



## **2006 NOAA State and Territory Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring Grants**

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### **Summary**

The NOAA Coral Reef Monitoring Grant Program, as authorized under the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, provides matching grants to Governor–appointed point of contact agencies for the jurisdictions of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI), Florida, Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (including Chuuk, Yap, Kosrae, and Pohnpei), and American Samoa for State and Territory Coral Reef Monitoring activities.

The objective of the State and Territory Coral Reef Monitoring Grant program is to provide support for NOAA partners towards implementing a nationally coordinated, comprehensive, long-term monitoring program to assess the condition of U.S. coral reef ecosystems, and to evaluate the efficacy of coral ecosystem management. This program was requested by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, which, along with the nation's coral reef program managers and the public, endorsed and called for implementation of "A National Program to Assess, Inventory, and Monitor U.S. Coral Reef Ecosystems".

### **2006 Program Priorities**

NOAA's National Ocean Service, (NOS) is providing funding for cooperative agreements to support state and territorial coral reef monitoring activities under the priority areas listed below, which have been recommended by the Nation's coral reef resource managers. These key biotic and abiotic parameters should be monitored at all local sites in the National monitoring network:

1. Benthic habitat characterization
2. Associated biological community structure including fish condition and large motile and sessile invertebrates condition
3. Water/substrate quality

Proposed work should include multi-organizational partnerships (local, regional, Federal, and possibly international) that build local capacity for maintaining long-term monitoring sites as part of a National Coral Reef Monitoring Network. NOAA will be an active partner in the development and implementation of the award; thus, proposals should be structured as cooperative agreements between NOAA and the principal investigators.

### **Due Date for Applications**

- Pre-applications must be received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on November 15, 2006.
- Final applications must be received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on March 3, 2006.

## **Typical Awards**

NCCOS may provide approximately \$1,100,000 in funding for FY 2006 to support coral reef ecosystem monitoring activities under this program. FY 2006 awards to Puerto Rico, Florida, U.S. Virgin Islands, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are expected to range from \$50,000 to \$130,000. FY 2006 awards to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) are expected to be approximately \$10,000 to \$30,000 per year. Funding will be subject to the availability of federal appropriations. FY 2006 grant seekers may submit proposals up to three years in duration, at funding levels specified above (i.e., up to \$90,000 for three year continuation proposal for Palau, FSM, and RMI, and up to \$390,000 for three year continuation proposal for all other eligible applicants).

## **Cost Sharing or Match Requirements**

Federal funds for any coral conservation project funded under this Program may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the projects. Therefore, any coral conservation project under this program requires a 1:1 match.

As per section 6403(b)(2) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, the NOAA Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement if no reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement, and the probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement. In accordance with 48 U.S.C. 1469a(d), this match requirement is waived for local matching funds for any project under \$200,000 (including in-kind contribution) to the governments of Insular Areas (jurisdictions of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

## **Full Funding Announcement**

The Full Funding Announcement for the State and Territory Coral Reef Management Grant Program can be found at: <http://www.Grants.gov>. Search for the Funding Opportunity Number NOS-NCCOS-200602000366.

## **Agency Point of Contact**

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Silver Spring, MD 20910  
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[john.christensen@noaa.gov](mailto:john.christensen@noaa.gov)

## **Additional Information**

For additional information on NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program and the State and Territory Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring grants visit the NOAA Coral Reef website at: <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov/grants.html>.



## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Federal Agency Name:** National Ocean Service (NOS); National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); U.S. Department of Commerce

**Funding Opportunity Title:** NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program – State and Territorial Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring Grant

**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** NOS-NCCOS-2006-2000366

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:**  
11.426 - Financial Assistance for National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science

**Submission Dates:** Pre-applications must be received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on November 15, 2005. Final applications must be received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on March 3, 2006.

**Funding Opportunity Description:** The NOAA Coral Reef Monitoring Grant Program, as authorized under the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, provides matching grants to Governor–appointed point of contact agencies for the jurisdictions of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI), Florida, Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (including Chuuk, Yap, Kosrae, and Pohnpei), and American Samoa for State and Territory Coral Reef Monitoring activities

### **Agency Contact(s)**

Technical point of contact for State and Territory Coral Reef Monitoring is John Christensen at 301-713-3155, extension 153 or e-mail at [john.christensen@noaa.gov](mailto:john.christensen@noaa.gov).

### **A. Funding Opportunity Description**

#### **1. Program Objective**

Pursuant to the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (Act), the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), through the NOAA Administrator (Administrator), and subject to the availability of funds, is authorized to provide matching grants of financial assistance for coral reef conservation projects through the Coral Reef Conservation Program (Program). As such, the objective of the Program is to provide financial assistance for coral reef conservation projects consistent with the Act and “A National Coral Reef Action Strategy” (Strategy). A copy of the Strategy and the Act can be found at: <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov/>.

Pursuant to the Act, NOAA published the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program Implementation Guidelines (Guidelines) in the Federal Register Vol. 67, No. 76, page 19396, on Friday, April 19, 2002. The Guidelines can be also found at: <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov/>.

The Guidelines provide broad eligibility criteria, pursuant to Section 6403(g) of the Act, for coral reef conservation activities, and also created the following six program categories under the Program for awarding financial assistance:

1. State and Territory Coral Reef Management;
2. State and Territory Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring;
3. Coral Reef Ecosystem Research;
4. General Coral Reef Conservation;
5. Projects to Improve or Amend Coral Reef Fishery Management Plans; and,
6. International Coral Reef Conservation.

From year to year, specific priorities of the above listed program categories change due to Congressional appropriations and direction, and priorities of NOAA, the Program, and the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force. Each of the categories listed above has its own FFO announcement, which describes the following specific requirements and criteria: program priorities, applicant and project eligibility, funding availability, application content and submission, application review and selection, and award administration. The criteria provided herein are specific only to the State and Territory Coral Reef Monitoring category.

The objective of the State and Territory Coral Reef Monitoring Grant program is to provide support for NOAA partners towards implementing a nationally coordinated, comprehensive, long-term monitoring program to assess the condition of U.S. coral reef ecosystems, and to evaluate the efficacy of coral ecosystem management. This program was requested by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, which, along with the nation's coral reef program managers and the public, endorsed and called for implementation of "A National Program to Assess, Inventory, and Monitor U.S. Coral Reef Ecosystems".

NOAA began implementing the Program in 2000 and continues to administer it with Congressional appropriations for coral reef conservation. The Program includes the collection, analysis, and reporting of long-term coral reef ecosystem monitoring data pursuant to scientifically valid methodologies and protocols and is a key priority of the "A National Coral Reef Action Strategy."

The implementation plan calls for integration of monitoring activities into a coordinated national network, sharing of monitoring information among U.S. coral reef resource managers and scientists, and filling gaps in monitoring coverage nationwide. Through this Program, U.S. Federal, state, commonwealth, territory, and Freely Associated State agencies support a variety of local and regional assessments, inventories, and monitoring of U.S. and U.S. affiliated coral reef resources. A nationally coordinated coral monitoring infrastructure will enable the preparation of a biennial science-based report on the status of U.S. coral reef ecosystems and support local coral reef management efforts.

The following description provides requirements for applying for funding appropriated by Congress to NOAA and in FY 2006. All applications submitted pursuant to this FFO must be consistent with the requirements stated herein, the Guidelines and the Strategy. Applicants may also request copies of the Strategy from the contacts listed below. Funding is subject to the availability of Federal appropriations.

## 2. Program Priorities

NOAA's National Ocean Service, (NOS) is providing funding for cooperative agreements to support state and territorial coral reef monitoring activities under the priority areas listed below, which have been recommended by the Nation's coral reef resource managers. These key biotic and abiotic parameters should be monitored at all local sites in the National monitoring network:

1. Benthic habitat characterization: e.g., depth, habitat delineation, and/or percent live/dead cover of corals, submerged aquatic vegetation, macroalgae, sponges, rugosity, diversity, etc.);
2. Associated biological community structure including fish condition (e.g., abundance, density, size, diversity, disease, harvest trends, etc.) and large motile and sessile invertebrates condition (abundance, density, size, diversity, disease, harvest trends, etc.); and,
3. Water/substrate quality (e.g., temperature, nutrient enrichment, toxic chemicals, turbidity, etc.).

Proposed work should include multi-organizational partnerships (local, regional, Federal, and possibly international) that build local capacity for maintaining long-term monitoring sites as part of a National Coral Reef Monitoring Network. NOAA will be an active partner in the development and implementation of the award; thus, proposals should be structured as cooperative agreements between NOAA and the principal investigators. For these proposals, it is appropriate to include the equipment necessary to build capacity, and to archive data (e.g., one or more digital videography cameras with underwater housing, museum maintenance of reference specimen collections, etc.).

## 3. Program Authority

Authority for the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program is provided by Section 6403 (Coral Reef Conservation Program) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401 *et seq.*).

## **B. Award Information**

### **1. Funding Availability**

NCCOS may provide approximately \$1,100,000 in funding for FY 2006 to support coral reef ecosystem monitoring activities under this program. FY 2006 awards to Puerto Rico, Florida, U.S. Virgin Islands, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are expected to range from \$50,000 to \$130,000. FY 2006 awards to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM - including Chuuk, Yap, Kosrae, and Pohnpei), Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) are expected to be approximately \$10,000 to \$30,000 per year. Funding will be subject to the availability of federal appropriations. FY 2006 grant seekers may submit proposals up to three years in duration, at funding levels specified above (i.e., up to \$90,000 for three year continuation proposal for Palau, FSM, and RMI, and up to \$390,000 for three year continuation proposal for all other eligible applicants).

In certain instances, when requested by the applicant and agreed upon by NOAA, NOAA may hold back a portion of any awarded funds in order to provide specific technical assistance in the form of contractual or other services. This will only be allowed where such priority technical assistance and/or the lack of sufficient means to deliver it are unavailable at the local level. Such requests proposed herein will be reviewed on a case by case basis with respect to the specific management objectives of this and the local coral reef program.

If all available funds are not awarded, NOAA will consult with the eligible applicants on the use of any residual funds. NOAA will work with each jurisdiction to ensure the greatest degree of success in meeting local, state, territorial, and national coral reef monitoring needs.

### **2. Project/Award Period**

Annual projects should follow the Federal fiscal year, beginning on October 1 and ending September 30. Multiple-year applications must specify the budget and activities for each year. FY 2006 awards, however, will only provide funding for the monitoring activities proposed for FY 2006, and funding for out years is contingent on subsequent years' appropriations.

### **3. Type of Funding Instrument**

Recipients will enter into a cooperative agreement with the NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS), which indicates that "substantial involvement" will be

required from NOAA in execution of the agreement to term. Examples of substantial involvement include:

- a) Requirements that the appropriate NOAA official collaborate with the recipient by working jointly with a recipient scientist or technician in carrying out the scope of work;
- b) Specify direction or redirection of the scope of work due to the relationships with other projects; and,
- c) Review scope of work and closely monitor the program operations during the performance period.

### **C. Eligibility Information**

#### 1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are limited to the natural resource management agency in each U.S. State or Territory, or Freely Associated State, with jurisdiction over coral reefs, as designated by the respective governors or other applicable senior jurisdictional official. NOAA is requesting proposals from Puerto Rico, Florida, U.S. Virgin Islands, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Federal agencies are not eligible for funding under this Program.

Furthermore, to be eligible for FY 2005 funding, applicants previously receiving funds under this program must have made significant progress implementing those tasks and met data submission deadlines, including all performance and fiscal reporting requirements and data transfers.

#### 2. Cost Sharing or Matching

As per section 6403(b)(1) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, Federal funds for any coral conservation project funded under this Program may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the projects. Therefore, any coral conservation project under this program requires a 1:1 match. Matching funds must be from non-Federal sources and can include in-kind contributions and other non-cash support. NOAA strongly encourages applicants to leverage as much investment as possible. Federal funds may not be considered as matching funds.

As per section 6403(b)(2) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, the NOAA Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets the following two requirements:

1. No reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement, and,

2. The probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching Requirement.

Applicants must specify in their proposal the source and may be asked to provide letters of commitment to confirm stated match contributions. In the case of a waiver request, the applicant must provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver including attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other extenuating circumstances preventing the availability of match.

Notwithstanding any other provisions herein, and in accordance with 48 U.S.C. 1469a(d), the Program shall waive any requirement for local matching funds for any project under \$200,000 (including in-kind contribution) to the governments of Insular Areas, defined as the jurisdictions of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Please Note: eligible applicants choosing to apply 48 U.S.C. 1469a (d) should note the use and amount in the matching funds section of the respective application.

#### **D. Application and Submission Information**

##### 1. Address to Request Application Package

To request an application package, send requests to: Dana John Christensen, 1305 East West Highway, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, N/SC11, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or telephone 301/713-3028 extension 153; or fax 301/713-4384. The Federal financial assistance forms can also be obtained from the NOAA grants Website at <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~grants/pdf>, or at <http://www.grants.gov>. Any administrative questions also should be addressed to John Christensen.

##### 2. Content and Form of Application Submission

The application process required by this FFO requires both a pre-application and a final application to be submitted through GRANTS.GOV (<http://www.grants.gov/>), which is subject to the submission dates and times listed in Section D-3. Applicants selected for funding may be asked to modify or revise the final application as necessary.

Each application submitted in response to this FFO must include: 1) all specific application requirements listed in the relevant funding category description found in the Attachment of this FFO, and 2) a cover sheet with the following information:

- a. Project title;
- b. Applicant organization; nonprofit, university, government, etc;
- c. Principal investigator or contact responsible for conducting the project;
- d. Contact information including address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address;



- e. Program category (see Section I. Funding Opportunity Description above);
- f. Geographic location of the project (countries and sites, if appropriate);
- g. Amount of grant funds requested;
- h. Amount of matching funds provided; and,
- i. One paragraph project summary.

Applicants whose pre-applications are preliminarily selected and choose to submit a final application, must submit a final Federal financial assistance award application package, including proposed projects and supporting documentation as described Program category description below, and all required Federal financial assistance forms. The required Federal financial assistance forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, CD-511, CD-512, and if applicable, CD-346 and/or SF-LLL, can be requested by mail, by telephone, or by fax (see this Section D-1 above). Application Content should be developed and submitted according to the following guidelines:

- a) First time applicants for monitoring awards: Eligible activities for the first year of proposed funding include an initial characterization of baseline ecosystem condition, an inventory/mapping of biotic resources, and an assessment of anthropogenic stressors (e.g., contaminants in lagoon sediments, sedimentation conditions, eutrophication, etc.) if these studies are prerequisite to establishing new long-term monitoring sites. Activities can also include database development and training of field crew. Proposed second and third year work should follow the guidelines for previous recipients below.
- b) Previous recipients of NCCOS monitoring awards: Proposals from previous recipients should detail the monitoring design, sampling parameters and protocols, data management, and the need/context for establishing new long-term monitoring sites. Proposals should describe how the proposed monitoring meets local coral conservation needs and fits into ongoing long-term assessments, inventories, and monitoring within the jurisdiction and/or region. Each proposal must provide enough specificity on the parameters to be monitored, the design and frequency of sampling, methods used, data management and quality assurance, and other information for peer reviewers to judge the quality of proposed work. The information produced through these awards is intended to fill gaps in knowledge of coral reef ecosystems nationwide, track and predict changes in coral reef ecosystems nationwide, and serve as the foundation for biennial reporting in the “Report of the Health of U.S. Coral Reef Ecosystems.”

In addition, each jurisdiction’s proposal for FY 2006 must include the preparation of an assessment of coral reef ecosystem status for that jurisdiction. This will contribute to the “Report on the Status of U.S. Coral Reef Ecosystems: 2006.” Toward this end, FY 2006 applications may budget for travel to at least one national workshop (annual coral reef mapping and monitoring meeting), costs for preparing and printing a jurisdictional report on the condition of coral reef ecosystems, and related expenses.

Applicants must submit pre-applications, inclusive of elements a-e below, by the date established in the Submission Dates and Times above. Applications are limited to 15 standard letter size pages, including attachments, and font should be Times New Roman, 12 point or larger.

- a) Cover Page as described above;
- b) A Project Description (i.e., narrative description) for each proposed task that includes: the specific priority management questions that are driving the effort, how data collected will be translated and transferred to the local management community, project objectives, and a timetable with project milestones;
- c) Summary Budget that includes a detailed breakdown of costs by category and a description of the amount of matching funds available to the applicant, as described in Section VIII of the Guidelines. Each subcontract or subgrant should be listed as a separate item. Describe the products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Provide separate budgets for each subcontract or subgrant and indicate the basis for the cost estimates. Intended sources of matching funds must be identified in the application. Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be required to submit letter(s) of commitment to fund from the organization(s) providing matching funds with the final application. Multiple-year proposals must specify the budget and activities for each year;
- d) Curriculum Vitae for principal investigators;
- e) Summary Project Abstract; and,
- f) All required NOAA Federal financial assistance awards - forms (see below). One original and two copies of the jurisdiction's application must be submitted to NOAA by the date established in Section IV. C. Submission Date and Times below (Section D-3).

Final applications must include all elements of the pre-application, any responses to comments and edits, all required NOAA Federal financial assistance forms (see Section D-1), and must be received by NOAA on or before the date established in the Submission Date and Times below (Section D-3). The required Federal forms can be found on NOAA grants Website at <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~grants/>. The two most relevant sections at this web site are, "C. Instructions and Guidelines," and, "D. Application Forms for Pre -Application Submission."

### 3. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the dates specified below. If the application is not received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the dates specified below, the late application will not be reviewed or considered for FY 2005 funding.

If an applicant's pre-application is preliminarily selected and the applicant decides to submit the final application by electronic mail (e-mail), the applicant must also submit by surface mail, one original and two signed hard/paper copies of the Federal financial

assistance forms along with the final application. Applicants should consider the delivery time when submitting their applications from international or remote areas. The following review and selection are key dates in the application review timetable:

- Pre-applications due to NOAA – November 15, 2005
- NOAA returns proposal comments to applicants – January 16, 2006
- Final Applications due to NOAA - March 3, 2006

#### 4. Funding Restrictions

Large equipment and/or infrastructure acquisitions are not a priority for funding under this program. Such purchases proposed herein will be reviewed on a case by case basis with respect to the specific management objectives of this and the local coral reef program.

#### 5. Other Submission Requirements

Pre-applications may be submitted by surface mail or e-mail. Submissions by e-mail are preferred. If submitting by surface mail, applicants are encouraged to include an electronic copy of the pre-application or final application on disk or cd. Pre-applications must be sent to [coral.grants@noaa.gov](mailto:coral.grants@noaa.gov) or to John Christensen, N/SCI-1, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Final applications should be submitted via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), the Federal grants portal.

### **E. Application Review Information**

#### 1. Evaluation Criteria

Once a full application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Merit review is then conducted by peer reviewers. Applications will be peer-reviewed by a minimum of 3 individuals with coral reef and fisheries management experience on the weighted evaluation criteria listed below, as evidenced by information in the application. Each reviewer will individually evaluate and rank proposals using the evaluation criteria provided below. A minimum of three merit reviewers per proposal is required. The merit reviewers' ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (25%): This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.

2. Technical/scientific merit (25%): This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives for this management activity.

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (25%): This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

4. Project costs (25%): The Budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

5. Outreach and education (0%): NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.

Reviewer results will be shared with applicants, and applicants will be given the opportunity to revise their application and/or respond to reviewer comments.

## 2. Review and Selection Process

Taking into consideration comments received from peer reviewers, NCCOS will evaluate each proposal and develop funding recommendations based on the above criteria. In evaluating the technical merit and adequacy of the implementation plan, NCCOS will apply the following 3 equally weighted criteria:

a. Relevance to establishing a national monitoring network. The principal objective of the proposals should be to fill priority gaps or needs in coral reef monitoring and assessment programs, such that they contribute to the creation of a comprehensive and coordinated network of monitoring sites for U.S. coral reef ecosystems. In subsequent years, the project should be monitoring the "minimum suite of key biotic and abiotic parameters," (as listed in the program description) at least once a year, at one or more sites;

b. Quality assurance and error estimates for parameter measurements. Flexibility of methodologies for acquiring measurements is allowable, as long as they are done in situ and are quantitatively reliable within a jurisdiction and across a region. Where possible, NOAA favors a stratified random sampling design for site selection (i.e., ideally based on reliable habitat maps), multi-methodological monitoring of the ecosystem (i.e., line transects for cryptic species, pointcount surveys for large pelagic species), and sample archiving (i.e., species reference collections, transect/survey videographic records); and

c. Potential to meet data reporting requirements and the ability of transferring the data to the local or regional management community. Data from proposals must be useful in preparing the biennial report on the "Status of U.S. Coral Reef Ecosystems." Grant recipients will provide raw or synthesized data to NCCOS no later than 3 months after data collection. The data generated in the National Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring

Program will be used by NOAA and its partners to develop regional and national state of the reef reports and disseminated to the public via NOAA's Coral Reef Information (CoRIS) Web site development (<http://www.coris.noaa.gov>). Biotic data integrity is critical for sharing of information and detection of national/regional trends and hotspots. Each jurisdiction will need to have basic data management quality controls and quality assurances for its data. Funding eligibility for future funding years will be contingent on meeting data submission deadlines including all performance and financial reporting requirements and data transfers.

Based on the criteria reviews, NCCOS will provide a preliminary funding recommendation and proposal comments to each selected applicant. These comments will include input from peer reviewers and the Federal agency team and are intended for use in the applicants' development of the final application.

Upon receipt of the final application, complete with the Federal forms, the Federal agency team will review the complete package and make final funding recommendations based on the incorporation and/or response to comments that were returned to the applicant.

NCCOS will submit these funding recommendations to the NOAA review panel for final review, pursuant to Section X(4) of the Guidelines.

### 3. Selection Factors

The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order to the NOAA Review Panel which shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding;
2. Balance/distribution of funds;
  - a. Geographically
  - b. By type of institutions
  - c. By type of partners
  - d. By research areas
  - e. By project types
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
4. Program priorities and policy factors - These are found in section A.2. above;
5. Applicant's prior award performance;
6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

## **F. Award Administration Information**

### 1. Award Notices

The NOAA Grants Officer will provide written notice of the award by postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient. Unsuccessful applications will be destroyed and not returned to the applicant. It is the goal of the NOAA Program Officer to also provide written notice to each unsuccessful applicant before September 30, 2006.

### 2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

#### Indirect Costs

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., utilities, rent, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. For this solicitation, the Federal share of the indirect costs awarded will not exceed the lesser of either the indirect costs that the applicant would be entitled to if the negotiated Federal indirect cost rate were used or 25 percent of the Federal direct costs proposed. For those situations in which the use of the applicant's indirect cost rate would result in indirect costs greater than 25 percent of the Federal direct costs proposed, the difference may be counted as part of the non-Federal share. A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal Government must be included with the application. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award.

If an application is selected for multi-year funding, NOAA has no obligation to provide any additional prospective funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Any subsequent proposal to continue work on an existing project must be submitted to the competitive process for consideration and will not receive preferential treatment. Renewal of an award to increase funding or to extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of NOAA.

The recipients must comply with Executive Order 12906 regarding any and all geospatial data collected or produced under grants or cooperative agreements. This includes documenting all geospatial data in accordance with the Federal Geographic Data Committee Content Standard for digital geospatial data.

The Program uses only the existing NOAA Federal financial assistance awards package requirements per 15 CFR parts 14 and 24.

## The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389) are applicable to this solicitation.

### Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

### 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. NOAA has completed a programmatic Environmental Assessment of the NOAA Coral Grants Program. This document streamlines NOAA's review of coral grant applications.

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\\_TOC.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc\\_ceq.htm](http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm).

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of a project-specific environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

## 3. Reporting

### Performance and Financial Reports

Recipients receiving funding will be required to submit semiannual performance reports and copies of all products that are developed under the award. The specific information, products, or data contained in the performance report can be determined by the NOAA office responsible for the program and applicant in pre-award negotiations or, the recipient will submit performance reports according to the Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Performance reports must be submitted to the NOAA office responsible for the program within 30 days after each semi-annual performance period.

Unless otherwise authorized, semi-annual financial reports will be submitted in accordance with the Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions to the Grants Officer at NOAA Grants Management Division.

**G. Agency Contact(s)**

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