

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: FY09 Ocean Exploration Omnibus - Education

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: OAR-OER-2009-2001485

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.460, Special Oceanic and Atmospheric Projects.

Dates: Completed pre-proposals are required for all categories and must be received by 5 p.m. (EDT) on August 29, 2008. Full proposal submissions must be received by 5 p.m. (EDT) on October 21, 2008. Applications received after the above deadlines will not be considered.

Funding Opportunity Description: In prior years, OE has funded the development of educational products to enable teachers to bring NOAA science into classrooms throughout the country. With this announcement, OE is seeking proposals that will facilitate the use of NOAA science in formal and informal education environments by extending the use of existing OE education products, located on its Web site (<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov>, in school districts and other learning centers throughout the country.

OE is seeking pre-proposals and full proposals to support its mission, consistent with NOAA's Strategic Plan (<http://www.nrc.noaa.gov>), to further ocean science education and ocean literacy.

It is anticipated that a total of approximately \$300,000 will be available through this Ocean Exploration Education announcement. Only ocean education proposals will be funded, any other kind of project will not be reviewed. Applicants are encouraged to visit the Ocean Explorer Web site (<http://www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov>) to familiarize themselves with past and present OE-funded activities.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Discovering Earth's Final Frontier: A U.S. Strategy for Ocean Exploration, the report of the 2000 President's panel on Ocean Exploration, called for a national program of discovery with central topics in mapping, exploring, technology development and education. In response to the Presidential Report, NOAA formed the Office of Ocean Exploration (OE), annually soliciting proposals on all or a subset of these central topics. The purpose of this announcement is to invite the submission of pre-proposals and full proposals in Ocean Exploration Education.

B. Program Priorities

The following thematic priorities are consistent with the 2000 President's Ocean Exploration Panel Report (<http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/websites/retiredsites/oceanpanel.pdf>); NOAA's 5-Year Research Plan (http://www.nrc.noaa.gov/Docs/NOAA_5_Year_Research_Plan_010605.pdf); the 2004 NOAA Education Plan at: <http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/>; eight regional NOAA-hosted ocean exploration workshops (<http://www.explore.noaa.gov/workshops/welcome.html>); the 2003 National Academy Report "Exploration of the Seas: Voyage into the Unknown"; the 2004 Report of the US Commission on Ocean Policy (2004); and the President's Ocean Action Plan.

Ocean Exploration Education

In response to the 2000 President's Panel on Ocean Exploration Report and the NOAA Strategic Plan, the NOAA OE Office produced educational products to enable teachers to bring NOAA science into classrooms throughout the county. Some of these products include Lessons (<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/lessonplans/lessonplans.html>), the Learning Ocean Science through Ocean Exploration Curriculum (<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/curriculum/welcome.html>), Expedition Education Modules (<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/modules/welcome.html>), and OceanAGE (<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/oceanage/welcome.html>). Education submissions must consider at least one of the following areas to effectively integrate one or more of the above referenced products into teaching and learning:

1. District-wide professional development for teachers in the use of one or more of the products;
2. The development of informal learning center-based programs using one of

more of these products, i.e., summer camps, family science programs, and/or after-school programs;

3. Integration of one or more of these products at institutions of higher learning for, or working with, pre-service teachers;
4. Integration of one or more of these products into mentoring programs; and
5. Other novel projects that extend the use of these products at the national, local, state and/or regional level.

All proposals are strongly encouraged to work closely with underserved and underrepresented groups, identify how the proposed project might enhance interests in STEM careers (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), and must demonstrate how they address the Ocean Literacy Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts (<http://www.coexploration.org/oceanliteracy/>). Formative and summative evaluation and demographic data collection are required as part of the project.

A more detailed description of the OE education products listed above follows and responders to this Announcement are strongly encouraged to review these products on the Ocean Explorer Web site:

1. Lessons- National Science Education Standards-based lessons have been developed that bring entire classrooms "on board" for exploration and discovery. Using new technological "eyes" to see, sense, measure, image, and describe a little known ocean world, scientists and educators bring the excitement of late-breaking ocean discoveries into classrooms through lessons for teachers of students in Grades 5-12. See <http://www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/lessonplans/lessonplans.html>

2. Learning Ocean Science through Ocean Exploration Curriculum - An Earth science-based curriculum developed for teachers of Grades 6-12, the curriculum includes lessons developed from NOAA expeditions of discovery. Curriculum themes progress from physical science through Earth science to biological and environmental science. By combining the Ocean Explorer Web site (<http://www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov>) and the OE companion CD into the curriculum, teachers and students have a direct connection to the scientists whose work they are modeling in the classroom and to other new discoveries made on OE expeditions. See <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/curriculum/welcome.html>.

3. Expedition Education Modules - Designed as an education unit to share the excitement of daily at-sea discoveries and the science behind NOAA's major ocean exploration expeditions, each module contains an Expedition Purpose, Lessons, Multimedia Learning Objects, OceanAGE Career Connections, and Other Resources and Links. See <http://www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/modules/welcome.html>.

4. OceanAGE (Another Generation of Explorers) Careers - OceanAGE Careers invites students to interact with the talented people who explore our ocean planet. From underwater pilots to research scientists, these marine explorers provide students with first-hand knowledge of exciting careers through live interviews, profiles, and mission

logs. See <http://www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/oceanage/welcome.html>.

To facilitate the use of NOAA science in formal and informal education environments, NOAA is seeking to extend the use of these OE education products located on the Web site in school districts and other learning centers throughout the country.

C. Program Authority

33 U.S.C. 883d.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

In anticipation of the FY09 President's Budget, OE anticipates a total of approximately \$300,000 will be available through this Ocean Exploration Education announcement. Depending on the quality and quantity of proposals received, a minimum of six projects are expected to be funded, resulting in an average award level of approximately \$50,000.

The OE Director may hold-over select proposals submitted for 2009 funding for consideration in 2010.

The amount of funding available through this announcement is subject to the final FY09 appropriation for Ocean Exploration. Publication of this announcement does not obligate NOAA to fund any specific project or to obligate all or any part of available funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to initiate or continue research activities where funding has been recommended by OE. The exact amount of funds that OE may recommend be granted will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Future opportunities for submitting proposals may be available and will depend on OE funding levels.

B. Project/Award Period

The current principal focus of the OE program is on one year projects. Proposals should include sufficient resources to analyze and publish results of the project. Applications must include a scope of work, budgets for each year and a total for the entire award period.

The earliest date for receipt of awards will be approximately 120-150 days after the annual NOAA funding appropriation from Congress. Applicants should consider this selection and processing time in proposing education activities.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Proposals selected for funding from non-Federal applicants will be funded through a grant or cooperative agreement under the terms of this notice. Proposals selected for funding from NOAA educators will be funded through an intra-agency transfer. Proposals selected for funding from a non-NOAA Federal agency will be funded through an inter-agency transfer. For applications funded through cooperative agreements, substantial involvement of the Federal government may include, but is not limited to, activities such as specifying direction or redirection of the scope of work due to inter-relationships with other projects or stipulating that the recipient must meet or adhere to specific procedural requirements before subsequent stages of a project may continue.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education; other nonprofits; commercial organizations; foreign governments; organizations under the jurisdiction of foreign governments; international organizations; state, local and Indian tribal governments; and Federal agencies. PLEASE NOTE: Before non-NOAA Federal applicants may be funded, they must demonstrate that they have legal authority to receive funds from another Federal agency in excess of their appropriation. Because this announcement is not proposing to procure goods or services from applicants, the Economy Act (31 USC 1535) is not an appropriate legal basis.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost-sharing is not required.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

i. Funding Requirements

Not Applicable.

ii. Potential Partners

As evidenced by the success of funded research under the auspices of the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP), the Ocean Exploration and Research Program encourages partnerships between academia, government and industry. While not a requirement, proposals demonstrating these types of partnerships are encouraged. OE also encourages investigators to seek complementary funding for their proposed projects through linked proposals to other agencies, both internal and external to NOAA.

iii. Permits and Approvals

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary International, Federal, State and Local Government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize potential adverse environmental impact. If applicable, documentation of requests for or approvals of cultural resource or environmental permits must be included in the proposal package. Applications will be reviewed to ensure they have sufficient environmental documentation to allow program staff to determine the environmental impact of a proposal under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

There is a two-page pre-proposal application required for a complete pre-proposal submission (Section IV. B. 1.), in addition to the required cover sheet which may be obtained through the OE Office web site at <http://www.explore.noaa.gov/research-funding-opportunities>. Please note: the OE cover sheet is not in Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>), but must be included to have a complete submission.

Full proposal application packages for non-Federal applicants are available at <http://www.grants.gov/>.

For applicants without internet access, hard copies of the OE cover sheet and the application package can be obtained by contacting Dr. Nicolas Alvarado, NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration & Research, 1315 East West Highway, SSMC 3, Rm. 10244, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, by phone at (301) 734-1015, or email: OAR.OE.FAQ@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

1. Pre-proposal Contents

Two-page pre-proposals are required for all submissions and should be compelling, concise and clear. They should identify project priorities, and objectives, describe how the proposed project relates to OE's mission and themes (as described in Section 1. A & B above), identify all major collaborators and their expertise, and include a budget summarizing the major categories of effort, including funds for other research, education, and outreach projects, as appropriate. Incomplete pre-proposals will not be considered.

As appropriate, additional information should be supplied regarding 1) any vessels, platforms or other critical assets required to technically achieve the goals and their costs; 2) any auxiliary funding sources for the proposed project; 3) time or operational constraints, especially with regard to field operations; 4) anticipated outputs (e.g. outcomes and impact, published papers, reports, meetings, and/or education and outreach products/materials) and 5) results from past Ocean Exploration funding (if appropriate).

All pre-proposal submissions must: 1) include the 2-page OE coversheet; 2) not exceed two additional single-sided typewritten pages and; 3) be written on 8.5 x 11 inch paper, in at least 12 pt font, with 1-inch margins. The Principal Investigator's last name should be typed in the bottom right-hand corner of each page. See Section IV.C for submission due dates and IV.F. and IV.G. for submission procedures and addresses. Pre-proposals submitted after the due dates will not be reviewed.

2. Full Proposal Contents

Full proposals must include the following, unless otherwise indicated, in the order listed. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in application not being reviewed. Excluding the coversheet, please number each page and label it with the Principal Investigator's last name in the bottom right-hand corner (highly recommended for tracking purposes only). As appropriate, all full proposal text should be written on 8.5 x 11 inch paper, in at least 12 pt font, with 1-inch margins. See Section IV.C for submission due dates and IV.F. and IV.G. for submission procedures and addresses. Proposals submitted after the due dates will not be considered. No appendices are permitted.

- a. Completed 2-page Proposal Coversheet: Principal and Co-Principal investigators should be identified.
- b. Maximum One-Page Executive Summary: Describe the essential elements of the project being proposed. Include: 1) Title, 2) List of names, contact details and affiliations of each investigator who will significantly contribute to the project, 3) Funding request for each year of the project as well as total funding requested, and 4) A concise statement of the compelling objectives and benefits of the project and the rationale for the work proposed;
- c. Project Description: The project description is not to exceed 15 pages, including

all text and any tables and visual materials (e.g., charts, graphs, maps, photographs). The 15-page limit does not include the Coversheet, Executive Summary, Budget and Budget Justification, Literature Citation, Current and Pending Support, Curriculum Vitae, Letters of Commitment, and required forms.

- i) Describe the goals and objectives of your project, the rationale for your approach, the methodology you propose to use and your justification for the proposed effort. Please be sure to address the educational, cultural or socioeconomic importance and merit.
 - ii) Provide a brief discussion of the personnel chosen for the overall effort, and as appropriate, how the team expertise will cover the any interdisciplinary aspects of the effort,
 - iii) Any auxiliary funding sources for the proposed project,
 - iv) Time or operational constraints, and
 - v) Anticipated outputs (e.g. knowledge and impact, published papers, reports, meetings, and/or education and outreach material) and cost. Proposals should also include a description and justification of data funding needs and explain how data will be made accessible or available to the public.
- d. Summary of Results from Past Ocean Exploration Support (if applicable). Concise summary of results and achievements, including publications from past Ocean Exploration funding.
- e. Summary of Relevant Current Funding Support: Applicants must provide information on all their current and pending Federal support for ongoing projects and proposals, including potential subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. The proposed project and all other projects or activities using Federal assistance or that requires a portion of time of the principal investigator or other senior personnel should be included. The relationship between the proposed project and these other projects should be described, and the number of person-months per year to be devoted to the projects must be stated.
- f. Brief Resumes for Each Investigator: two pages maximum for all Principal and Co-Principal Investigator(s) involved in carrying out the proposal including relevant recent publications and references,
- g. Detailed Tabular Budget: Separate budgets within the single proposal must be provided if more than one funding action is anticipated (e.g., if funds are to be allocated to more than one institution or agency through subcontracts).
- h. Budget Justification: including justification for how labor hours and travel costs were determined, justification for non-standard items as well as cost share/in-kind contribution.
- i. NEPA questions or a statement: There are none.
- j. Forms: Applicants must submit a complete NOAA grant application package provided from Grants.gov.
- k. List of Suggested Reviewers or Reviewers Not to Include (optional): Applicants may include a list of suggested reviewers (name, e-mail addresses and phone numbers) of five unconflicted potential peer-reviewers who they feel are especially well qualified to review the proposal. Applicants may also designate reviewers which are to be avoided, including potentially disqualifying conflicts of interest, e.g., thesis student/advisor, recent collaborators, etc..

See Section IV.C for submission due dates and IV.F. and IV.G. for submission procedures and addresses.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Completed pre-proposals are required for all categories and must be received by 5 p.m. (EDT) on August 29, 2008. Before 5:00 pm (EDT), an auto-reply message will notify applicants that their email with pre-proposal material was received. After 5:00 pm (EDT), an auto-reply message will notify applicant that their email with pre-proposal material submission is late and will not be considered. A complete pre-proposal is a prerequisite for submission of a full proposal. Applicants will receive an email encouraging or discouraging a full proposal submission by September 1, 2008. If you have not received a reply by September 5, 2008 contact OE (OAR.OE.FAQ@noaa.gov) as soon as possible.

Full proposal submissions must be received by 5 p.m. (EDT) on October 21, 2008. Applications received after the above deadlines will not be considered. For applications submitted through www.Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy proposals will be date and time stamped when they are received in the Program Office in Silver Spring, Maryland. For applicants without internet access or federal applicants, hard copies of the cover sheet and the application package can be obtained via mail at NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration, 1315 East West Highway, SSMC 3, 10th Floor, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, or requested by phone at (301) 734-1015 as well.

Pre-proposals and Full-Proposals submitted after their respective cutoff date and time will not be considered. Please note applicants may have to register or renew their central contractor registration prior to submitting to grants.gov. [Grants.gov](http://grants.gov) will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days to establish. Please plan your time accordingly to avoid late submissions. For further information please visit the Central Contractor Registration website (<http://www.ccr.gov/>).

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Applicants must contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the State's process under EO 12372. The names and addresses of the SPOC's are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's Web site:<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

E. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Pre-proposal submissions can be either by e-mail (preferred, send to OAR.OE.FAQ@noaa.gov) or by hard-copy (see address below). If by e-mail, please put your last name in the subject heading along with the words OE Pre-proposal, e.g., "Smith OE Pre-proposal." Adobe PDF format is preferred. No facsimile pre-proposals will be accepted.

Full proposal submissions must be through Grants.gov, except for those non-Federal applicants without internet access and Federal applicants, who may submit hard copies to ATTN: Dr. Nicolas Alvarado, Proposal Manager, NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration & Research, SSMC III, 10th Floor, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. (see address below). No e-mail or facsimile proposal submissions will be accepted.

Pre-proposal submissions can be either by e-mail (preferred, send to OAR.OE.FAQ@noaa.gov) or by hard-copy (see address below). If by e-mail, please put your last name in the subject heading along with the words OE Pre-proposal, e.g., "Smith OE Pre-proposal." Adobe PDF format is preferred. No facsimile pre-proposals will be accepted.

Full proposal submissions must be through Grants.gov, except for those non-Federal applicants without internet access and Federal applicants, who may submit hard copies to ATTN: Dr. Nicolas Alvarado, Proposal Manager, NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration & Research, SSMC III, 10th Floor, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. (see address below). No e-mail or facsimile proposal submissions will be accepted.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

i. Pre-Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The OE Director in consultation with the program staff will make the decision to encourage or discourage full proposal submissions based on one or more of the following factors: (1) Importance, Relevance and Applicability of Proposal to the

Program Goals and thematic priorities (see Section I.A. Program & Notice Objectives and Section I.B. Program Priorities & Guidance); (2) Scientific and Technical Merit (if applicable), (3) Overall qualifications of applicants, (4) Project Costs, (5) Outreach and Education Merit ; (6) Logistical feasibility (e.g., ship availability), given OE resource availability and (7) Consistency with the priorities of this announcement. The final decision to submit a full proposal is up to the applicant.

ii. Full Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Full proposals will be evaluated and rated individually by three or more independent peer reviewers. The following criteria will be used to review proposals using the corresponding weight value:

1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal to the Program Goals (40%):

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and relevance to appropriate NOAA, international, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the OE review process this includes the degree to which the proposal addresses and supports OE's mission, objectives, themes and priorities (see Section I.A. Program & Notice Objectives and Section I.B. Program Priorities & Guidance).

2. Scientific and Technical Merit (0%): 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. For the OE review process, this will evaluate the scientific, and/or technical merit of the effort, including whether the anticipated results (as appropriate, scientific, technical, historical, cultural, societal or economic) will have high impact or lead to the revision of existing paradigms or the formulation of new paradigms, whether approach is interdisciplinary, and whether the sampling methods and plan are appropriate. This criterion is not used in this competition.

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (10%): This ascertains whether the applicant(s) possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the OE review process this includes the qualifications of the applicant (s), the strength, diversity and depth of any partnership to accomplish the work proposed, as well as accomplishments from past OE funding, if applicable.

4. Project Costs (10%): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For the OE review process this includes the reasonableness of project costs, relative to the scope of work proposed and the available funds.

5. Outreach and Education Merit (40%): 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 OE review process, this includes whether there are clear project goals and objectives; whether the approach is technically sound and innovative; whether the proposed methods are appropriate; and evaluate the educational and outreach merit of the effort, including whether the anticipated results will have high impact.

B. Review and Selection Process

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

If proposals are determined to be in compliance and complete, a proposal will be subjected to peer-review. Peer reviewers shall rate the individual proposals using the evaluation criteria and percentage weights provided above and provide summary comment. Both Federal and non-Federal experts in the field may be used in the peer-review process, which may include external mail reviews and/or a peer-review panel. Peer-review panelists will not be asked to reach consensus on individual proposals. Based on the individual scores, summary comments and, as appropriate, summaries and scores by the panelists, the OE Senior Scientist, in consultation with appropriate OE staff, will make funding recommendations to the OE Director. In making the final selections, the OE Director 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 in section V.C.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the following factors.

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. Geographically (This includes ship availability)
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research areas
 - 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 (as in Section I.B).
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 NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding

are made to the Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

OE will notify all applicants (Federal and non-Federal) of the results of a peer review and the final recommendation to award or decline funding of a proposal in writing, by postal mail or email approximately 120 days after receipt of a full proposal. Successful applicants will receive notification from the NOAA Grants Management Division that the application has been funded. Official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows OE funding of the project to begin. Notifications will be issued through electronic mail to the proposal's Authorizing Official.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the collaboration duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement in the activities of each partnership will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and OE. Project activities should not be initiated in the expectation of grant funding until a notice of award document is received from the NOAA Grants Management Division.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Department of Commerce 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.

Limitation of Liability.

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal or project preparation costs if these programs are cancelled because of other agency priorities identified prior to final award of a grant. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project.

National Environmental Policy Act

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA Web site:

<http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/leaving.cgi?from=leavingFR.html&log=linklog&to=http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA,

<http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/leaving.cgi?from=leavingFR.html&log=linklog&to=http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>

NAO216--6--TOC.pdf, NEPA Questionnaire,

<http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/leaving.cgi?from=leavingFR.html&log=linklog&to=http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf>, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations,

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/leaving.cgi?from=leavingFR.html&log=linklog&to=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 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 proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

C. Reporting

Progress reports are due semi-annually and cover 6-month periods that begin with the start date of the project. Progress reports are due either electronically or by mail directly to the NOAA Ocean Exploration office and are due no later than 30 days after each 6-month project period. A final report is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of an award. Progress reports should detail collaborative

activities that have occurred during the reporting period that correspond with the goals and objectives identified in the narrative, as well as provide specific, project-related information including financial reports.

VII. Agency Contacts

For further information contact the NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration at (301) 734-1015 or submit inquiries via email to the Frequently Asked Questions address: OAR.OE.FAQ@noaa.gov. Email inquiries should include the Principal Investigator's name in the subject heading. Inquiries can be mailed to:

ATTN:
Dr. Nicolas Alvarado
NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration
1315 East West Highway
SSMC3, 10th Floor,
Silver Spring, Maryland
20910

VIII. Other Information

A. Proprietary or Privileged Information

Patentable ideas, trade secrets, privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, disclosure of which may harm the proposer, should be included in proposals only when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project. Such information should be clearly marked in the proposal or included as a separate statement accompanying the proposal and should be appropriately labeled with a legend such as, "The following is (proprietary or confidential) information that (name of proposing organization) requests not be released to persons outside the Government, except for purposes of review and evaluation." While NOAA will make every effort to prevent unauthorized access to such material, it is not responsible or in any way liable for the release of such material.

B. Release of Grantee Proposal Information

A proposal that results in a NOAA award will be available to the public on request, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the proposal aids identification of what may be specifically exempt. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, NOAA will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for merit review of the proposal or as otherwise authorized

by law.

Portions of proposals resulting in grants that contain descriptions of inventions in which either the Government or the grantee owns a right, title, or interest (including a non-exclusive license) will not normally be made available to the public until a reasonable time has been allowed for filing patent applications. NOAA will notify the grantee of receipt of requests for copies of funded proposals so the grantee may advise NOAA of such inventions described, or other confidential, commercial or proprietary information contained in the proposal.