

fishing vessels that participate in HMS fisheries. Surveys and workshops will be conducted by NMFS personnel and/or contractors with affected fishery participants, in order to provide information and identify options for the development of the management system. NMFS, in consultation with the AP, will develop a plan to conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing a comprehensive management system.

Procedures and Guidelines

A. Procedures for Establishing the Advisory Panel.

Individuals representing definable interests in the recreational and commercial fishing and related industries, environmental community, academia, governmental and quasi-governmental entities will be considered as members of the AP. Selection of AP members will not be limited to those that are nominated.

Nominations are invited from all individuals and constituent groups. The nomination should include:

1. The name of the applicant or nominee and a description of their interest in or connection with HMS and the pelagic longline fishery in particular;
2. A statement of background and/or qualifications;
3. A written commitment that the applicant or nominee shall actively participate in good faith in the tasks of the AP.

B. Participants.

The AP shall consist of not less than seven (7) members who are knowledgeable about the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery. Nominations will be accepted to allow representation from recreational and commercial fishing interests, the conservation community, and the scientific community. NMFS does not believe that each potentially affected organization or individual must necessarily have its own representative, but each interest must be adequately represented. The intent is to have a group that as a whole reflects an appropriate balance and mix of interests given the responsibilities of the AP. Criteria for membership include (one or more of the following): a) Experience in or knowledge of the commercial longline fishing industry involved in harvesting tunas, swordfish, or sharks; b) experience in or knowledge of the recreational fishing industry involved in harvesting HMS; c) experience in connected industries (marinas, bait and tackle shops, processors); d) experience in the scientific community working with HMS; e) former or current representative of private, regional, state, national, or

international organization representing marine fisheries interests dealing with HMS.

NMFS will provide the necessary administrative support, including technical assistance, for the AP. However, we will be unable to compensate participants with monetary support of any kind because no funds were appropriated to support this activity in fiscal year 1997. Members will be expected to pay for travel costs related to the AP.

C. Tentative Schedule.

Meetings of the AP will be held twice or thrice yearly. NMFS, in consultation with the AP, will develop by June 1997, a plan to conduct workshops/surveys and results of these workshops and surveys will be published by December 1997. A plan to conduct a feasibility study of the comprehensive management plan will be developed by July 1997 and the final study will be published and distributed by January 1998. NMFS has initially determined that the responsibilities of the AP members will be concluded by October 1998, as management advisory responsibilities will be carried out by other AP's for swordfish, sharks, billfish, and tunas. These AP's will consider any comprehensive management plan that is developed in consultation with this longline AP.

Dated: February 19, 1997.

Gary C. Matlock,

Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 97-4655 Filed 2-25-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

[I.D. 012797G]

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; Request for Nominations of Individuals for the Ecosystem Research Advisory Panel

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of request for nominations.

SUMMARY: Section 406 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires NMFS to establish an advisory panel to develop recommendations to expand the application of ecosystem principles in fishery conservation and management activities. NMFS requests nominations of qualified individuals to serve on the advisory panel.

DATES: Nominations will be accepted through March 21, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Nominations should be sent to Office of Science and Technology, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, ATTN: Fisheries Ecosystem Panel.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ned Cyr, NMFS, (301) 713-2363.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 406 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act (Public Law 104-297), requires NMFS to establish an advisory panel, not later than April 11, 1997, to develop recommendations to expand the application of ecosystem principles in fishery conservation and management activities. The panel will consist of no more than 20 individuals with expertise in the structures, functions, and physical and biological characteristics of ecosystems. The panel will also consist of representatives from the Regional Fishery Management Councils, states, fishing industry, conservation organizations, or others with expertise in the management of marine resources. The panel will be required to submit a report to Congress by October 11, 1998, which includes: An analysis of the extent to which ecosystem principles are being applied in fishery conservation and management activities, including research activities; proposed actions by the Secretary of Commerce and by Congress that should be undertaken to expand the application of ecosystem principles in fishery conservation and management; and such other information as may be appropriate.

NMFS is requesting nominations of qualified individuals to serve as advisory panel members. Please submit nominations of qualified individuals, along with supporting credentials, to NMFS (see ADDRESSES).

Dated: February 19, 1997.

Gary C. Matlock,

Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Technology Innovation Challenge Grants

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of proposed selection criteria, selection procedures, and application procedures.

SUMMARY: The Secretary proposes selection criteria, procedures for

evaluating and selecting applications, and procedures for submission of applications under the Technology Innovation Challenge Grants Program. The Secretary may use these selection criteria, selection procedures and application procedures in fiscal year 1997 (FY 1997) and in subsequent years. The Secretary takes this action to make informed funding decisions on applications for technology projects having great promise for improving elementary and secondary education.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before March 28, 1997.

ADDRESSES: All comments concerning the proposed selection criteria, selection procedures, and application procedures should be sent to: Technology Innovation Challenge Grants, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, Room 606D, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20208-5544.

Comments may also be sent through the Internet to ITO_STAFF1@ed.gov or by FAX to (202) 208-4042.

Comments that concern information collection requirements must be sent to the Office of Management and Budget at the address listed in the Paperwork Reduction Act section of this notice. A copy of those comments may also be sent to the address in the preceding paragraph.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Technology Innovation Challenge Grants, Office Of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, Room 606D, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20208-5544. Telephone: (202) 208-3882. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Technology Innovation Challenge Grants Program is authorized in Title III, section 3136, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6846).

Under this program the Secretary makes grants to consortia. Each consortium must include at least one local educational agency (LEA) with a high percentage or number of children living below the poverty line and may include other LEAs, private schools, State educational agencies, institutions of higher education, businesses, academic content experts, software designers, museums, libraries, or other appropriate entities. The Technology Innovation Challenge Grants Program provides support to consortia that are

developing, adapting, or expanding existing and new applications of technology to improve schools through activities that include continuous professional development for teachers and the development of high quality academic content that helps all children learn to challenging standards.

The Secretary will announce the final selection criteria, selection procedures, and application procedures in a notice in the Federal Register. The final selection criteria, selection procedures, and application procedures will be determined by responses to this notice and other considerations of the Department.

Note: This notice does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition will be published in the Federal Register concurrent with or following publication of the notice of final selection criteria, selection procedures, and application procedures.

Selection Criteria

The Secretary proposes in this notice selection criteria, selection procedures, and application procedures for the FY 1997 competition and subsequent competitions. The program statute (20 U.S.C. 6846(c)) requires the Secretary to give priority in awarding grants to consortia that demonstrate certain factors in their applications. The Secretary proposes to carry out this mandate by incorporating the priority factors into the selection criteria. In addition, the Secretary believes that substantive selection criteria specifically framed for this program competition are necessary to enable the Secretary to evaluate how well the applicants address the purpose of the Technology Innovation Challenge Grants Program.

Proposed Criteria

The Secretary proposes the following unweighted selection criteria to evaluate applications:

(a) *Significance.* The Secretary reviews each proposed project for its significance by determining the extent to which the project—

(1) Offers a clear vision for the use of technology to help all students learn to challenging standards;

(2) Will achieve far-reaching impact through results, products, or benefits that are easily exportable to other settings and communities;

(3) Will directly benefit students by integrating acquired technologies into the curriculum to improve teaching and student achievement;

(4) Will ensure continuous professional development for teachers, administrators, and other individuals to

further the use of technology in the classroom, library, or learning settings in the community;

(5) Is designed to serve areas with a high number or percentage of disadvantaged students or other areas with the greatest need for educational technology; and

(6) Is designed to create new learning communities among teachers, students, parents, and others, which contribute to State or local education goals for school improvement, and expand markets for high-quality educational technology or content.

(b) *Feasibility.* The Secretary reviews each proposed project for its feasibility by determining the extent to which—

(1) The project will ensure successful, effective, and efficient uses of technologies for educational reform that will be sustainable beyond the period of the grant;

(2) The members of the consortium or other appropriate entities will contribute substantial financial and other resources to achieve the goals of the project; and

(3) The applicant is capable of carrying out the project, as evidenced by the extent to which the project will meet the problems identified; the quality of the project design, including objectives, approaches, evaluation plan, and dissemination plan; the adequacy of resources, including money, personnel, facilities, equipment, and supplies; the qualifications of key personnel who would conduct the project; and the applicant's prior experience relevant to the objectives of the project.

Evaluation and Selection of Applications

The Secretary proposes to evaluate applications using unweighted selection criteria. The Secretary believes that the use of unweighted criteria is most appropriate because they will allow the reviewers maximum flexibility to apply their professional judgments in identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses in individual applications.

The Secretary also believes that due to the highly technical nature of the applications, it will be necessary to obtain clarification and additional information from applicants during the selection process. For the purposes of the Technology Innovation Challenge Grants Program, the Secretary proposes to be able to request highly rated applicants to submit additional information in response to specific questions raised during the application selection process for the FY 1997 competition and subsequent competitions. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.231, the Secretary also may

request an applicant to submit additional information after the application has been selected for funding.

Proposed Selection Procedures

In applying the selection criteria, the Secretary proposes to use a three-tier peer review process for the FY 1997 competition and subsequent competitions. In view of the large number of applications in this program, and in consideration of the complexity of each application, the Secretary believes this process is necessary to ensure full and thorough consideration of each application.

At each tier of the review process panels of experts will read the applications under consideration to determine which applications are most deserving of further consideration in light of the selection criteria. The Department will, to the extent feasible, use reviewers that represent three areas of expertise: (1) K-12 school-based educators who use new technologies for classroom instruction or curriculum development; (2) K-12 school-based administrators who have management responsibility for school-wide, system-wide, or state-wide technology applications; and (3) educational technology experts drawn from higher education, consulting firms, or technology related firms.

At each tier of the review process, each reviewer assigns a qualitative rating for Significance and a qualitative rating for Feasibility to each application he or she reviews. The qualitative ratings used by individual reviewers are as follows: "A" for high quality; "B" for satisfactory quality; and "C" for unsatisfactory quality. The reviewers also assign an overall rating of "A", "B", or "C" for each application they review.

In Tier I of the review process reviewers are recruited to serve on panels that meet in several regional sites around the country. Tier I of the review process has two stages. In Stage 1 of Tier I, all of the applications received by the published application deadline are assigned to teams of readers at each site. The applications are read and rated by all of the individual readers on the team, who then meet to compare their individual ratings of each application they have read with each other. Through this process the reviewers identify applications that have been unanimously awarded high ratings. At the end of Stage 1 of Tier I each team at a review site forwards its most highly rated applications for further consideration. The applications forwarded for further consideration at that site are then read and individually

rated by reviewers who served as team leaders in Stage 1 of Tier I. These team leaders use the same qualitative ratings of "A", "B", and "C" for Significance, Feasibility and the overall rating for each forwarded application they read. In Stage 2 of Tier I the team leaders meet to compare the ratings of all the applications they have read or considered at both stages of Tier I, taking into account all of the readings and ratings of all of the reviewers for each application at that site. Those applications that have been unanimously awarded high ratings by the team leaders at the end of Stage 2 of Tier I are forwarded for further consideration at Tier II of the review process.

In Tier II of the review process, team leaders from all of the regional sites are brought together to serve as reviewers at a single site. These reviewers read the applications forwarded for further consideration from Tier I. Taking into account the quality of all of the applications they have read, the reviewers assign a qualitative rating for Significance, a qualitative rating for Feasibility, and an overall rating of "A", "B", or "C" for each application they review.

Tier II of the review process has two stages. In Stage 1 of Tier II, the reviewers meet in teams to compare their individual ratings of each application they have read. Through this process the reviewers identify applications that have been unanimously awarded high ratings. At the end of Stage 1 of Tier II each team forwards its most highly rated applications for further consideration. The applications forwarded for further consideration are then read and individually rated "A", "B", or "C" by the team leaders who served in Stage 1 of Tier II. In Stage 2 of Tier II the team leaders meet to compare the ratings of all the applications they have read or considered at both stages of Tier II, taking into account all of the readings and ratings of all of the reviewers for each application at that site. Those applications that have been unanimously awarded high ratings at the end of Stage 2 of Tier II are then forwarded for further consideration at Tier III of the review process. At the end of Tier II, the reviewers will also identify inconsistencies, points in need of clarification, and other concerns, if any, pertaining to each application. Each applicant whose application is forwarded for further consideration at the end of Tier II will have an opportunity to respond in writing to these clarification questions and concerns.

At Tier III readers are assembled to serve as reviewers at a single site. These reviewers have served as team leaders during each of the previous Tiers of the review, and each of the original Tier I review sites are represented by one team leader at Tier III. There is only one stage of review at Tier III. The reviewers read the applications that are still under consideration and, after reading the responses to the clarification questions, they assign ratings for Significance and Feasibility, and an overall rating of "A", "B", or "C" for each application, taking into account the quality of all of the applications they have read. The reviewers compare their individual ratings of each application they have read, and through this process the reviewers identify applications that have been unanimously awarded high ratings. Those applications that have unanimously high ratings are recommended for funding. The reviewers also provide individual recommendations on an appropriate budget level for each application recommended for funding. The Secretary awards grants only to those applications the reviewers have recommended for funding at the end of Tier III. No other applications are considered for funding. In the final selection of applications for funding, the Secretary may also consider the extent to which each application demonstrates an effective response to the learning technology needs of areas with a high number or percentage of disadvantaged students or the greatest need for educational technology. In preparation for a grant award, the Secretary also may request an applicant to submit additional information after the application has been selected for funding.

The Secretary believes these procedures lead to the selection of the best applications for funding under this program.

Application Deadline

The Secretary, in order to ensure timely receipt and processing of applications, proposes the following application deadline for the FY 1997 competition and subsequent competitions.

Proposed Procedures for Submission of Applications

Applications, in order to be considered for funding under this program, must be received on or before the deadline date announced in the application notice published in the Federal Register. The Secretary will not consider an application for funding if it is not received by the deadline date

unless the applicant can show, in accordance with 34 CFR 75.102 (d) and (e), proof that the application was (1) sent by registered or certified mail not later than five days before the deadline date; or (2) sent by commercial carrier not later than two days before the deadline date. An applicant must show proof of mailing in accordance with 34 CFR 75.102(d) and (e). Applications delivered by hand must be received by 4:00 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time) on the deadline date. For the purposes of this competition the Secretary proposes not to apply 34 CFR 75.102(b), which requires an application to be mailed, rather than received, by the deadline date.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

The proposed selection criteria contain information collection requirements. As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3507(d)), the Department of Education has submitted a copy of these selection criteria to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review.

Collection of Information: Technology Innovation Challenge Grants Program.

Under this program consortia are eligible to apply. Each consortium must include at least one LEA with a high percentage or number of children living below the poverty line and may include other LEAs, State educational agencies, institutions of higher education, businesses, academic content experts, software designers, museums, libraries, or other appropriate entities. The information to be collected includes a description of each proposed project, including the professional development that teachers and other educational support staff will receive in the use of technologies; the integration of acquired technologies into curriculum to enhance teaching, training, and student achievement; and a project evaluation including a dissemination strategy. The Department needs and will use the information to select, on the basis of project feasibility and significance, the highest quality applications.

All information is to be collected and reported once, as part of the application for assistance. Annual reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 40 hours for each response for 500 respondents, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Thus, the total annual reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection is estimated to be 20,000

hours. Organizations and individuals desiring to submit comments on the information collection requirements should direct them to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB, Room 10235, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503; Attention: Desk Officer for U.S. Department of Education.

The Department considers comments by the public on these proposed collections of information in—

- Evaluating whether the proposed collections of information are necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluating the accuracy of the Department's estimate of the burden of the proposed collections of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhancing the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimizing the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology; e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

OMB is required to make a decision concerning the collections of information contained in these proposed selection criteria, selection procedures, and application procedures between 30 and 60 days after publication of this document in the Federal Register. Therefore, a comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication. This does not affect the deadline for the public to comment to the Department on the proposed selection criteria and procedures.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. The objective of the Executive Order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism by relying on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with the Order, this document is intended to provide early notification of the Department's specific plans and actions for this program.

Invitation to Comment

Interested persons are invited to submit comments and recommendations regarding these proposed selection criteria and procedures. Comments will be available for public inspection, during and after the comment period, in Room 606D, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday of each week except Federal holidays.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 6846.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.303A, Challenge Grants for Technology in Education)

Dated: February 21, 1997.

Marshall Smith,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement.

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[CFDA No.: 84.304A]

International Education Exchange Program; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 1997

Purpose of Program: To support international education exchange activities between the United States and eligible countries in civics and government education and economic education.

Eligible Applicants: Independent nonprofit educational organizations that—

(a) Have expertise in international achievement comparisons, and are experienced in—

(1) The development and national implementation of curricular programs in civics and government education and economic education for students from grades kindergarten through 12 in local, intermediate, and State educational agencies, in schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and in private schools throughout the Nation with the cooperation and assistance of national professional educational organizations, colleges and universities and private sector organizations;

(2) The development and implementation of cooperative university and school-based inservice training programs for teachers of grades kindergarten through 12 using scholars from such relevant disciplines as political science, political philosophy, history, law, and economics;

(3) The development of model curricular frameworks in civics and government education and economic education;