resources
- Evaluation of the use of climate information by coastal managers and the effectiveness of adaptation actions

ii. Develop regional or cross-regional capacity for water resource management and planning

Identification of broad needs for climate information by water managers has been the focus of previous studies. Moreover, research on the impacts of climate variability and change on water resources (e.g., streamflow, snowpack, reservoirs) has the attention of many researchers. Much less is known about how best to communicate climate information, build on existing networks of trusted information providers, and evaluate the use of climate information in the water management arena. Thus, high priority topics under this announcement for enhancing the adaptive capacity of water managers and planners include (but are not limited to):

- Improving literacy and ways of communicating information (e.g., experimental methods of working with water managers, developing training modules) about a suite of climate information to water managers across multiple regions of the U.S.
- Understanding, analyzing and documenting networks of key climate information providers and decision makers within regions of high priority for NIDIS (e.g. Missouri River Basin, Rio Grande/Bravo Basin, and the Carolinas).
- Working across RISA teams to analyze best practices for and/or current understanding of the use and evaluation of climate information for water management communities
- Working across RISA teams to advance the use of climate information and enhance the adaptive capacity of water managers and populations at risk such as indigenous communities

iii. Develop regional capacity for land managers to adapt to climate

Vulnerability assessments are valuable for federal, state, local, tribal, and private land managers. Developing a climate response requires land managers to understand how climate may affect agricultural production systems and forest and grassland resources. Vulnerability assessments can be used to consider the effect of climate with other stressors and can help develop and prioritize effective management response, including monitoring needs. Large-scale problems like climate change require a large-scale approach. Assessing vulnerability across all lands in a region takes advantage of the unique capabilities of each land

management group. Research Stations and Regional Offices of the US Forest Service and state foresters in many places are already engaged in some level of assessments and have much of the data needed to complete vulnerability assessments, but may not have the expertise in working with data across climate extremes, variability and change, integrating socio-economic and other stressors, and/or assessing vulnerabilities and adaptation options across forest and grassland ecosystems. Similarly, Agricultural Research Stations of the US Department of Agriculture may have an understanding of climate impacts on individual crops or food production systems, but may not have the expertise or capacity to assess impacts of climate extremes, variability, and change, integrate socio-economic and other stressors, and/or assess food security by looking across production systems. In both cases, changing wildfire regimes present a management challenge that could be addressed in the research community through enhanced or expanded use of remote sensing products. To advance the knowledge and capacity of land managers and forest and agricultural scientists to address climate extremes, variability, and change, priority areas of research include (but are not limited to):

- Assessment of the vulnerability of food production to climate extremes, variability, and change with multiple stressors
- Addressing interactions between climatic and non-climatic stressors in forest and grassland ecosystems and agricultural production systems
- Coupling regional-scale climate, socio-economic, land use, agricultural, and ecosystem information, models, and/or projections
- Advancing the development and application of approaches for assessing vulnerability of public lands
- Evaluation of the use of climate information by public land managers and agricultural communities and the effectiveness of adaptation actions

### 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

We anticipate total available funding ranging from \$900,000 - \$1,500,000 for 6 - 11 projects ranging from \$75,000 - \$200,000 each. Federal funding for FY 2013 may be used to fund some awards submitted under this competition. Current or previous recipients are eligible to apply for a new award that builds on, but does not replicate, activities covered in the current or previous award.

## B. Project/Award Period

Projects are expected to last for 2 years from the start date.

## C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards will generally be a grant. If, however, it is anticipated that NOAA will be substantially involved in the implementation of the project, the funding instrument should be a cooperative agreement. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, applications for collaboration between NOAA scientists and a recipient scientist or contemplation by NOAA of detailing Federal personnel to work on proposed projects. NOAA will make decisions regarding the use of a cooperative agreement on a case-by-case basis. Funding for contractual arrangements for services and products for delivery to NOAA is not available under this announcement.

## III. Eligibility Information

### A. Eligible Applicants

The lead institution for each application must be one of the institutions included in the eleven existing RISA awards. Existing RISA awards include those on no-cost extensions.

### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None

### C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

One or more of the lead investigators for each application must be a lead investigator or co-investigator on an existing RISA award. All sub-awards, including those involving other RISA institutions, will be handled by the applicant.

## IV. Application and Submission Information

### A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available at Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) "Apply for Grants". For applicants without Internet access, please contact the CPO Grants Manager Diane Brown by mail at NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room 12237,

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

### 1. Application

Applications are limited to 10 pages using 12-point 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 this competition number. 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 of the problem, rationale and a brief summary of work to be completed. The abstract should appear on a separate page, headed with the application title, institution(s), investigator(s), total proposed cost and budget period.

(3) Results from prior research: 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 problem, scientific objectives, proposed methodology, relevance to the goal of the Climate Program and the priorities of the Program to which you are submitting the proposal (listed above). Benefits of the proposed project to the general public and the scientific community and data sharing procedures should be discussed. Mission goal must be broken down by year for multi year project within the proposal.

(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. Purchases of equipment greater than \$5000 must

include a purchase versus lease justification. Note that these justifications are considered part of the 10-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 and 2 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 institution's 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.

Contractual funds requested must be accompanied by a basis of selection statement; and a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement must be attached to the application to justify any indirect cost charges.

(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) 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.

(10) 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.

(11) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), of each applicant's project that is seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA's compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including the NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6\\_TOC.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf), and the Council of

Environmental Quality implementation regulations,  
[http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc\\_ceq.htm](http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm).

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their project activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species, and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting 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.

No NEPA information is required with the initial application. NEPA information may be requested after review of the application if NOAA determines such information is required (as discussed above).

#### C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications for this Competition must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, May 23, 2012. Applications received after this time will not be considered for funding. For applications submitted through grants.gov a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy submissions will be date and time stamped when they are received in the Climate Program Office. Faxed or emailed copies of applications will not be accepted.

#### 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

None.

Applications are submitted through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) ?Apply for Grants?. If an applicant does not have Internet access, CPO Grants Manager Diane Brown should be contacted by mail at NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room 12734, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 for hard copy submission instructions. Please allow two weeks after receipt for a response.

Please refer to the information about submission dates and times above to help ensure your application is received on time.

## V. Application Review Information

### A. Evaluation Criteria

NOTE: Percentages reflect final weighting for proposals that make it through Stages 1 and 2, described below.

#### A. Evaluation Criteria

##### 1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Application to the Program Goals (25%)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the CPO Grant Program Competition, this includes importance and relevance to the scientific priorities of the selected Competition(s) (See Section I.B Program Objective of this announcement for more details.). The PI's record of making his/her data accessible and usable by the scientific community in the past may also be considered when evaluating the importance and relevance of the application. **50%** of the above-stated relevance evaluation will be based on documentation within the proposal indicating the level of collaboration by the partner entity dedicated to the proposed project. Evidence of collaboration can include in-kind research/staff time, workshop costs, computer time, or data gathering/analysis contributed by the partner to the proposed project. Federally-funded university researcher time already dedicated to another project cannot be used to meet this criterion. Applicants can also describe how new resources from a partner would provide funding to this project.

##### 2. Technical/Scientific Merit (52.5%)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether the goals of the Competition will be realized through clear project goals and objectives.

### 3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (15%)

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

### 4. Project Costs (7.5%)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

### 5. Outreach and Education (0%)

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

## B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full application has been received, an administrative review will be conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

The reviews will take place in two stages. In Stage 1, independent peer mail reviewers and/or independent peer panel reviewers consisting of both Federal and non-Federal experts will evaluate applications using the following three criteria described above: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and project costs. Relevance will be assessed separately in Stage 2. The panel will not give consensus advice. The identity of mail reviewers and panel reviewers are privileged.

If a mail review is conducted during Stage 1, each reviewer will provide one score for each of three criteria: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and project costs for each application.

If a panel review is conducted during Stage 1, each reviewer will provide one score for each of three criteria: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and project costs for each application. The scores from the reviewers for each application will be combined using the weighting averages provided below to produce a single numerical score for Stage 1. Occasionally a reviewer may, due to lack of familiarity in a particular area, choose not to score a particular application. Proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2.

If only a mail peer review is conducted for stage 1, proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2.

If a mail review and a panel review are both conducted for Stage 1, the mail reviews will be provided to the Stage 1 review panel for use in its deliberations prior to providing its ratings, but the Competition Manager will use only the numerical rank order of the peer review panel to determine the average score for each proposal. Proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2.

In Stage 2, scores for Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Application to the Program Goals will be determined by a second panel comprising either federal or a combination of federal and non-federal partners. Each panel reviewer will provide a relevance score for each application that moved forward from Stage 1. The Stage 2 panel will not give consensus advice. The applications and their associated scores from Stage 1 will be provided to the Stage 2 panel.

The Stage 1 and Stage 2 weighting of scores for the individual criteria is shown in the following table:

Criterion weight	Stage 1 Weight	Stage 2 Weight	Final
1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability	0%	100%	25%
2. Technical/Scientific Merit	70%	0%	52.5%
3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants	20%	0%	15%
4. Project Costs	10%	0%	7.5%
5. Outreach and Education	0%	0%	
Stage Total	100%	100%	100%
Final weighting for each stage score	75%	25%	

To determine the final score, the scores from Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be combined, with a weighting of 75% for the Stage 1 score and 25% for the Stage 2 score, leading to the overall weightings for each criterion reported in section V.A above. The final score for each application will be used to determine the numerical rank order of proposals within each Competition.

The Competition Manager will recommend applications to the Selecting Official in numerical rank order unless a recommendation out of rank order is justified based upon any of the factors listed in the following section. The Competition Manager will review the amounts requested for each selected application (including costs for computing and networking services) and recommend the total duration and the amount of funding, which may be less than the application and budget requested. The Selecting Official will review the recommendations.

### C. Selection Factors

The Competition Manager shall select awards 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. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Partnerships with/participation of targeted group
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

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

### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding by an official of the NOAA Climate Program Office. 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 Principal Investigator of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not selected for recommendation.

## VI. Award Administration Information

### A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding by an official of the NOAA Climate Program Office. 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 Principal Investigator of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not selected for recommendation.

### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

### C. Reporting

Award recipients are required to submit financial and technical progress reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically to <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>. 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](http://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 CPO Grants Manager, Diane Brown, by mail (see address above) or at <diane.brown@noaa.gov>. Please allow up to two weeks after receipt for a response.

## VIII. Other Information

None.