

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

Fisheries Pacific Islands Region Program Office (PIRO)

Funding Opportunity Title

FY25 Pacific Islands - Hawai'i Marine Wildlife Response and Outreach

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-NMFS-PIR-2025-29385

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.454

Dates

Proposals must be received by <http://www.Grants.gov>, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., Hawai'i Standard Time, on February 17, 2025. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable.

Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

NOTE: We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov).

Applicant organizations and individuals must first register with SAM.gov and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). After you obtain your UEI, you can complete your Grants.gov and eRA Commons registrations concurrently.

See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on registration requirements. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in this NOFO for submission instructions.

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See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on registration requirements. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in this NOFO for submission instructions.

Funding Opportunity Description

The National Marine Fisheries Service (hereinafter, "NMFS") is soliciting competitive applications for the fiscal year 2025 Pacific Islands - Hawai'i Wildlife Response and Outreach competition. Projects are being solicited to support specific programmatic activities related to the following 3 priorities:

Priority 1: Hawaiian Monk Seal Management Support, Field Response, and Outreach: Projects to conduct in-field response and educational outreach for Hawaiian monk seals occurring on the islands of O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i, or Hawai'i Island. Funding availability is island and species-specific, with total funding not to exceed \$460,000 (up to 4 proposals may be funded).

Priority 2: Sea Turtle Management Support, Field Response, and Outreach: Projects to conduct in-field response and educational outreach for sea turtles occurring on the islands of O'ahu, Maui, or Hawai'i Island (western Kona side). Funding availability is island and species-specific with total funding not to exceed \$140,000 (up to 4 proposals may be funded).

Priority 3: Native Hawaiian engagement in cetacean and sea turtle response. Requested funding per project is recommended to not exceed \$15,000 (up to 2 proposals may be funded).

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NMFS is soliciting competitive applications for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Pacific Islands - Hawai'i Wildlife Response and Outreach competition. Selected projects which support management through conservation activities, incident response and support, and related outreach for Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, and cetaceans will be funded via grants and/or cooperative agreements. Total available funding under this notice is not anticipated to exceed \$630,000. Applicants will be selected by NMFS on a competitive basis as outlined in this announcement.

B. Program Priorities

Proposals must address one (1) and only one of the three (3) stated funding Priorities, which are listed in no particular rank order of preference (i.e., no one Priority carries a higher priority than another). The application should clearly identify which Priority it falls within on the title page of the application.

Priority 1: Hawaiian Monk Seal Management Support, Field Response, and Outreach: Projects to conduct in-field response and educational outreach for Hawaiian monk seals occurring on the islands of O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i, or Hawai'i Island.

Projects under Priority 1 must work in close collaboration with NMFS, relevant state and local government agencies, and non-government partners to ensure consistency in response and data collection protocols. Close coordination with NMFS on public communications, including social media posts, is also required to ensure compliance with NMFS permitting requirements and consistency with outreach guidelines. Projects must coordinate closely with the NMFS Hawaiian Monk Seal Research and Recovery Programs, and be consistent with the NMFS Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Plan (2007) and Species in the Spotlight Priority Action Plan (2021). All projects should use branding elements (personnel uniforms, vehicle marking, etc.) that are unique to the project and clearly distinguish the project from NMFS and other government personnel and assets.

Applicants must maintain an outreach and response program to receive and transmit sighting and incident reports, respond to haul outs and pupping events, assist NMFS with stranding response, and reduce adverse human-seal interactions via public outreach. Proposals must clearly describe capacity to:

- Receive calls via NMFS hotlines and other sources, assess and document reports of sightings and human-seal interactions.
- Immediately and accurately transmit to NMFS all reports involving possible seal injuries and other situations requiring direct NMFS engagement.
- Rapidly dispatch qualified personnel to conduct on-scene response assessment and transmit relevant information to NMFS, and to remain at haul-outs and pupping events to reduce adverse human-seal interactions via outreach and minimal use of temporary signage and light fencing.
- Maintain personnel and resource capacity sufficient for effective program management and administration, including internal policies and procedures for personnel safety, regulatory compliance, public relations, information management, and personnel recruitment, retention, training, and performance evaluation.
- Create and maintain good relationships with partners that are relevant to operations. Also recognizing that information and data may be transmitted through various channels (including via NMFS).
- Follow NMFS chain of command for communication requiring assistance at responses. Namely, communicate with NMFS to agree on a response plan prior to responding and address if there are conflicting in-field response needs (i.e., multiple response situations).
- Provide seal sighting data and health information to NMFS using formats approved by NMFS to ensure compatibility with NMFS data management systems.
- Implement communication strategies targeting audiences who may interact with monk seals to reduce harmful interactions and improve understanding of recovery issues and opportunities.
- Foster opportunities for shoreline residents to provide on-scene haul-out support to reduce the need to dispatch project personnel.

Priority 2: Sea Turtle Management Support, Field Response, and Outreach: Projects to conduct in-field response and educational outreach for sea turtles occurring on the islands of O'ahu, Maui, or Hawai'i Island (i.e., the western (Kona) side of Hawai'i Island).

Projects under Priority 2 must work in close collaboration with NMFS, relevant state and local government agencies, and non-government partners to encourage consistency in response and data collection protocols. Close coordination with NMFS on public communications including social media posts is also required to ensure compliance with NMFS permitting requirements and consistency with outreach guidelines. Projects must coordinate closely with the NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science

Center (PIFSC) Marine Turtle Biology and Assessment Program (MTBAP) and the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network in Hawai'i. All projects should use branding elements (personnel uniforms, vehicle marking, etc.) that are unique to the project and clearly distinguish the project from NMFS and other government personnel and assets.

Applicants must maintain a sea turtle stranding response program on O'ahu, Maui, or on the western or Kona side of Hawai'i Island (via a network of volunteers, interns, staff, and community collaboration) to respond to or assist in the care and treatment of stranded sea turtles. Programmatic activities and reporting must be designed to collect data to support NMFS's mission for monitoring threats and impacts to sea turtles. Proposals must clearly describe capacity to:

- Independently receive, vet (in coordination with NMFS), and document public reports and other information on dead, injured or compromised sea turtles, and provide guidance to reporting parties.

- Provide sufficient personnel capacity and ensure project personnel have appropriate training, equipment, and protective gear; and ability to communicate with the public effectively, and with cultural sensitivity, during and after response events.

- Conduct outreach to raise community awareness about threats and impacts to sea turtles, and to encourage behaviors that may reduce harmful human interactions with sea turtles (e.g., promote responsible public viewing, responsible fishing, or safe boating).

- Conduct field responses, manage data, communicate openly with NMFS and generate reports to be submitted to NMFS to support monitoring of threats and impacts to sea turtles.

- Provide basic medical care, treatment of injuries or humane euthanasia under the guidance and authorization of NMFS staff or NMFS contract veterinarian.

- Create and maintain good relationships with partners that are relevant to operations. Also recognize that information and data may also be transmitted to NMFS by partners or the public through various channels.

- Follow NMFS chain of command for communication to discuss in-field response strategy in the event of multiple response scenarios.

- Reporting to NMFS:

- *Submit a Stranding Report to NMFS PIFSC via the MTBAP Sea Turtle Stranding Reporting Form within 24 hours of a field response or a public report of a dead, injured, sick, diseased (i.e., tumored), buoyant, out of habitat, or otherwise compromised sea turtle, including treatment (and release) of a case in the field. Reporting on the size and location of FP tumors on basking green turtles is necessary to monitor the progression and prevalence of the disease.

- *Submit a Stranding Report to NMFS PIFSC via the MTBAP Sea Turtle Stranding Reporting Form within 24 hours of an animal determined to be stranded (dead, entangled, injured, buoyant, large tumors, or out of habitat) but unable to access/respond to due to personnel safety concerns, the animal is in the water or in a fish pond, or due to conflicting response scenarios. In such cases, communication with NMFS is necessary to agree on the no-action response to ensure consistency in the state-wide field response to such animals.

- *Grant reports to NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) to include (per sector if applicable): 1) the number of reported strandings, 2) the number of confirmed strandings (with threats identified based on gross external observation), 3) the number of in-field responses, and 4) the number of stranded (or potential strandings) but no-response initiated as per bullet above. These reported numbers should be consistent with the data reported to PIFSC MTBAP, hence terminology to be standardized prior to project implementation.

- *Grant reports to NMFS PIRO to include (per sector/location if applicable): any self-reporting from key community members (e.g., fishermen or boaters) regarding their interactions with turtles, any public reports of disturbance reported to the hotline, or cases forwarded to enforcement.

- Communication with NMFS:

- *Communicate with NMFS (via phone or WhatsApp) to discuss cases (i.e., entangled, vessel strike, high tumor or barnacle load, buoyancy, appearing sick/lethargic, in shallow-water or fish pond for extended period (more than 2-3 days), basking for extended period (>3 days), out of habitat, or conflicting response scenarios) to determine if a sea turtle should be left at liberty or brought to a rehabilitation

center.

*Communicate with NMFS (via phone or WhatsApp) about the final disposition of dead turtles. Animals in remote locations or those of no scientific value may be buried on site. Deceased animals can be brought to NMFS or a holding facility.

*All reported cases (dead, injured, etc) within Department of Defense properties (e.g., Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam, Marine Corp Base Hawai'i, Bellows Airforce Base, etc), on land or in the water, must be reported to NMFS in real time (via WhatsApp).

*Turtles with large tumors that may be basking (e.g., in known basking areas) should also be discussed with NMFS to ensure consistency in the state-wide field response to such animals.

Priority 3: Native Hawaiian engagement in cetacean and sea turtle response.

Projects under Priority 3 must work in close collaboration with NMFS, relevant state and local government agencies to support Native Hawaiian engagement in cetacean and sea turtle response. Communities in Hawai'i have specific cultural and religious practices and obligations (kuleana) regarding the handling of marine animals and the final disposition of their bodies. Projects under this priority will include activities that support Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners' involvement in cetacean and sea turtle stranding response to support culturally appropriate response and final disposition of deceased animals (e.g., traditional at sea burial) in compliance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and other applicable laws (e.g., Environmental Protection Act). Projects will include costs associated with stranding response including supplies and materials, equipment rental (including vehicle and vessel rental or fuel fees), shipping, honoraria for practitioners (e.g., kahu), etc. Projects would work under NOAA's MMPA and ESA authority for cetaceans and ESA regulations for sea turtles.

C. Program Authority

Authority 16 U.S.C. §661 and 16 U.S.C. §742f

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total funding available under this notice is not anticipated to exceed \$630,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. Actual funding availability for this program is contingent upon FY 2025 Federal appropriations. The maximum funding per project is dependent on priority activities and island areas, and is detailed below.

PRIORITY 1: Total funding for Priority 1 is not anticipated to exceed \$460,000 per year. Available funding is island-specific and dependent upon NMFS having dedicated Hawaiian monk seals funding to disburse. Multi-year projects are encouraged, up to 3 years, with funding amounts recommended to not exceed total anticipated amounts available per island: O'ahu (\$200,000 per year); Maui (\$100,000 per year); Moloka'i (\$80,000 per year); Hawai'i Island (\$80,000 per year).

PRIORITY 2: Total funding for Priority 2 is not anticipated to exceed \$140,000 per year. Available funding is island-specific and dependent upon NMFS having dedicated sea turtle funding to disburse. Multi-year project proposals, up to 3 years, may be submitted, with funding amounts recommended to not exceed total anticipated amounts available per island: O'ahu (\$60,000 per year); Maui (\$60,000 per year); western (Kona) side of Hawai'i Island (\$20,000 per year).

PRIORITY 3: Total funding for Priority 3 is not anticipated to exceed \$30,000 per year. Available funding is dependent upon NMFS having funds dedicated to disburse. Proposals are recommended to not exceed \$15,000 per project per year. Multi-year project proposals, up to 3 years, may be submitted.

Award amounts will be determined by the proposals and available funds. There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by the same applicant, however, multiple applications submitted by the same applicant must clearly identify different projects.

Pre-award costs are not allowed under the award unless approved by the NOAA Grants Officer.

B. Project/Award Period

Applicants can apply for up to a 3 year multi-year project. All projects are recommended to be at least 12 months in duration. Preferred begin date is October 1, 2025. Projects can start as early as August 1, 2025, however the funding may not yet be available at that date.

If a multi-year application is selected for initial funding in year one, NMFS has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

NMFS will fund the projects under this competition as grants or cooperative agreements. The government will be substantially involved in the management and/or operation of the program, if a project is funded through a cooperative agreement. This substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to partnering in collaborative efforts, operating under a NMFS research permit, and/or alignment of activities to meet program priorities. Substantial involvement may also include NMFS staff assisting in training; capacity building; development of outreach materials and activities; development of meeting agendas and participant lists; and conduct and facilitation of meetings.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are individuals, institutions of higher education, nonprofits, commercial organizations, state, local, and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies and their employees, as well as, Federal instrumentalities (including employees and members) are not eligible to apply.

NOTE: We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov).

Registration Requirements: Applicant organizations and individuals must first register with SAM.gov and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). After you obtain your UEI, you can complete your Grants.gov and eRA Commons registrations concurrently.

See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on required registrations. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in this NOFO for submission instructions.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or matching is required under the program.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application package, consisting of the standard forms, i.e., SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at <http://www.grants.gov>. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. If you do not have Internet access, an application package may be received by contacting: Hideyo Hattori, NOAA Federal Program Officer, Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1845 Wasp Blvd, Building 176, Honolulu, HI 96818, Email: hideyo.hattori@noaa.gov. Phone: (808)725-5057.

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov is inaccessible, paper applications will be accepted. Paper applications must be submitted with completed, signed inked signature, original forms in hard copy and an electronic copy of the entire application on CD, including scanned signed forms. If the applicant has completed the entire application in Grants.gov but is unable to submit it via Grants.gov, then this application package should be provided via CD along with printed and signed versions of forms SF-424, SF-424B, and CD-511. The authorized representative MUST sign and date these forms over the printed signature that will appear in the signature box. Paper applications without inked signatures on their forms will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed. Paper applications should not be bound in any manner.

B. Content and Form of Application

All application materials should be submitted in Adobe PDF or a common word processing format, and when printed out should meet all format requirements. All pages must be no less than double-spaced (printed or typed), printed or typed in at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out. Consideration will only be given to material that is physically included in an application. Information provided via a hyperlink will not be considered, nor will it influence the application evaluation. Failure to follow these requirements will result in the rejection/return of the application.

Consideration will only be given to material that is physically included in an application. Information provided via a hyperlink will not be considered, nor will it influence the application evaluation.

Each application must include:

- Federal application forms, including:
 - SF-424.
 - SF-424A, Budget Information, Non-construction Programs must be completed, and also include all matching funds.
 - SF-424B, Assurances, Non-construction Programs must be completed for each submitted non- construction application.
 - CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.
 - SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).
 - Title Page (Proposal cover sheet, limit 1 page).
 - Narrative Project Description (described below, limit 20 pages).
 - Budget Justification (described below, limit 4 pages). Provide justifications (in narrative format) for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget justification should be broken out and detailed using the same budget categories as noted on the SF-424A budget form, with a corresponding budget narrative for each funding period when applying for a Multi-Year award (2 to 3 years).

- NEPA Questionnaire. The NOAA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questionnaire must be completed by answering each relevant question for each application. For more information on this requirement, see section "B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements" and <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf>. This questionnaire does not count towards any page limits.
- Data Sharing or Management Plan (up to 2 pages, if the project collects environmental data).
- Attachments (limit 10 pages). Other Supporting Documentation and relevant attachments the applicant deems important to the overall understanding and evaluation of the proposed project (combined into one PDF document). All combined attachments must be no longer than 10 pages. Attachment information can include: charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations; abbreviated CVs or resumes of key personnel; letters of collaboration; an indirect cost rate agreement; permit information; or any other supporting information.

Content Requirements:

1. Title Page (Proposal Cover Sheet, 1 page maximum)

(a) Funding opportunity title and priority to be addressed in the proposal (e.g., FY25 Pacific Islands - Hawai'i Marine Wildlife Response and Outreach. Priority 1: Hawaiian Monk Seal Management Support, Field Response, and Outreach)

(b) Project title

(c) Project Manager and Financial Representative with complete contact information (address, fax, email, and phone number)

(d) Any co-managers with contact information

(e) Start and end dates of proposed project

(f) Funding type request (grant or cooperative agreement)

(g) Total cost of the project, including federal and non-federal funding requested

(h) If requesting a multi-year project, the project costs per funding year

(i) Summary (abstract) of the project (e.g., activities, location, and expected outcomes and benefits of the project). This summary statement (or abstract) may be posted on our website if the project is funded.

2. Project Narrative (limit 20 pages): Describe the project activities completely and accurately, with emphasis placed on describing how the proposed project would address the competition's Priority (1B) and implement activities as indicated in the notice of funding opportunity. The Project Narrative should be a clear statement and description of all work to be undertaken and must include the information listed below. For multi-year applications, if project activities are proposed to differ or change from year to year, this must be clearly described in separate Project Activities sections for each project year. (Note: separate Budget Narratives must be submitted for each project year for multi-year applications.)

(a) Project Goals, and Objectives: Describe the key goals and objectives of the project (reference any necessary and applicable management plans, ESA recovery plans, etc.), and describe how the project will implement the activities outlined in Priorities 1B. Include a summary of background information that exists for the project to help put the project into context. Projects historically funded by NMFS should include a brief summary of results or data to date. Summarize any expected accomplishments or outcomes. Objectives should be attainable within the specified time period and with the available monetary and human resources. Objectives should be simple, understandable, and as specific and quantitative as possible.

(b) Project Management: Describe how the proposed project will be organized and managed, including financial management of the project. Describe who will be responsible for carrying out project activities, and when/how communication with NMFS regarding project activities and objectives will take place. The lead organization/individual and person listed as the technical contact should be identified as the Project Manager (PM). Use of sub-contractors or volunteer or intern staff time to complete project activities and oversight of those individuals should be discussed. The PM is responsible for all technical oversight and implementation of the approved work plan as delineated in the proposal. One PM must be designated, but the PM may or may not be the applicant. However, if the applicant is not the PM, there must be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and PM (e.g., applicant will be responsible for managing the grant funds and the PM will be responsible for completing the project milestones on time and within budget, etc.). Project participants or organizations that will have a significant role in conducting the project should be listed as Co-Managers. Organizations or individuals that support the project, for example, researchers contributing data or materials, should be referred to as Cooperators. Short (1 page max) resumes or curricula vitae of the PMs and Co-Managers must be included in appendices.

(c) Project Activities: Describe the technical plan of activities or methods that will be accomplished or implemented to meet the proposed project's goals and objectives. Include detailed descriptions of activities, survey methodology (if applicable), collaborators, milestones, and expected products resulting from the completed project. Include federal permit information if a permit is required to undertake work. Project methods should include:

- i. Project activities and how they relate to the project's goals and objectives.
- ii. A list of the activities or methods that will be conducted by project personnel, volunteers,

community members, etc. to implement the activities outlined in section 1B. Describe the oversight of any volunteers and how their time will be used to complete project activities. Describe activities such that they are commensurate with the budget and scope of work.

iii. Clearly describe strategies or methods for meeting each objective described in this Announcement, milestones for each strategy, and a description of the specific activities and associated timelines necessary to meet them. If relevant, describe any timelines in project-specific increments (e.g., month one, month two, etc.), or by specific dates. Provide an explanation if dates are necessary. Make sure the timelines are reasonable and reflect your overall project period. Specify the quantitative and/or qualitative evaluation criteria (metrics) you will use to determine the relative success or failure of the project in achieving the stated project goals, objectives, and milestones.

iv. Identify the outcomes, results, or products, and how they relate to the program Priority (1B) to be addressed by the proposed project. If applicable, describe how the project outcomes, results, or products will be applied and/or made available to any appropriate user groups or through outreach and education efforts.

v. Need for Government financial assistance: Demonstrate the need for government financial assistance. List all other sources of funding that are or have been sought for the project.

vi. Federal, State and local government activities: List any programmatic partners, plans or activities (Federal, State, or local government activities) this project would affect or collaborate with and describe the relationship between the proposed project and those plans, activities or partners.

vii. Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant: Describe how any non-governmental entities will participate in the project and the nature of their participation.

3. Budget Justification (not to exceed 4 pages in length)

(a) Each application must include clear and concise budget information covering total project costs, both on the required Federal forms and in a detailed budget narrative. Scalable projects are encouraged with budgets and objectives drafted such that specific components can be funded independently of other project components. Multi-year applications must include a budget narrative for each year of the proposed project.

The NOAA Grant Management Budget Narrative guidance can be found on their website:

https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2019/Jun/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf

(b) Applications must include OMB standard form 424A, "Budget information - Non Construction Programs." All instructions should be read before completing the form, and the amounts per category and total amounts indicated on the form should correspond with amounts indicated in the budget narrative and justification.

(c) On a separate sheet or spreadsheet, list itemized costs per category and the corresponding Federal and non-Federal share and direct and indirect cost totals. Describe and justify the requested budget. For the non-Federal share, the itemized costs should be separated into cash and in-kind contributions. If in-kind contributions are included, describe briefly the basis for estimating the value of these contributions.

(d) 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 15% 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 Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer

NOAA Grants Management Division 1325 East West Highway

9th Floor

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 lamar.revis@noaa.gov

4. Data Sharing or Management Plan (up to 2 pages, if the project collects environmental data. The data sharing plan will not count towards any other page limits.)

(a) 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.

(b) If projects submitted in response to this announcement collect or manage environmental data, then applications 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.

(c) 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. 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.

5. Appendices (optional; maximum 10 pages): Abbreviated/short curricula vitae or resumes of the PM and any Co-Managers should be included with the application. Additional material that is necessary or useful to the description of the project may also be provided (e.g., letters of collaboration, tables or visual materials, permits, maps). Letters of collaboration are strongly recommended.

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.

Applicants are required to submit answers to questions from the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire that are relevant to their proposed project activities. See Section VI.B., Administrative and National Policy Requirements, below for additional NEPA information.

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

Proposals must be received by <http://www.Grants.gov>, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., Hawai'i Standard Time, on February 17, 2025. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372.

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. Such expenditures may not be considered as part of the applicant's cost share or matching contribution.

G. Other Submission Requirements

We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take six weeks or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

Applicant organizations and individuals must register for three different Federal systems prior to submitting an application through Grants.gov (SAM.gov, eRA Commons, and Grants.gov). See below for more detailed information on each required registration process.

1. System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

SAM.gov registration is required to do business with the U.S. government. After registering with SAM.gov, you will receive a 12-character Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) that you will use throughout the application process.

We recommend allowing at least three weeks for initial SAM.gov registrations and at least two weeks for SAM.gov registration renewals. Additional information on SAM.gov registration is available here:

<https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>

You must update your SAM.gov registration any time your entity's information changes. You must also renew and revalidate your entity's SAM.gov registration at least every 12 months from the date you last certified to and submitted the registration. The renewal process may take up to two weeks. Your SAM.gov account's primary point of contact will receive an email message alerting them to the renewal requirement at 60 days, 30 days, and 15 days prior to expiration. If you do not renew your registration by the deadline, it will expire.

2. eRA Commons

After completing your SAM.gov registration and receiving your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), you must register with eRA Commons and create several required user accounts. NOAA uses eRA Commons to process grant applications and manage grant awards.

NOTE: eRA Commons requires applicants to create one ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE and two USER ACCOUNTS before submitting an application. These requirements are described in detail below.

We recommend allowing at least three weeks for eRA Commons registration. This process can be completed concurrently with your Grants.gov registration. Additional information on the eRA Commons registration process is available here: <https://www.commerce.gov/ocio/programs/gems/applicant-and-grantee-training>

After creating an overall account for your “institution”, which may be for your organization or yourself as an individual, eRA Commons requires you to set up at least two user accounts: one Signing Official (SO) account and one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account.

The Signing Official (SO) user account must be assigned to an individual with signature authority to legally bind the organization in grants administration matters. The SO will receive 4-5 emails throughout the registration process.

The Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account must be assigned to an individual with primary responsibility for the project(s) described in the grant application. The eRA Commons User ID (Username) for the PD/PI must also be listed on the SF-424 form for item 4 (Applicant Identifier).

Your SO and PD/PI user accounts must be active before you submit an application. Both accounts can be assigned to the same individual if appropriate.

3. Grants.Gov

After completing your SAM.gov registration and receiving your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), you must complete a one-time registration process with Grants.gov. Grants.gov is a government-wide portal used to solicit and accept grant applications.

We recommend allowing at least two weeks for Grants.gov registration. This process can be completed concurrently with your eRA Commons registration. Additional information on the Grants.gov registration process is available here: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

Submission Validation: The Grants.gov and eRA Commons validation processes for a submitted application can take up to two business days after submission. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA to review. To ensure successful submission of an application, we strongly recommend that you submit a final and complete application at least two business days prior to the submission deadline. Grants.gov and eRA Commons will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Submissions may also be rejected if:

The Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI)'s account username within eRA Commons is not provided on the SF-424 form for item 4 (Applicant Identifier).

The Universal Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov is not provided on the SF-424 form for item 8.c (UEI).

The Congressional District is not entered in the correct format on the SF-424 form for item 16 (Congressional Districts). The correct format is: [State Abbreviation]-[three digit district number]. For example, Virginia's 1st Congressional District would be listed as VA-001.

PDF files are not flattened. To flatten a fillable PDF, you can use the “Print to PDF” function from any web browser or PDF reader application.

File sizes exceed 100 MB.

Page sizes are greater than 8.5x11.

File names exceed 50 characters (including spaces).

File names include special characters.

After you submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by NOAA. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by FOUR automated responses (1-Grants.gov Submission Receipt; 2-Grants.gov Submission Validation Receipt for Application; 3-Grants.gov Grantor Agency Retrieval Receipt for Application; 4-Grants.gov Agency Tracking Number Assignment for Application).

In addition to the Grants.gov automated notification messages, you may receive automated email notifications of any errors or warnings identified by eRA Commons. You must resolve all eRA Commons errors prior to the application due date in order for the application to be processed.

Once an electronic application is accepted in eRA Commons, you will receive an additional automated notification that the completed application was received and that an application number will be assigned. You should save and print the proof of submission messages from both Grants.gov and eRA Commons. If you do not receive an acceptance message from both Grants.gov and eRA Commons, you should follow up with the agency contact listed in VII to confirm NOAA’s receipt of the complete submission.

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

Full applications should be submitted through www.grants.gov. If you do not have internet access, a paper application package may submitted to Hideyo Hattori, Federal Programs Officer, NOAA/NMFS/PIRO; 1845 Wasp Blvd., Building 176, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96818.

V. Application Review Information

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	Maximum Points: 30
<p>This criterion ascertains whether there is value in the proposed work related to the specified Priority (Section 1.B above), and to other relevant NMFS, Federal, regional, state, management objectives including relevance to ESA recovery or management plans. Applications will be evaluated to determine if the project’s goals, objectives and activities are clear and realistic. Reviewers will consider what is the likelihood of meeting the proposed project’s goals and objectives, and achieving anticipated results or outcomes in the stated time period. Is there a high certainty for successful programmatic implementation to effectively address management and conservation needs? Does the proposal describe how partners or community members will be productively engaged in the project?</p>	
2. Technical/scientific merit	Maximum Points: 30

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, and if the methods are appropriate to achieve or implement the project's goals and objectives. Proposals should provide a clear definition of the project design and the means for securing productive results (e.g., evaluation criteria). Proposals should have sufficient information to enable reviewers to provide a technical evaluation of the project, including reference to Federal permits if needed to implement programmatic activities. Does the project have a strong technical design to ensure the project will produce productive and meaningful results? Does the proposal clearly indicate: a) who will be responsible for carrying out project activities? b) when/how communication with NMFS regarding project activities and objectives will take place? c) how project personnel will coordinate with NMFS and partners to maximize collaboration and information-sharing, maximize efficiency, and reduce duplication of efforts? d) how the applicant intends to engage with and foster participation by diverse stakeholder groups and community members? and/or e) specify the quantitative and/or qualitative evaluation criteria (metrics) that will be collected, documented, and reported by the applicant to determine the relative success or failure of the project in achieving the stated project goals, objectives, and milestones? Per the NOAA Data Sharing Directive, data management plans shall be also evaluated as part of the proposal review process as part of the evaluation criterion.

3. Overall qualifications of applicants

Maximum Points: 20

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, facilities, community connections, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Reviewers will consider previous related performance experience and qualifications of the project's PM, Co-Manager(s) and other personnel, including designated contractors, consultants, and cooperators. Reviewers will consider if the project is already established and has the necessary connections (government, local community, partnerships) to implement programmatic objectives. If not, is there certainty that the project can implement objectives while becoming established? Reviewers will also consider whether the proposed project is a status quo continuation of past efforts under a previous award or if it is expected to achieve new or enhanced project results or outcomes.

4. Project costs

Maximum Points: 10

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. This includes reviewing the reasonableness of the costs associated with the required tasks to be performed, and the overall relationship with the cost effectiveness for successfully completing the project. Are all costs itemized, and do they directly support the project goals, objectives, and activities? Is the overall budget justified and appropriately allocated? Does the project provide a high conservation value for low expenditure of resources? Scalable projects are encouraged with budgets and objectives drafted such that specific components can be funded independently of other project components. Reviewers may recommend specific components of projects be funded based on merit of proposed activities.

5. Outreach and Education

Maximum Points: 10

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. Applications will be evaluated on whether project results or products will be shared appropriately given the nature of the proposed work, and whether sufficient detail is provided to make this determination. Is there an appropriate outreach/education plan, strategy, or products for the type and nature of the proposal? Are the methods and target audiences adequately described? Will product(s) be effective and support meaningful and long-term conservation or management outcomes? Depending on the nature of the project, outreach and education may include: postings on websites and social media (in collaboration with NOAA), presentations, meetings and community events, development of brochures, education materials, or training manuals.

Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors that the reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets the criterion. We encourage applicants to make explicit connections to the evaluation criterion and factors in their applications.

Written comments are required to justify provided scores in each section of the review. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

Three technical/merit review panels will be convened - one panel for each Priority. The applications will be evaluated under the program Priority which is specified in the project proposal. Applications will not be evaluated under more than one Priority. Each panel will evaluate proposals by assigning scores up to the maximum indicated for each of the criteria below. Each review panel will generate a rank order of proposals per Priority.

Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 3 steps: initial screening; technical/merit review panel; and final selection by the Selecting Official (the NOAA NMFS Regional Administrator).

1. Initial Screening - An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to determine compliance with application requirements and completeness of application materials. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete or non-responsive will be eliminated from further review. When applications are received they will be screened to ensure they were received by the deadline date (see Section IV. D. Submission Dates and Times); the applicant is eligible to apply; the proposed project addresses one of the funding priorities; and includes a title page, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B. Content and Form of Application. We do not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause your application to be rejected so that you would have an opportunity to correct them. However, should we do so and provide you information about deficiencies, or should you independently decide it is desirable to do so, you may correct any deficiencies in your application before the deadline.

After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it. If your application does not conform to the requirements listed above, and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will be returned and rejected without further consideration.

2. Technical/Merit Panel Review -

After the initial screening, each application will be reviewed by three or more appropriate federal, private or public sector experts (e.g. industry, academia, or governmental experts) with subject matter expertise. There will be one panel for each Priority. The reviewers will meet and evaluate each proposal individually based on its own merit against the evaluation criteria described in Section V.A. Evaluation Criteria. All applications, regardless of Priority (I.B), will be reviewed in this manner. Prior to the meeting or webinar, each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score prior to the panel meeting or webinar. During the panel meeting or webinar, reviewers may revise their scores and comments. Reviewers will submit their final scores to the competition manager by the end of the panel meeting or Webinar. After the panel scores are submitted, a compilation of all proposals will be ranked per Priority (1, 2, or 3) based on the average score from the technical review and panel. No consensus advice will be developed at the meeting, nor given to NOAA. These reviewers will be required to certify that they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the application(s) they are reviewing. NOAA will protect the identity of each reviewer to the maximum extent permitted by law.

Selection Factors

The NMFS PIRO Regional Administrator, as the Selecting Official, will review the funding recommendation and comments of the technical/merit panel review to determine which applications will be recommended to the NOAA Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall recommend proposals to the Grants Officer for funding in the ranked order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors listed, in no order of significance:

1. Availability of funds;
2. Balance/distribution of funds;
 - a. By priority;
 - b. By project type;
 - c. By type of applicant;
 - d. By type of partners;
 - e. Geographic distribution;
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies;
4. Program objectives and priorities as noted in Section I A. and B.
5. Applicant's prior award performance in conducting a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Selecting Official may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality;
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups; and
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination and draft necessary documentation before project commencement.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications being considered for funding are expected to be complete by June of 2025. Preferred begin date of proposed projects is October 1, 2025. The earliest start date for projects will be August 1, 2025, dependent upon availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Projects must begin on the first day of the month.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive notification from a NMFS Regional representative that the application has been recommended for funding selection to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project, and it is not a guarantee of funding. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. This notification will be issued to the Authorizing Representative of the project either electronically through use of eRA or in hard copy. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until the Applicant's Authorized Representative has received official notice of the award from the NOAA Grants Officer and has reviewed and accepted the terms of the award.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified if their proposal was not recommended for funding or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in IV.B (Content and Form of Applications). Unsuccessful paper applications will not be returned to the applicant. 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 project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

Award documents provided by the Grants Officer may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award, as applicable, and will be applied on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award so they are fully aware of the relevant Standard Terms and Conditions as well as any Special Award Conditions that have been placed on the award.

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 or cooperative 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/SBq4>.

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>

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.

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.

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 15% 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, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov.

C. Reporting

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

Performance Progress Reports: Basic information that should be in all report submissions includes the project title, award number, dates of the award period, dates of the reporting period, and the name(s) of the grantee and the principal investigator. Inclusion of media such as photography and statistics (tables, graphs, etc.) to help document programmatic activities in report submissions is also encouraged. Pertinent, captioned photographs of project activities are requested, and may be included within the progress report document submitted via eRA. Semi-annual progress reports should describe the tasks accomplished within the reporting period (from the proposal and amendments) and the tasks that were actually accomplished in the period, using the evaluation criteria (metrics) for each objective as outlined in your Project Description (see section IV.B.2.c). The report should also explain any special problems or differences between the scheduled and accomplished work.

- (a) Report title, reporting period, organization, project manager/investigator, grant number, date.
- (b) Executive Summary: A brief and succinct summary of the project.
- (c) Purpose:
 - Detailed description of the problem that was addressed by the project.
 - Objectives of the project.
- (d) Approach: Detailed description of the work that was performed.
- (e) Project Management: List individuals and/or organizations actually performing the work and how it was done.
- (f) Findings/Results:
 - Actual accomplishments and findings.
 - If significant problems developed which resulted in less than satisfactory or negative results, these should be discussed.
 - Description of need for additional work, if any.
 - Collected data during the course of the performance period should be included in tabular format (e.g., spreadsheet). Final reports must include a complete dataset of data collected during the performance period.
- (g) Evaluation:
 - Describe the extent to which the project goals and objectives were attained. This description should address the following: Were the goals and objectives attained? How? If not, why? Were modifications made to the goals and objectives? If so, explain.
- (h) Dissemination of project results:
 - Explain, in detail, how the project's results have been and will be disseminated.

Publications, Videos, and Acknowledgement of Sponsorship: Publication of the results or findings of the funded award activities in appropriate professional journals, outreach materials, or press releases, and production of video or other media is encouraged as an important method of recording and reporting scientific information. These are also constructive means to expand access to federally funded research. The recipient is required to submit a copy of any publication to the funding agency, and when releasing information related to a funded project, include a statement that the project or effort undertaken was or is sponsored by NOAA Fisheries Service. The recipient is also responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including Internet sites and videos) based on or developed under an award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following acknowledgement and disclaimer: "This project received funding under award [number] from NOAA Fisheries PIRO. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA Fisheries." The final report is a public document and may be posted, partially or in its entirety, on the NOAA Fisheries website. All publications, videos, social media posts, outreach materials, etc., that describe or depict activities conducted under a NMFS permit must be submitted to NMFS for review and approval prior to public distribution. Project managers are strongly encouraged to provide NMFS an opportunity to review public outreach materials that describe or depict federal laws, policies, or guidelines prior to public distribution.

VII. Agency Contacts

If you have any questions regarding this proposal solicitation, please contact Mr. Hideyo Hattori, NOAA Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1845 Wasp Blvd, Building 176, Honolulu, HI 96818; Phone: (808) 725-5057; Email: hideyo.hattori@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.