

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

National Weather Service Program Office (NWSPO)

Funding Opportunity Title

International Capacity Development for Weather and Climate Observations and Forecasting and Disaster Risk Reduction

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-NWS-IA-2024-26755

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.467

Dates

. Full applications must be received by November 29, 2024. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered. For applications submitted via Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication will form the basis for determining timeliness. For those applicants not having access to the Internet, one signed original and two hard copy applications must be submitted. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. Note that late-arriving hardcopy applications provided to a delivery service on or before 5:00 p.m. EDT on the closing date for applications will be accepted for review if the applicant is able to document that the application was provided to the guaranteed delivery service by the specified closing date and time and if the application is received by NWS no later than 5:00 p.m. EDT, two business days following the closing date. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Applications submitted after 5:00 p.m. EDT, on November 29, 2024, will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Expected project start date is February 10, 2025.

Funding Opportunity Description

NOAA's National Weather Service, Office of International Affairs is soliciting proposals for International Capacity Development for Weather and Climate Forecasting and Disaster Risk Reduction (ICD-WCFDRR). The ICD-WCFDRR program's goal is to improve the capacity of operational National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) organizations worldwide to implement end-to-end early warning systems. Improving NMHS capacity for weather and climate-based early warning systems is done through collaboration between operational meteorologists, climatologists, hydrologists, and researchers in the development and implementation of innovative programs that will improve weather and climate-based early warning systems in developing countries.

All funding is contingent upon the availability of federal appropriations. NOAA has identified \$15,000,000 to be available the first year and up to \$15,000,000 will be available annually, for up to a total of \$75 million over five years, subject to the availability of funds. This funding is available to support multiple awards but NOAA will consider the possibility of providing only one award. NOAA anticipates providing funds each year for five years based on funding availability for that year. NOAA has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Funding for each subsequent year of a multi-year proposal is at the discretion of NOAA and is subject to the availability of funds and the recipient's performance. The actual annual funding that the awardee receives may be less than the anticipated amount and will depend on the availability of funding, the quality of the deliverables, and the satisfactory progress in achieving the stated goals described in project proposals, and the continued relevance to the program objectives.

Applications should include information that demonstrates an applicant's knowledge of the current status of and meet the technical and programmatic development and implementation requirements, including the structured and intense training programs related to Famine Early Warning System (FEWSNET), 3-D Printed Automatic Weather Stations (3D-PAWS), Impact-based forecasting, storm surge forecasting, and other objectives as discussed in the Program Objectives Section.

These programs expect various projects and activities to be underway through other funding mechanisms and the applicant must be able to seamlessly support those programs. The applicant must also understand the current needs and requirements for countries in the process of implementing end-to-end, people-centered, early warning systems at national levels for multiple hydrometeorological hazards as well as tsunami hazards. The applicant must be able to undertake multiple sub-awards to various international organizations in order to further project implementation. Most importantly, the applicant must have experience providing technology transfer and training to NMHSs globally. The applicant will be expected to work closely with NWS/IAO partners in these programs as well as NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) and its subsidiary bodies, NOAA's National Hurricane Center, USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), State Department Bureau for Oceans and Environmental Services (OES), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The objectives of the International Capacity Development for Weather and Climate Forecasting and Disaster Risk Reduction (ICD-WCFDDR) are to support capacity building in developing and least developed countries to improve hydrometeorological observations and forecasting for multiple hazards, including tsunami, in order to reduce the socio-economic impacts of hydrometeorological-related risks to ensure sustainable development. Early warning systems rely on early action based on information that is timely, accurate, accessible and understandable and is crucial in enabling at-risk communities to take effective, timely and pre-emptive action to reduce risks and avoid human casualties and losses.

To meet this objective, NOAA NWS Office of International Activities (IA) will support the development of various international projects including but not limited to increased in-situ observations through 3D-Printed Automatic Weather Stations (3D-PAWS); improved forecasting through real-time storm surge forecasts for developing countries during tropical cyclones; in person and online module development of training materials for impact-based forecasting; marine services, satellite imagery interpretation and other hydrometeorological capacity development training; and assistance with forecasting through the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET), and climate-based early warning system development, among others. Most, if not all, of these activities are ongoing and have a history of project development and implementations. It is anticipated that both programs will have new projects and activities that build off the past and complement existing programs. The overall goal of the projects are to contribute towards end-to-end early warning system development for multiple hydrometeorological hazards, including tsunamis. The 3D-PAWS initiative, for example, is a project that involves training and procurement of 3D-PAWS supplies to NMHS for their own use, creation, and deployment of AWSs following the initial training. The initiation of a 3D-PAWS training in a country is typically by request as the number of countries encountering 3D-PAWS and seeing its value has increased substantially in recent years. NOAA anticipates the funding award to go towards expanding 3D-PAWS extent to several additional countries in Africa, the Caribbean, Pacific Islands, and South America. NOAA has currently supported 3D-PAWS development in El Salvador, Kenya, the Dominican Republic, and Barbados, among others. Specifically, the 3D-PAWS initiative addresses the need of countries to increase in-situ observations and communicate weather and climate information in rural communities and data sparse regions with low-cost technology.

NOAA intends on utilizing 3D-PAWS to expand observation networks with the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET) in at least 10 countries in Africa over the next several years. Integrating these observations into FEWSNET products is a critical component of long-term sustainability of the FEWSNET program to increase utility of the products and ensure that NMHSs in the region are contributing in real-time to the system.

Another example is NOAA's plan to help develop end-to-end early warning systems which requires integrating observation data from various platforms and collaborating with NMHSs to formulate end-to-end multi hazard early warning systems through various forecast services and platforms. Specifically, NOAA intends to expand storm surge forecasting throughout the Caribbean and Central America and Pacific SIDS through developing coastal storm surge modeling and risk assessment, analysis, and mapping frameworks for the Caribbean and linking them with existing observation networks to monitor and evaluate storm surge forecasts. To do this, NOAA will require additional implementation and installation of storm surge sensors in key countries in the Caribbean, Central America, and Pacific SIDS.

NOAA is also working with other countries and multilateral donors to implement end-to-end, people centered, multi-hazard early warning systems at national levels. These systems are seen as a way to ensure sustainable development and reduce the socio-economic impacts of climate-related risks and disasters. Early warning is essential in disaster risk reduction as it saves lives and reduces climate impacts from floods, droughts, excessive heat, and other disasters such as tsunamis. Countries around the world have emphasized preparedness and preventive strategies to adapt with weather and climate hazards, including tsunamis, but are vastly under-resourced, under capacity, and obtain little technical knowledge to deliver early warnings. These represent areas at every step of the way along an end-to-end multi hazard warning system where programmatic and technical support are needed. These projects will be multi-faceted and will require the applicant to administer and oversee subawards with international organizations and government agencies to further implement project goals and objectives

This assistance may include identification of gaps in early warning systems, including areas for improvement, such as well-developed governance and institutional arrangements; disaster risk knowledge; roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders; appropriate and available technical and operational capacities for weather and climate observing equipment; detecting, monitoring, forecasting and warning of multiple weather and climate hazards, including tsunamis; and efficient, clear and timely communication of weather and climate-related data and information and understanding its impact and effect on user operations and needs. Other considerations include the implementation of demonstration projects that include a variety of regions and varying cultures, socioeconomic standing, and climatic conditions to show the benefits of a multi-hazard early warning system.

The main objective for the (ICD-WCFDDR) is to provide programmatic and technical support to countries in implementing people-centered, end-to-end early warning systems.

B. Program Priorities

NOAA will give attention to proposals addressing the identified priorities as listed below and the program objectives outlined above. Proposals must clearly articulate how these priorities and objectives will be addressed. The proposal must address the programmatic and technical approaches to be taken and clearly demonstrate the applicant's understanding of the programs and indicate its ability to address the goals of the ICD-WCFDDR program. The priorities are:

- Expand the number of 3D-PAWS observations and capacity development with NMHSs based on the needs of countries to improve in-situ hydrometeorological observation network and the capabilities of NMHS to implement and maintain 3D-PAWS.
- Training and Capacity Building: Assist NWS national centers such as National Center for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) and its subsidiary bodies, the National Hurricane Center, International Tsunami Information Center, Weather Prediction Center, and possibly others, in the implementation of projects which may include organizing and executing forecaster and/or stakeholder based workshops and trainings, providing training to meteorological forecasters, and facilitating any programmatic (such as travel arrangements, hiring) or technical needs (such as training module development).
- Operational and maintenance support of Chatty Beetles that have been deployed with Pacific SIDS. Chatty Beetles are critical communication devices that are designed to operate in remote environments. This would include training, updating technical needs, and maintaining data and server needs.
- Work with countries to reduce societal risk at the community and or national level. Specifically, this is working with NMHSs and other stakeholders to evaluate disaster-related decision-making processes in order to fill gaps, increase knowledge, and further facilitate early-warning system development.
- Connecting with existing hydrometeorological capacities and linking them with new trainings or weather and climate products to help streamline end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems. This will consider a range of needs, requirements, resource and technical capacities.
- Support Capacity Development through the collection of meteorological and hydrological observations in developing countries.
- Support capacity development for improved multi-hazard early warning monitoring and prediction systems to enhance flood, flash flood, drought, and heat predictions.
- Support capacity development for improved hydrometeorological database management for weather, water, and climate data in developing countries.
- Ability to manage sub-awards with many different partners with NOAA to further implement early warning system priorities.

Outreach Sub-Awards:

An Outreach Program's goal is to improve early warning systems by providing financial support to international organizations, such as National Meteorological and Hydrological Services' in developing countries, as well as organizations that work internationally to improve hydrometeorological database management, including historical reanalysis data. This includes creating partnerships between the academic research community, international operational hydrometeorologists, international NMHS's, the private sector, and civil society that allow the exchange of ideas to the benefit of both groups. This activity needs to be with PIs in international organizations along with NOAA and its partners. The proposals will usually address a local or regional gap for implementing multi-hazard early warning systems.

C. Program Authority

NOAA's authority to support the research, development, and implementation of associated activities anticipated by this NOFO is contained in one or more of the following:

--15 U.S.C. § 313, the Weather Service Organic Act.

- 49 U.S.C. § 44720, which authorizes NOAA, inter alia, to maintain agreements and support research projects in meteorology through the use of private and Governmental research facilities; and

--33 U.S.C. § 893a, the provision of the America COMPETES Act which authorizes NOAA to conduct, develop, support, promote, and coordinate formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

NOAA anticipates up to \$15,000,000.00 per year will be made available annually for this award. The actual annual funding that the awardee receives may be less than the anticipated amount and will depend on the actual projects that are approved by NOAA after the main award beings, the availability of funding, the quality of the deliverables, the satisfactory progress in achieving the stated goals described in project proposals, and continued relevance to program objectives.

B. Project/Award Period

This program announcement is for projects to be conducted for a five-year period, with an anticipated start date of February 10, 2025 unless otherwise directed. When a proposal for a multi-year award is approved, funding will initially be provided for only the first year of the program. It will be contingent upon satisfactory progress in relation to the stated goals of the proposal to address specific science needs and training priorities. Applications must include a scope of work and a budget for the entire award period.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for extramural awards will be a cooperative agreement since one or more NOAA components will be substantially involved in project activities. NOAA scientists and meteorologists will collaborate in the implementation of early warning systems. NOAA also has the expertise and relationships with foreign nations to help provide strategic oversight and guidance to meet stated objectives.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are private, non-profit entities and academic institutions in the United States.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application package is available at <http://www.grants.gov>.

If an applicant does not have internet access or issues accessing [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), an application package may also be requested by contacting: Andrew Horan, International Project Manager, Office of International Affairs, NOAA/NWS 1325 East-West Highway, Room 17033, Silver Spring, MD 20910; or at andrew.horan@noaa.gov, cell: 941-468-5094.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals should total no more than 50 pages in length, single spaced, with one inch margins on 8 ½ x 11 inch paper. The proposal should use Times New Roman 12 point font. Federally-mandated forms, tables of content, PI and staff vitae, budget tables, and any letters of support are not included within the page count.

Multi-year proposals up to a maximum of five years will be considered; however, funding beyond the first year will be dependent upon satisfactory performance and the availability of funds. February 3, 2025 is to be used as the proposed start date on proposals unless otherwise directed by the NOAA Program Officer.

The application elements listed below are required before an award can be made. Failure to submit elements 1, 4 and 5 by the deadline will result in the application not being reviewed if the omissions are not corrected prior to the deadline. The application elements are as follows:

1. Title Page. The title page must be officially authorized by the institutional representative. The PI and institutional representative should be identified by full name, title, organization, telephone number, and email address. It is requested that the title page clearly indicate which project areas are being addressed and the total amount of requested Federal funds be listed for each budget period.
2. Abstract Page - An abstract should be included and 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 proposal title, institution's investigators, total proposed cost, and budget period.
3. Results from Prior Training and/or Research - The results of relevant project should be described, including their relation to the current proposed work. Reference to each prior award should include the title, agency, award number, PIs, period of award, and total award. The section should be a brief summary and should not exceed five pages total.
4. Project description - The proposed project must be completely described, including identification of the problem; scientific and training objectives; proposed methodology; relevance to the priorities of operational hydrometeorology; operational applicability; scientific merit; proposed technology transfer; past collaborations with international operational hydrometeorologists, cost-effectiveness of training materials and approaches; and the program priorities listed above. Benefits of the proposed project to the general public and the broader scientific and educational community must be discussed. A year-by-year general summary of proposed work must be included. Specific plans for capacity development must be included.
5. Budget and Proposed Budget Justification - Applicants must submit a Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance, including a detailed budget using the SF 424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs. (The forms are available on [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).) Applicants should pay careful attention to show the yearly budget breakout on the SF424A for multi-year proposals. In addition, the body of the proposal should include a separate table showing the total annual budgets (if multi-year) corresponding with the project description. Additional text to justify expenses should be included as necessary.

6. Vitae. An abbreviated curriculum vitae must be included for each investigator identified with each proposal. Reference lists should be limited to all publications in the last five years with up to five other relevant papers.
7. Current and Pending Support. For each investigator, submit a list which includes project title, supporting agency with grant number, investigator months, dollar value, and duration. Requested values should be listed for pending support.
8. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Questionnaire: NOAA has determined that applicants do not need to provide answers to the NEPA Questionnaire at this time. The full proposal package includes the information described above as well as the following required federal forms: (1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424); (2) Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A); (3) Certification Regarding Lobbying (CD-511); (4) Assurances - Non Construction Programs (SF-424B); (5) Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL). Current versions of these forms are available on Grants.gov
- 9.

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan (up to 2 pages). See Section VI.B., Administrative and National Policy Requirements, below for additional information on what the plan should contain.

C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its application; and (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Full applications must be received by 5:00 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on November 29, 2024. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered. For applications submitted via Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication will form the basis for determining timeliness. For those applicants not having access to the Internet, one signed original and two hard copy applications must be submitted. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. Note that late-arriving hardcopy applications provided to a delivery service on or before 5:00 P.M. EDT on the closing date for applications will be accepted for review if the applicant is able to document that the application was provided to the guaranteed delivery service by the specified closing date and time and if the application is received by NWS no later than 5:00 P.M. EDT, two business days following the closing date. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Applications submitted after 5:00P.M. EDT on November 29, 2024 will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Expected project start date is February 10, 2025.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

NOAA will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, travel or salaries for Federal employees, or profit as allowable costs in the proposed budget. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Project costs can only include support for activities conducted between the effective start date and end date of the award, and cannot include activities undertaken either before or after the agreed upon dates. Applicants will not be reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award. Funding beyond the first year may be dependent upon satisfactory performance and continued availability of funds. NOAA is not responsible for proposal preparation costs.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicant organizations must complete and maintain three registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. These registrations include SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and eRA Commons. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants should begin this activity as soon as possible. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

Prior to registering with eRA Commons, applicant organizations must first obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov, if needed (refer to Section IV. Applications and Submission Information, Section C). Organizations can register with eRA Commons in tandem with completing their full SAM and Grants.gov registrations; however, all registrations must be in place by time of application submission. eRA Commons requires organizations to identify at least one Signing Official (SO) and at least one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account in order to submit an application.

The first PD/PI listed on the application must include their eRA Commons ID in the "Credential, e.g. agency login" Applicant Identifier field on the SF424 form. Failure to register in the Commons and to include a valid PD/PI Commons ID in the Applicant Identifier field will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application.

Federal employees are not allowed to assist in the preparation of an application or proposal. Because this is a competitive program, Federal employees will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for an application or proposal.

All applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals through the Grants.gov portal. For applicants without Internet access, hard copy proposals will be accepted. The hard copies must be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery. Hard copy proposals must be submitted to:

NOAA/NWS

ATTN: Andrew Horan, International Projects Manager
1325 East-West Highway, SSMC-2, Room 17330
Silver Spring, MD 20910

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

NOAA/NWS

ATTN: Andrew Horan, International Projects Manager
1325 East-West Highway, SSMC-2, Room 17330
Silver Spring, MD 20910

V. Application Review Information

Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	Maximum Points: 30
<p>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.</p> <p>1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal (30 percent): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, and international activities. For the ICD-WCFDRR competition this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the historical track record of the applicant in collaborative outreach between the operational and research in the weather, water, and climate communities, particularly international? • What is the plan for ensuring productive collaboration among relevant federal and international agencies? 	
2. Technical/scientific merit	Maximum Points: 25
<p>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.</p> <p>Technical/Scientific Merit (25 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. For the ICD-WCFDRR competition this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were focused evaluation objectives applicable and relevant? • Are the proposed capacity development initiatives in line with the technical and human capabilities of the international organization, agency, or country? • Are focused scientific objectives and strategies, including data management considerations and project milestones used? 	
3. Overall qualifications of applicants	Maximum Points: 25
<p>This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.</p> <p>Overall Qualification of Applicants (25 percent): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the ICD-WCFDRR competition this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do PIs clearly document past scientific and instructional collaborations and international capacity development with operational hydrologists, meteorologists and other environmental scientists, managers, and relevant stakeholders? • Have past interactions been successful? • Are key staff likely to maintain effective and consistent interactions with operational hydrometeorologists and other appropriate international officials throughout the course of the proposed ICD-WCFDRR program? • Have key staff and the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct successful training and education of large numbers of international students synchronously, asynchronously, and through virtual and simulation approaches? • Is applicant cognizant of the current status of and meet the intricate technical and programmatic development and implementation requirements of multi-hazard early warning system development, including 3D-PAWS programs and objectives as discussed in the Program Objectives. 	

- Does applicant have working knowledge of 3D-PAWS and multi-hazard early warning system technology and its global implementation and applications processes for the development and implementation of relevant projects?
- Does applicant understand the current needs and requirements for developing and least developed countries in the process of implementing (or at least addressing) end-to-end, people-centered, early warning systems at national levels for multiple hazards.
- Does applicant have previous experience on successful technology transfer and training with National Meteorological and Hydrological Services worldwide and have working relationships with NWS/IAO partners in these programs such as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)?

4. Project costs

Maximum Points: 20

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

4. Project Costs (20 percent): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For the competition this includes:

- Does the PI and key staff demonstrate the ability to utilize their resources in a cost efficient manner?
- Is there a high ratio of operationally useful results versus proposed costs?
- Are proposed approaches cost effective in various budgetary scenarios?
- Are proposed Capacity Development solutions the most cost-effective method of improving the observational and dissemination capabilities to improve early warning systems in a country given the country's potentially limited technological advancement level?

Review and Selection Process

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

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 one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. geographically
 - b. by type of institution
 - c. by type of partners
 - d. by research priority
 - 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 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.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

February 10, 2025, should be used as the proposed start date on proposals. The announcement of the award is expected around January 13, 2025.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

PRE-AWARD COSTS. Per 2 CFR 200.458, NOAA authorizes award recipients to expend pre-award costs up to 90 days before the period of performance start date at the applicant's own risk without approval from NOAA and in accordance with the applicant's internal policies and procedures. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award. This does not include direct proposal costs (as defined at 2 CFR 200.460). In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for direct proposal preparation costs. Pre-award costs will be a portion of, not in addition to, the approved total budget of the award. Pre-award costs expended more than 90 days prior to the period of performance start date require approval from the Grants Officer. This does not change the period of performance start date.

GRANTS OFFICER SIGNATURE. Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation are not considered awards until the Grants Officer has signed the grant agreement. Only Grants Officers can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. The Grants Officer's digital signature constitutes an obligation of funds by the federal government and formal approval of the award.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY. Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of funds. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS. Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which applies to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

RESEARCH TERMS AND CONDITIONS. For awards designated on the CD-450 as Research, the Commerce Terms, and the Federal-wide Research Terms and Conditions (Research Terms) as implemented by the Department of Commerce, currently, at <https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtc.jsp>, both apply to the award. The Commerce Terms and the Research Terms are generally intended to harmonize with each other; however, where the Commerce Terms and the Research Terms differ in a Research award, the Research Terms prevail, unless otherwise indicated in a specific award condition.

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 December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC) TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in eRA at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

BUREAU TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Successful applicants who accept an award under this solicitation will be bound by bureau-specific standard terms and conditions. These terms and conditions will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system. For NOAA awards only, the Administrative Standard Award Conditions for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Financial Assistance Awards U.S. Department of Commerce are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/financial-assistance>

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH. For research projects involving Human Subjects an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or an exemption determination will be required in accordance with DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions Section G.05.i "Research Involving Human Subjects" found at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

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 proposals 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://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf. 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 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. 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.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT. Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS. The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

DATA SHARING PLAN. 1. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards. 2. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. 3. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. 4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

More information can be found on NOAA's Data Management Procedures at: https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0_remediated.pdf and at NAO 212-15 Management of Environmental Data and Information: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-212-15-management-of-environmental-data-and-information>

NOAA SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY.

NOAA requires organizations receiving federal assistance to report findings of sexual harassment, or any other kind of harassment, regarding a Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI, or any other key personnel in the award.

NOAA expects all financial assistance recipients to establish and maintain clear and unambiguous standards of behavior to ensure harassment free workplaces wherever NOAA grant or cooperative agreement work is conducted, including notification pathways for all personnel, including students, on the awards. This expectation includes activities at all on- and offsite facilities and during conferences and workshops. All such settings should have accessible and evident means for reporting violations and recipients should exercise due diligence with timely investigations of allegations and corrective actions.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/noaa-workplace-harassment-training-for-contractors-and-financial>.

SCIENCE INTEGRITY. 1. Maintaining Integrity. The non-Federal entity shall maintain the scientific integrity of research performed pursuant to this grant or financial assistance award including the prevention, detection, and remediation of any allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, and the conduct of inquiries, investigations, and adjudications of allegations of violations of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. All the requirements of this provision flow down to subrecipients. 2. Peer Review. The peer review of the results of scientific activities under a NOAA grant, financial assistance award or cooperative agreement shall be accomplished to ensure consistency with NOAA standards on quality, relevance, scientific integrity, reproducibility, transparency, and performance. NOAA will ensure that peer review of "influential scientific information" or "highly influential scientific assessments" is conducted in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review and NOAA policies on peer review, such as the Information Quality Guidelines. 3. In performing or presenting the results of scientific activities under the NOAA grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement and in responding to allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, the non-Federal entity and all subrecipients shall comply with the provisions herein and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 202-735D, Scientific Integrity, and its Procedural Handbook, including any amendments thereto. That Order can be found at <http://nrc.noaa.gov/ScientificIntegrityCommons.aspx>. 4. Primary Responsibility. The non-Federal entity shall have the primary responsibility to prevent, detect, and investigate allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. Unless otherwise instructed by the grants officer, the non-Federal entity shall promptly conduct an initial inquiry into any allegation of such misconduct and may rely on its internal policies and procedures, as appropriate, to do so. 5. By executing this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement the non-Federal entity provides its assurance that it has established an administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigating, and reporting allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct; and that it will comply with its own administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigation, and reporting of such misconduct. 6. The non-Federal entity shall insert this provision in all subawards at all tiers under this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement.

REVIEW OF RISK. After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.206. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments about any information concerning organizational performance listed in the Responsibility/Qualification section of SAM.gov for consideration by the awarding agency.

REVIEWS AND EVALUATION. The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with the Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with §200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

REQUIRED USE OF AMERICAN IRON, STEEL, MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, AND

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS. If applicable, and pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Pub.L. No. 117-58, which includes the Build American, Buy American (BABA) Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52 and OMB M-22-11, recipients of an award of Federal financial assistance from the Department of Commerce (DOC) are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless: 1) all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States—this means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States; 2) all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States—this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation; and 3) all construction materials¹ are manufactured in the United States—this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

WAIVERS. When necessary, recipients may apply for, and DOC may grant, a waiver from these requirements. DOC will notify the recipient for information on the process for requesting a waiver from these requirements. 1) When DOC has made a determination that one of the following exceptions applies, the awarding official may waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference in any case in which DOC determines that: a. applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest; b. the types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality; or c. the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25 percent. A request to waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference must be in writing. DOC will provide instructions on the format, contents, and supporting materials required for any waiver request. Waiver requests are subject to public comment periods of no less than 15 days and must be reviewed by the Made in America Office. There may be instances where an award qualifies, in whole or in part, for an existing waiver described at whitehouse.gov/omb/management/made-in-america.

DEFINITIONS. "Construction materials" includes an article, material, or supply—other than an item of primarily iron or steel; a manufactured product; cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives²—that is or consists primarily of: non-ferrous metals; plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinylchloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables); glass (including optic glass); lumber; or drywall. "Domestic content procurement preference" means all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States; the manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States. "Infrastructure" includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States, roads, highways, and bridges; public transportation; dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime facilities; intercity passenger and freight railroads; freight and intermodal facilities; airports; water systems, including drinking water and wastewater systems; electrical transmission facilities and systems; utilities; broadband infrastructure; and buildings and real property. Infrastructure includes facilities that generate, transport, and distribute energy. "Project" means the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States. -- 1 Excludes cement and cementitious materials, aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel, or aggregate binding agents or additives. 2 IIJA, § 70917(c)(1).

C. Reporting

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.328-9 and the terms and conditions of the award, financial reports are to be submitted electronically and semi-annually and performance (technical) reports are to be submitted electronically and semi-annually. Reports are submitted electronically through eRA.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsr.gov/> on all subawards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically through the eRA Commons online system on a semi-annual basis. All financial reports are routed directly to the NOAA Grants Officer. Performance reports are routed to the NOAA Federal Program Officer. 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, 31 U.S.C 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier sub awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000.

VII. Agency Contacts

The point of contact is Andrew Horan, International Projects Manager, International Affairs Office, NOAA/NWS, 1325 East-West Highway, Room 17033; Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3283, or by phone at 301-427-9047, cell at 941-468-5094, or via email at: Andrew.Horan@noaa.gov

VIII. Other Information

INDIRECT COST RATE. If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Jennifer Jackson, email: Jennifer.Jackson@noaa.gov