

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

OAR Cooperative Institutes Administration Office (CIAO)

Funding Opportunity Title

Cooperative Institute Fostering Aquaculture Research and Marketing (CIFARM)

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-OAR-CIPO-2025-31269

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.432

Dates

Deadline: Applications must be submitted to Grants.gov and accepted by eRA no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Friday, September 5, 2025.

Period of Performance: This multiyear, Institutional project must have a start date no earlier than April 1, 2026 and an end date approximately 5-years later.

Funding Opportunity Description

The NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) in collaboration with the National Marine Fisheries Service invites applications for the establishment of a Cooperative Institute Fostering Aquaculture Research and Marketing (CIFARM) that will: directly support [NOAA's Research and Development Vision Areas](#) by advancing key goals in aquaculture, fostering innovation, promoting environmental stewardship, and building strong coastal economies; support the robust development of aquaculture in the United States to address the seafood import deficit and benefit the economy; and help the agency fulfill the tenets of the NOAA Aquaculture Strategic Plan. This Cooperative Institute (CI) will facilitate a long-term collaborative relationship between NOAA and the recipient within which broad-based research, technology innovation, and education and outreach capabilities that focus on NOAA's priorities for the US aquaculture sector can be developed and sustained. The CI may consist of one or more research institutions with expertise and capabilities in the NOAA priority areas that contribute to the areas of research described as research themes later in this announcement.

Applicants to this Notice of Funding Opportunity will submit one overarching application that seeks to establish the CIFARM at an eligible institution or group of institutions. This application should speak to high level research themes (See I.B.) that future projects could fall under, but should not include detailed projects at this time. This overarching application will be identified as a T1 award.

Following the selection of the CI host institution, the awardee will then be requested to submit an additional application for approximately \$9,000,000 detailing the proposed projects that fall under the research themes. Not every applicant will be asked to submit this second application, **only** the institution recommended for funding. Once awarded, this second application will be identified as a T3. The host institution will continue to submit T3 detailed project applications at various funding levels throughout the life of the five year award.

All projects must take place within the United States or territories or their respective waterways.

Applicants 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. NOAA has created a website to aid applicants in understanding Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs), the application process, and how to properly format application packages to eRA, linked [here](#).

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.

This document sets out requirements for submitting to NOAA-OAR-CIPO-2025-31269.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The purpose of this announcement is to invite the submission of proposals to establish a Cooperative Institute Fostering Aquaculture Research and Marketing (CIFARM) and to provide details on the application, review, and selection process. NOAA's mission requires a forward-thinking, interdisciplinary perspective to provide the scientific underpinning for an ecosystem approach to management of ocean resources. Over the past several years, NOAA sought input from stakeholders and partners for a number of major initiatives, including the NOAA Aquaculture Program Strategic Plan, and Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Economic Development. This input helped to inform the research themes for this NOFO. CIFARM must have a broad geographic scope (in part to address needs in both warm and temperate water), with a focused emphasis on advancing aquaculture in an open ocean environment. To do this, the CI will need to tackle research in fields such as engineering and technology, environmental modeling, monitoring, innovation, risk assessment, and demonstration.

CI Concept/Program Background

A Cooperative Institute (CI) is a NOAA-supported, non-Federal organization that has established an outstanding research program in one or more areas that are relevant to the NOAA mission “to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts, to share that knowledge and information with others, and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.” CIs are established at research institutions with outstanding graduate degree programs in NOAA-related sciences. CIs provide significant coordination of resources among all non-government partners and promote the involvement of students and post-doctoral scientists in NOAA-funded research. NOAA establishes a new CI competitively when it identifies a need to sponsor a long-term (5-10 years) collaborative partnership with one or more outstanding non-Federal, non-profit research institutions. For NOAA, the purpose of this long-term collaborative partnership is to promote research, education, training, and outreach aligned with NOAA’s mission; to obtain research capabilities that do not exist internally; and/or to expand research capacity in NOAA-related sciences to:

- conduct collaborative, long-term research that involves NOAA scientists and those at the research institution(s) from one or more scientific disciplines of interest to NOAA;
- utilize the scientific, education, and outreach expertise at the research institution(s) that, depending on NOAA’s research needs, may or may not be located near a NOAA facility;
- support student participation in NOAA-related research studies; and
- strengthen or expand NOAA-related research capabilities and capacity at the research institution(s) that complements and contributes to NOAA’s ability to reach its mission goals.

A CI may be comprised of a single academic institution or a consortium of academic institutions, at times working in conjunction with supporting research affiliates, each of which demonstrates outstanding performance within one or more established research programs in NOAA-related sciences. The Institutes conduct research under approved scientific research themes and tasks. These tasks may not be redefined or abbreviated:

- Task I activities are related to the management of the CI, as well as general education and outreach activities. This task also includes support of postdoctoral and visiting scientists conducting activities within the research themes of the CI that are approved by the CI Director, in consultation with NOAA, and are relevant to NOAA and the CI’s mission goals.
- Task II research activities usually involve ongoing direct collaboration with NOAA scientists. This collaboration typically is fostered by the collocation of Federal and CI employees.
- Task III research activities require minimal collaboration with NOAA scientists and may include research funded by other NOAA competitive grant programs.

B. Program Priorities

Research priorities for the CIFARM are listed below, in no particular order. Several of the priorities are intersecting or related, and should not be considered mutually exclusive. Applicants are encouraged to focus primarily on these themes, but additional themes are allowed.

1. **Marine Aquaculture Demonstration** - There is a recognized need for aquaculture demonstration projects in the U.S. Establishing CIFARM-held and operated test beds or proving grounds could accelerate the transition of concepts from ideation to operational implementation. Research under this theme will inform guidelines and best practices for robust aquaculture development.
 - *a. Implementing Pilot Projects and Offshore Test Beds:* Establish pilot projects and offshore test beds to demonstrate innovative aquaculture technologies and methods in real world settings, emphasizing monitoring and evaluation of productivity, environmental performance, and economic feasibility. This approach will provide a platform for testing and refining innovative technologies and bridge the gap between concept and full-scale commercialization.
 - *b. NOAA Aquaculture Opportunity Areas:* Strong applications will integrate test beds, field testing, and research initiatives within proposed Aquaculture Opportunity Areas (more information [here](#) and [here](#)) as part of an “ocean innovation cluster” approach to ensure regulatory efficiency and enhance coordination between testing environments and industry priorities.
 - *c. Best Practices for Open Ocean Aquaculture:* Inform best practices and operational standards based on empirical data from demonstration projects, focusing on operational efficiency, minimizing environmental impacts and space-use conflicts, and achieving economic sustainability.
2. **Aquaculture Engineering and Technology Development** - Innovations in engineering and a range of technologies suitable for aquaculture are essential to NOAA’s aquaculture development goals. Additionally, robust data analytics and remote sensing technologies are critical for real-time environmental monitoring and management, enhancing productivity, and ecological stewardship. This priority includes research to advance durable gear and systems that can withstand harsh marine and weather conditions while minimizing environmental impact.
 - *a. Engineering and Gear Innovations:* Develop durable and sustainable equipment for cages, nets, and other aquaculture tools, improving gear performance while reducing the overall environmental impact of farms. Examples include development of high-performance cages/pens and anchoring systems. The CI can work to design and validate such systems specifically for the challenging conditions of offshore aquaculture.
 - *b. Engineering to Minimize Protected Species Interactions:* Develop engineering solutions and best practices aimed at minimizing interactions between aquaculture operations and protected species and their habitats. This includes the design of protective gear, deterrent systems, and habitat-aware site selection processes to reduce risks to vulnerable marine populations. By incorporating engineering approaches that prioritize endangered, threatened, and protected species conservation, the CI can help ensure aquaculture operations are reviewed and permitted efficiently.
 - *c. Accelerated Technology Development and Transfer:* Develop straightforward mechanisms to accelerate the transfer of technology from research settings to the industry, help bring science-backed innovations to market, de-risk novel technologies, and bridge the gap between research and practical application.
3. **Environmental Observations, Modeling, Forecasting, and Aquaculture Management** - This research will enhance understanding of aquaculture’s interactions with coastal and offshore environments by examining its effects on water quality, habitat, and biodiversity. It will also assess ecosystem services, develop best practices to minimize and reduce risk of environmental impacts, and explore strategies to mitigate the effects of changing ocean conditions on aquaculture production. This theme will enhance understanding, modeling, and forecasting of aquaculture dynamics in the marine environment, including environmental interactions and production of ecosystem services. Examples include:
 - a. Standardized environmental and cultural resource surveys
 - b. Technologies and frameworks for cost-effective environmental compliance monitoring

- c. Tools for farm management
4. **Risk Management and Vulnerability Assessment** - Research to develop comprehensive risk assessment frameworks that incorporate ecological, economic, and social dimensions is essential for informed decision-making in the aquaculture sector. This research will ensure that the latest advancements in aquaculture science are available to inform regulatory and industry decision making.
- a. *Disease Prevention and Biosecurity Measures*: Research biosecurity protocols and disease management strategies tailored to offshore aquaculture. This focus will include developing and testing methods for early disease detection, prevention, and containment to reduce the risk of outbreaks.
 - b. *Economic Strength Analysis*: Investigate the economic vulnerabilities of aquaculture operations, including supply chain disruptions, market fluctuations, and increases in production costs associated with varying economic conditions. This research will provide insight into how to enhance profitability and financial sustainability of aquaculture businesses in dynamic economic environments.
 - c. *Environmental Risk Assessment Modeling*: Develop environmental modeling tools to assess potential impacts of aquaculture on water quality, sensitive habitats, wild populations, and ecosystems. This includes evaluating effects on protected species and creating data-driven scenarios to predict interactions and mitigate adverse outcomes. These models will directly inform best practices for environmental stewardship.
 - d. *Risk Assessment for Investment and Insurance*: Create risk assessment frameworks that evaluate environmental, biosecurity, genetic, engineering, and economic risks in aquaculture. These assessments will inform development of investment and insurance products that support the growth of the aquaculture industry while mitigating potential financial risks. This research will ensure stakeholders have a clear understanding of the operational risks involved.
 - e. *Increasing Profitability through Risk Reduction*: Develop strategies aimed at increasing profitability while simultaneously decreasing risks both to the marine environment and the farm. By integrating economic risk assessments with proactive business planning, aquaculture operations can withstand market volatility and supply chain disruptions, ultimately fostering a stable and profitable industry.
5. **Seafood Markets** - Research on offshore aquaculture's market impacts is essential to understanding its economic influence as the industry develops and expands. This research can provide a detailed analysis of the potential benefits and challenges associated with aquaculture.
- a. *Market Research and Economic Analysis*: A comprehensive market research program is essential to evaluating aquaculture's economic viability. Research needs include demand, market opportunities, pricing trends, consumer preferences, and supply chain logistics to inform profitability and competitiveness. Assessing economic benefits per unit effort will help maximize investment returns and support sustained market growth.
 - b. *Market Strength and Business Planning*: Effective business planning is crucial for fostering economic strength and stability within the aquaculture sector. This involves assessing different business models and financial strategies to determine which approaches can best respond to changing market conditions.
 - c. *Market Access and Waterfront Infrastructure*: Evaluating waterfront access, competition for space, and the availability of required infrastructure are key to ensuring that aquaculture operations can thrive without unnecessary bottlenecks. Addressing these factors is vital for smooth market entry and efficient distribution, which ultimately contributes to the growth of the industry.

- *d. Community Integration and Market Acceptance:* The acceptance and desirability of aquaculture products among local communities, as well as the broader consumer base, play a major role in shaping market dynamics. Ensuring that offshore aquaculture integrates harmoniously within existing markets and coastal communities can help minimize conflicts, build community support, and foster consumer trust—key elements for maintaining strong and expanding markets.

Cross-Cutting Expectations:

Education, Outreach, and Engagement - Activities undertaken by the CIFARM should include a focus on increasing public awareness of aquaculture benefits, practices, and advancements through accessible education and outreach initiatives. Development of targeted campaigns to address misconceptions, highlight the role of aquaculture in food security, and emphasize sustainability efforts are encouraged. Outreach and engagement efforts should ensure that science communication effectively translates complex research findings into clear language for non-experts and engages multiple stakeholders—including policymakers, industry leaders, local communities, and non-governmental organizations.

Facilities Required for a new Cooperative Institute Fostering Aquaculture Research and Marketing (CIFARM):

The CIFARM must have an implementable plan for an ocean test bed or consortia of test beds. This may include fully permitted offshore sites or an implementation plan, which includes an assessment of what permits must be sought for planned activities, development of a permit application plan, evaluation of expected environmental impacts from potential activities, and description of how a permit application and/or impact assessment would address possible social or environmental impacts.

The CIFARM is expected to promote student and postdoctoral involvement in aquaculture projects in ways that will enable the next generation of scientists to perpetuate the societal benefits of aquaculture. The CIFARM should provide substantial support for graduate and undergraduate students and post-doctoral scientists, thereby enabling development of a wide range of expertise. CIFARM employees and students will conduct research that complements NOAA's mission with support from NOAA. The Nation's students enrolled in undergraduate science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) degree programs and gaining degrees, are an untapped talent pool.

COMPOSITION OF THE INSTITUTE

The proposed CI may be comprised of a single academic institution that offers accredited graduate level degree-granting programs in NOAA-related sciences. The CI may also be comprised of multiple academic institutions (a consortium) with supporting research affiliates, if appropriate. A consortium must be led by a single academic institution that offers accredited graduate level degree-granting programs in NOAA-related sciences. Applicants must have strong programs in support of at least one of the identified research areas. The CI would be expected to develop and implement mechanisms to facilitate collaborative research, education, and outreach with NOAA.

DEMONSTRATED ABILITY TO SUPPORT NOAA'S LONG-TERM GOALS AND RESEARCH FOCI

The proposed CIFARM should support the long-term goals of [NOAA's Research and Development Vision Areas: 2020-2026](#) and [NOAA's 2026 Strategic Research Guidance Memorandum](#) by advancing key goals in aquaculture, fostering innovation, promoting environmental stewardship, and building strong coastal economies.

C. Program Authority

15 U.S.C. 1540; 118 Stat. 71 (January 23, 2004).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Subject to the availability of funding, this announcement describes how eligible applicants should apply to the Cooperative Institute Fostering Aquaculture Research and Marketing (CIFARM) competition. NOAA is seeking to establish this CI with a ceiling of \$300,000,000 in federal funds for the initial 5 year term of the Institutional award. The actual annual funding that the CI receives will be less than the proposed ceiling amount and will depend on the specific projects that are submitted by the CI and approved by NOAA after the main CI award begins, the availability of funding, the quality of the research, the satisfactory progress in achieving the stated goals described in project proposals, and continued relevance to program objectives.

NOAA anticipates that, pending appropriations, approximately \$9,000,000 will be available for projects proposed as part of the T3 application. Projects proposed as T3 tasks should request a minimum of \$250,000 per project, with project durations of 1-5 years.

This award and individual project applications DO NOT require non-federal match.

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards, or that any application will be selected for funding. If an applicant incurs any cost prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, it does so at its own risk of not being selected or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. NOAA and DOC will not be responsible for any incurred project cost if a project fails to receive full funding.

B. Project/Award Period

The award period for the CI will be 5 years and may be renewed for up to an additional 5 years based on the outcome of a review of scientific and administrative performance conducted in the fourth year of the award period, as described in the [NOAA CI Institute Handbook](#).

The CI must have a proposed start date no earlier than April 1, 2026 and an end date of no later than 5 years after the proposed start date. This original application to this particular Notice of Funding Opportunity will be identified as the T1.

Subsequent individual project applications (which will be identified as T3s) must have award periods that fit within the CI award period (the T1).

Pre-award spending may be authorized 90 days prior to the start date of the award (See Section VI below for more details).

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for this institutional award will be a cooperative agreement since NOAA will be substantially involved in working with the CI. The nature of the substantial involvement includes the following: The recipient can expect substantial collaboration, participation, and/or intervention in the management of the project by NOAA. Some examples of substantial involvement by NOAA include, but are not limited to, required NOAA approval before certain projects can be initiated in grant out-years; the ability of NOAA to halt an activity immediately if detailed performance specifications are not met; NOAA specifying direction or redirection of scope of work due to the interrelationships with other projects; proposals for collaboration between NOAA scientists and a CI scientist and/or assistance by NOAA personnel in developing curricula; and NOAA involvement in mid-cycle programmatic evaluation and planning processes. NOAA will issue only one award to the successful institution or to the lead academic institution of a consortium of universities, with supporting research affiliates if applicable, where the Institute will be established and resident.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to submit to this opportunity:

Eligibility is limited to non-Federal public and private non-profit universities, colleges and research institutions that offer accredited graduate-level degree-granting programs in NOAA-related sciences. Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal scientists and other employees can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on applications. Federal labs and offices can also make available specialized expertise, facilities or equipment to applicants but cannot be compensated under this competition for their use.

To be eligible to apply or receive an award, applicants must complete and maintain three registrations; [SAM.gov](#), [Grants.gov](#), and [eRA Commons](#). For each, the complete registration process can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants must begin this activity as soon as possible and well before the proposal due date. For more information on how to meet these registration and application submission requirements without errors, we advise all to carefully review relevant Applicant and Grantee Training modules: <https://www.commerce.gov/ocio/programs/gems/applicant-and-grantee-training>. Additionally, we advise that all carefully read 'Additional Application Package Forms' within the 'Full Proposal Required Elements' section below.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

Cost sharing or matching is not required. It cannot be used as an evaluation factor during the merit review of applications or proposals but may be considered. Values for non-Federal entity contributions of services and property must be established in accordance with applicable cost principles. Voluntarily committed cost sharing is not considered when determining the level of the CI's funding ceiling.

Acceptable cost sharing proposals could include, but are not limited to: offering a reduced indirect cost rate against activities in one or more Tasks; waiver of any indirect costs assessed by the awardee on subawards; waiver of indirect costs assessed against base funds and/or Task I activities; waiver or reduction of any costs associated with the use of facilities at the CI; and full or partial salary funding for the CI director, administrative staff, graduate students, visiting scientists, or postdoctoral scientists.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

There are no other criteria that affect eligibility.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available online as part of the NOFO announcement on Grants.gov under opportunity NOAA-OAR-CIPO-2025-31269. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, and submit all application forms via Grants.gov. The application will then be screened and submitted to eRA Commons. Applicants should not consider their application complete and received by the agency until they receive a final email from eRA Commons confirming a successful application with no errors or warnings and/or can verify the successful status in eRA Commons.

B. Content and Form of Application

This section provides an overview of these required proposal elements (and where to locate them).

Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Required Elements" below. Failure to adhere to these provisions may result in a delay in award processing or rejection of the application, based on the extent of the noncompliance.

The submitting applicant should not include any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in the application materials prior to final submission to grants.gov. PII includes, but is not limited to, social security number, date of birth, student identification number (from transcripts) or other information which if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This proposal package will be using a different set of forms than applicants may have completed in the past. Instead of the “SF424 NOAA Standard Non-Construction Application Package”, this application will include the “SF424 NOAA Research & Related (R&R) Forms Package.”

While many of the forms may be familiar, please pay special attention to the headings and instructions in this section.

NOAA has created a guide to aid applicants format application packages to eRA: Tips and Tricks for Successful eRA Submissions, linked [here](#). Recent applicants have had their applications rejected for formatting issues. Please be aware of the following:

- All attachments must be in PDF form.
- Do not use “bundling” or “portfolio” features to combine PDFs into a single document. Everything must be visible in the PDF.
- Descriptive filenames may only be 50 characters or less (including spaces).
- Keep attachment file size to 100 MB or less.
- eRA won’t accept any pages larger than the U.S. standard letter paper size (8.5” x 11”).

We **strongly** recommend that applicants submit their completed proposals at least a few days prior to the due date in case they encounter issues with the system. We will not extend the deadline date based on issues you may encounter in submitting your application into the system. Please contact the [eRA Service Desk](#) for assistance.

Required Elements:

Applications must include the following elements. Failure to adhere to these provisions may result in a delay in award processing or rejection of the application, based on the extent of the noncompliance.

Letter of Intent Requirements

Letters of Intent are **not** required for this NOFO.

Full Proposal Required Elements

(please also see VIII. Other Information for additional post-application required elements for submission):

REMEMBER: The intent of this application is to be high level and propose the establishment of the CI. Specific project level detail, goals or budget should NOT be included at this time.

The application **must** include the following 18 elements:

1. Standard Form (SF) 424 (R&R)
2. Title Page
3. Project Abstract Summary Form
4. Results from Prior Research
5. Description of Work - Research Plan
6. Description of Project Performance Sites
7. List of Senior and Key Personnel
8. Description of Data Sharing
9. Publication/Reference Review
10. Research & Related Budget (Total Fed & Non-Fed - Budget Form)
11. R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form (if applicable)
12. Detailed Budget Justification
13. Vitae
14. Current and Pending Support

15. CD-511
16. SF-424B
17. SF-LLL (if applicable)
18. Copy of the applicant's current approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

The instructions for preparation of full proposals provided below are mandatory. Required content includes:

Standard Form 424 (R&R): All applicants requesting direct funding must submit the Standard Form 424 (R&R), (SF-424 R&R), "Application for Federal Assistance" to indicate the total amount of funding proposed for their institution for the whole project period. This form is to be the cover page for the original proposal and is the first required form in the Grants.gov proposal package. The form can be downloaded at <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/r-r-family> in the Forms Repository section under the R&R Family hyperlink. For a NOAA and non-NOAA Federal partner, applications for Federal assistance (SF-424 (R&R) and the Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) Budget Form, must show the total amount less what would go to the Federal partner.

- Federal Award Payment Requirement - be sure that the Employer Identification Number (EIN) and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) numbers are correct.

Title Page: The title page should clearly indicate the proposed name of the CI, principal investigators (for the institutional award), total amount of Federal funds being requested, and award period. In the event that the application is submitted by a consortium, the lead academic institution for the consortium should submit the application on behalf of the consortium and any supporting research affiliates. Applications submitted by a CI consortium should include the name of each academic institution and supporting research affiliate, along with each associated principal investigator.

Project Abstract Summary Form: The Project Abstract Summary succinctly describes the project in plain language that the public can understand and use without the full proposal. If the application is funded, your project abstract information (as submitted) will be made available to public websites and/or databases including USAspending.gov. An abstract must be included and should contain a brief description of the CI, research themes, and proposed activities. The abstract should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, institution's investigators, total proposed cost and budget period. The summary should be prepared to be readable to a broad audience and contain the following sections:

- Project Name/Title
- Primary Contact (name address, telephone, email)
- Primary Recipient's Institution
- Other Investigators (name, affiliated institution or agency)
- Brief Project Summary including objectives and intended benefits
- Partners

Results from Prior Research: The results of related projects supported by NOAA and other agencies should be described, including their relation to the currently proposed work. Reference to each prior research award should include the title, agency, award number, Principal Investigators, period of award, and total award. The section should be a brief summary and should not exceed two pages.

Description of Work - Research Plan: The project description includes the following sections:

- Introduction/Narrative (information contained in this section of the proposal should provide background information and significance of the proposed research).
- Specific aims/milestones (information in this section of the proposal should provide the proposed goals and expected outcomes. It should also show when the researcher expects to reach the proposed goals and outcomes).
- Timeline for milestones (table showing the timeline for the milestones).
- Relationship to NOAA Goals (information in this section of the proposal should show how the proposed research relates to the current NOAA Research Goals identified by the Cooperative Institute).
- Educational outreach plans.

Description of Project Performance Sites: List facilities that may be used outside of the Cooperative Institute (including any Federally owned property) where research conducted will be directly related to the proposed research – this would not include consortium members.

List of Senior and Key Personnel: Describe their specific roles as they relate to the specific aims/milestones.

Description of Data Sharing: Information in this section of the proposal shows how the final research data will be shared and with whom or explains why data-sharing is not possible at this time and the plan and time-frame for data sharing.

Publication/Reference Review: Each reference should include the names of all authors in the same sequence they appear in the publications, the article title, the journal or book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publications. While there is no established page limitation, this section should include bibliographic citations only and should not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the Research Plan.

Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) Form: All applicants are required to submit a Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) Budget Form, which identifies the budget for each fiscal year of the primary proposal. A new Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) form is required for each fiscal year in sections A - D for the primary award. The form can be downloaded at <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family> in the Forms Repository section under the R&R Family hyperlink.

- Avoid the section title “Statement of Work/deliverables.” This phrase suggests a contractual arrangement.

Each subaward should provide a R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form if applicable for each fiscal year of the project. The form can be downloaded at <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family> in the Forms Repository section under the R&R Family hyperlink.

Detailed Budget Justification: All proposals must include a detailed budget narrative covering the proposed period of performance with a justification to support all proposed budget categories for each fiscal year. A separate budget narrative is required for each subcontract/subaward, if applicable. For additional information concerning each of the required budget categories and appropriate level of disclosure please see: https://coast.noaa.gov/data/coasthome/funding/_pdf/forms/budget-narrative-guidance-for-NOAA-grants.pdf

- If a partner is requested to perform any work as part of the project, please be advised that the work to be performed must be reflected separately in the project description and partner budget. The budget should clearly identify the recipient and funded activity. A R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) Form should accompany the budget narrative specific for each partner.

If more than one institution is collaborating in a project awarded funds, a separate budget narrative is required for each subaward (including Federal collaborators) and must be provided to the lead institution for submission. The lead institution will be the only institution to directly receive funds from NOAA and is responsible for sending funds to their other subaward institutions. The Budget Narrative must match the same direct cost categories as the Research & Related Budget (Total Fed + Non-Fed) Budget and the R&R Subaward Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Attachment(s) forms for the primary and each subaward.

Curriculum Vitae: (single-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, two (2) pages maximum, per person) Provide resumes of the Principal Investigator for the CI and other key personnel critical to the success of the CI. Ensure that resumes address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work. Publication lists should be limited to all publications in the last 3 years with up to five other relevant papers.

Current and pending support: For each principal 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.

CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying: Required only for the lead institution, which may submit this form through the Grants.gov CD511 document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on documents from the submitting institution. The form can be downloaded at: <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>.

SF-424B: Assurances - Non-Construction Programs: Required only for the lead institution, which may submit this form through the Grants.gov SF-424B document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on documents from the submitting institutions. The form can be downloaded at <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>.

SF-LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable): If lobbying activity is or has been secured to influence the outcome of a covered federal action, complete the SF-LLL standard lobbying disclosure form found at <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family> and include it with your proposal package.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA): Applicants must include a copy of their most recent approved NICRA. NOAA and the Cooperative Institute may share resources such as facilities, equipment, or personnel, which may offset the use of the institution's facilities and administration, as recovered under the indirect rate. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. 414(c)(3), the NOAA Cooperative Institute program has an approval to deviate from negotiated indirect cost rates. More information is available at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>. If the applicant is proposing a lower indirect cost rate to be applied to this award, also include that here.

Data Management Plan:

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.

If proposed activities will not generate any environmental data, please include the following statement at the end of the Project Narrative (after the NEPA Questionnaire or NEPA Statement): "Because this project will not generate environmental data, a Data Management Plan is not required."

Environmental Compliance:

The U.S. Department of Commerce National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Questionnaire & Checklist, which may be found at: <https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf>. Applicants are required to submit answers to the following abbreviated set of questions and, depending on the specifics of the project as indicated in response to those questions, may be required to provide additional detail, prior to a funding decision, as NOAA deems necessary in order for NOAA to fulfill its NEPA responsibilities:

The NEPA Questionnaire is required for ALL research projects even if the project is fully lab-based or relies on social science. The NEPA Questionnaire is also required for any project that will have components including:

- Requires environmental permits, authorizations or waivers
- Includes Biological take and/or release
- Includes Environmental sampling
- Generates Hazardous or toxic substances and waste
- Could have Permanent or temporary environmental effects
- Could involve Endangered or threatened species and/or protected areas
- Could have Known or unknown risks to human health or the environment
- Includes Controversial environmental subject matter

NEPA Statement

Projects or actions that fall into the below categories do not need a questionnaire. If a program believes that a project in the application meets one of the exceptions, the program should include the following NEPA Statement directly after the relevant project narrative. Please use the following format for the NEPA Statement:

"This project's activities are exclusively composed of [choose applicable activities from the bulleted list below] and therefore no NEPA Questionnaire is being submitted, as allowed by NOAA guidance."

NOAA has final responsibility to determine whether a project or action requires environmental compliance review. If NOAA determines that a project or action needs an environmental review, and the NEPA Statement is not sufficient, staff may request completion of a NEPA Questionnaire be provided instead.

Some examples of projects that can use the NEPA Statement are:

- Program management
 - Program Development projects (these projects may need to undergo environmental compliance review when the program identifies project activities; please work with the federal program officer during implementation of these projects).
- Placeholder projects (e.g., "Future Competed Projects"; these projects will have a Specific Award Condition on the grant and undergo environmental compliance review when the program submits an award action request to satisfy that specific award condition)
- Workshops or conferences that do not involve the above list of actions in the previous section
- Communication activities that do not involve the above list of actions in the previous section
- Hiring actions
- Purely administrative actions (e.g., purchase of office supplies)

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

Any applicant awarded in response to this Announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://sam.gov/SAM/>. SAM enables the use of a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and to build the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, to the extent applicable.

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is expected 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 UEI 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

The initial T1 application must be submitted to Grants.gov and accepted by eRA by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on Friday, September 5, 2025. Once a tentative selection is made, the selected applicant will be provided guidance and a timeline for submitting their detailed project T3 application (first round of projects).

Please note: validation or rejection of an application by Grants.gov and eRA may take up to two business days after submission. Eligible applicants should consider this process in developing their submission timeline. For eligible applications submitted through Grants.gov and eRA, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. NOAA has created a guide to aid applicants format application packages to eRA: [Tips and Tricks for Successful eRA Submissions](#), linked [here](#).

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

G. Other Submission Requirements

Federal employees are not allowed to assist in the preparation of an application or proposal, except that these individuals may provide you with information on program goals, funding priorities, application procedures, and completion of application forms. 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.

Registration requirements

NOTE: We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to initiate 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.

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>

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 for the PD/PI must also be provided on the Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile form in Credential, e.g., agency login

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.

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 Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile form in Credential, e.g., agency login
- The Universal Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov is not provided
- The Congressional District is not entered in the correct format. 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, once an electronic application is accepted in eRA Commons, you will receive an automated notification from eRA Commons that the completed application was received and that an application number will be assigned. If there are errors in the application, eRA Commons will send an automated email notification(s) 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.

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 eRA Helpdesk at 1-866-504-9552 and the agency contact listed in Section VII to confirm NOAA's receipt of the complete submission.

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

The primary form of proposal submission is electronically through the Notice of Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. If an applicant does not have Internet access or if www.grants.gov is inaccessible, paper applications will be accepted. Paper applications must be submitted with completed, signed, inked signatures, with original forms in hard copy. The Authorized Representative MUST sign and date all forms in the space reserved for electronic signature. Signatures must match the name printed in the "Authorized Representative" section of the SF-424 (R&R) Block 19. Another Authorized Representative may not sign on behalf of the individual noted in Block 19. Paper applications should not be bound in any manner. The paper application must be postmarked prior to the Notice of Funding Opportunity closing date of September 5, 2025 and mailed to Office of Aquaculture at 1315 East-West Highway 12th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910 with the ATTN: Mark Rath.

V. Application Review Information

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	Maximum Points: 25
<p>Is there a demonstrated commitment (in terms of resources and facilities) to enhance existing NOAA and CI resources to foster a long-term collaborative research environment?</p> <p>Does the project meaningfully and substantially address the Program Priorities described in the NOFO?</p>	
2. Technical/scientific merit	Maximum Points: 30
<p>Does the project description include a summary of clearly stated goals to be achieved during the five-year period that reflect NOAA's strategic plan and goals?</p> <p>Does the CI involve partnerships with other universities or research institutions, such as NOAA Cooperative Science Centers, that can contribute to the proposed activities of the CI?</p> <p>Does the proposal include a Data Management Plan that is appropriate for work and that addresses the intent of NOAA's Data and Publication Sharing Directive for NOAA Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts?</p>	
3. Overall qualifications of applicants	Maximum Points: 30
<p>If the institution(s) and/or Principal Investigators have received current or recent NOAA funding, is there a demonstrated record of outstanding performance working with NOAA and/or NOAA scientists on research projects?</p> <p>Is there nationally and/or internationally recognized expertise within the appropriate disciplines needed to conduct the collaborative/interdisciplinary research described in the proposal?</p> <p>Is there a well-developed business plan that includes fiscal and human resource management, as well as strategic planning and accountability?</p> <p>Are there any unique capabilities in a mission-critical area of research for NOAA?</p> <p>Has the applicant shown a substantial investment and to foster a long term collaboration with NOAA?</p>	

4. Project costs	Maximum Points: 5
The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.	
5. Outreach and Education	Maximum Points: 10
Is there a strong education program with established graduate degree programs in NOAA related sciences that also encourages student participation in NOAA-related research studies?	

Evaluation Criteria

Review and Selection Process

Once an application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review/screening is conducted to determine compliance with minimum 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 subject matter 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 recommend awarding 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.

The program manager, or grants specialist may contact the applicants to discuss questions about the merit or administrative correctness of the application and may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the award preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered.

Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall recommend awarding 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.

Consequently, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored application. Investigators may be asked to answer questions; and/or modify objectives, work plans, and/or budgets (including overall funding level) to address the issues raised by the reviewers, the competition manager, the Selecting Official, or the Grants Officer before an award is made. Subsequent administrative processing will be in accordance with current NOAA grants procedures.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

It is anticipated that successful applicants may be notified in 2026 that the Selecting Official is recommending them for funding to the NOAA Grants Officer. Subject to the availability of funds, projects are expected to start April 1, 2026. The anticipated start date for awards made under this competition will be dependent on funding availability, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA and environmental compliance analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail that their application was not recommended for funding after the final selection package has been approved by the NOAA GMD. Unsuccessful applications submitted to this competition will be retained for three years and then destroyed.

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.

RELEASE OF APPLICATION INFORMATION. Privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, patentable ideas, or trade secrets, disclosure of which may harm the applicant, should be included in the proposal only when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed work. In the event that a proposal contains information or data that the applicant does not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the proposal, 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. A proposal that results in an award will be available to the public on request, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary, or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the proposal aids identification of what may be specifically exempt. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, and 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for the Department of Commerce to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA.

Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, NOAA will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and contractors, and to outside reviewers when necessary for merit review of the proposal or as otherwise authorized by law. Portions of proposals resulting in awards that contain descriptions of inventions in which either the Government or the funding recipient owns a right, title, or interest (including a nonexclusive license) will not normally be made available to the public until a reasonable time has been allowed for filing patent applications. NOAA will notify the recipient of receipt of requests for copies of funded proposals so the recipient may advise NOAA of such inventions described, or other confidential, commercial, or proprietary information contained in the proposal. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the data management plan from funded projects, 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.

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. Following 2 C.F.R. § 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.

PERMITS. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all permits and approvals from Federal, state, and local governments and private landowners where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of environmental permits must be received by the NOAA Program Manager prior to release of funding. Failure to apply for and obtain Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, or letters of agreement may delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding. In some cases, if additional permits and approvals are required after an application is selected, funds may be withheld by the NOAA Grants Officer under a specific award condition requiring the recipient to submit required permits and approvals.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DOMESTIC SOURCING REQUIREMENT. Prior to initiation of any construction that may arise in this award, the Recipient is required to inform the NOAA Grants Officer and the Federal Program Officer whether it is using iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials as described in the Specific Award Condition in this award on Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials. In addition, the Recipient is required to inform the NOAA Grants Officer and the Federal Program Officer whether those materials are produced or manufactured in the United States, or alternatively, it is requesting one or more waivers, as described in the award condition. The Recipient is required to coordinate with NOAA regarding its compliance with this Term.

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>.

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 <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-202-735d-2-scientific-integrity>. 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.

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; or the construction materials 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).

INDIRECT COST RATE. If an applicant does not have a current 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 Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) (as allowable under revisions to 2 C.F.R. §200.414 in effect since October 2024). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. Do not include participant support costs when determining the indirect cost base. Additionally, applicants should be aware that most indirect cost rate agreements require that participant support costs be excluded from the MTDC base when calculating indirect costs. Applicants should reference their official agreements. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Jennifer Jackson, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. The Department of Commerce has designated this award as Research and Development (R&D) under 2 CFR § 200.1 for purposes of award administration. The Federal-wide Research Terms and Conditions, dated November 12, 2020, are no longer in effect and do not apply to this award. 2 CFR 200.308(h), which applies to this award, provides a waiver of prior approval requirements in certain circumstances. In the event the Department of Commerce adopts additional terms specific to R&D awards, this award may be amended by the Grants Officer to incorporate the additional terms.

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.fsrs.gov/> on all subawards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

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 Cooperative Institute Program. 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 acknowledgment and disclaimer: "This project received funding under award [number] from NOAA Cooperative Institute Program. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA." The final report is a public document and may be posted, partially or in its entirety, on the NOAA owned websites.

Data Reporting Requirement

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 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, and/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 the 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

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions regarding this announcement contact the Cooperative Institutes Administrative Office (CIAO), OAR, NOAA at cipo.oar@noaa.gov, or Mark Rath at (301) 734-1181.

VIII. Other Information

Webinar

Potential applicants are encouraged to check our website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-opportunities> for information about a webinar and FAQs related to this announcement.

Section 508 Compliance

All public-facing products produced with funding from the award(s)/project(s) must ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The grant application and final report of all funded grants are public documents, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the application will aid identification of what may be specifically exempt. 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 Department of Commerce and external program evaluators.