

# ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name: National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2008 Implementation of Regional Integrated Ocean Observing Systems

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOS-CSC-2008-2001072

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.473, Coastal Services Center.

Dates: Letters of Intent (LOIs) must be received by the Coastal Services Center by 5:00 p.m. ET on September 12, 2007. Full proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. ET, November 15, 2007.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) will efficiently link national and regional observations, data management, and modeling to provide required data and information on local to global scales. Regional coastal ocean observing systems (RCOOSs) are designed to complement the observing systems managed directly by federal agencies that meet national priorities. With the guidance of Regional Associations to understand regional priorities, RCOOSs provide the types of data, information, and products needed to address the estuarine and coastal issues experienced by the different regions, and to leverage the delivery and applicability of data collected by local data network nodes. NOAA views this announcement as an opportunity to demonstrate the regional observing system concept.

To assist in the implementation of the regional component of IOOS, NOAA seeks proposals for one- to two-year grant or cooperative agreement projects, with an optional third year, that will result in a regional system that has been optimized to provide data and products that are tailored to regional needs. The regional system will provide data and information in forms and at rates designed to meet the needs of regional decision makers. To accomplish that task, the regional system will integrate existing observing system components, prioritize additional observing system acquisition, and construct products and data management processes to deliver data and information to the regional stakeholders for the benefit of the region. Proposals submitted will demonstrate the approach and benefits of integration and implementation at the scale of the Regional Association and should address the following:

- a) Regional deployment, operation and maintenance of sensors and platforms to address needs for data and information that have been clearly articulated by the Regional Associations as representative of their stakeholders.

- b) Regional participation in developing a data integration framework for data streams, quality assurance procedures, and data delivery.
- c) Generation of regional or appropriately-scaled products, including data and model output, that facilitate the development of value-added, targeted products for identified users.

NOAA anticipates making multiple awards in response to this announcement.

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

#### A. Program Objective

In 1998, Congress called for the development of an Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) for the oceans and the Nation's coastal waters, including the Great Lakes, to serve as the U.S. contribution to [Global Earth Observation System of Systems \(GEOSS\)](#). Designed to be user-driven and provide sustained data and information in forms and at rates required by decision makers, the IOOS will efficiently link observations, data management, and modeling to provide required data and information on local to global scales, e.g., from the local scale of beaches and shellfish beds to the global scale of an El Niño event.

To provide the data at the time and space scales required by these decisions, the IOOS is being designed to address two major challenges: (1) efficiently integrate observations, data management and communications, modeling and analysis needed to provide quality-controlled data and information rapidly and reliably, and (2) develop an integrated hierarchy of observations, modeling, and user-driven information products that link changes occurring on global and national scales to local changes that impact coastal communities, ecosystems, and resources. These challenges require an IOOS that can provide data for near real-time decisions and for analysis of long-term patterns and trends.

The Integrated Ocean Observing System Development Plan (OceanUS, 2006) calls for an integrated system of observations that support national and regional priorities. Regional priorities are to be determined by a comprehensive effort to engage stakeholders at the local and regional level. The responsibility for such engagement is directed to IOOS Regional Associations. Eleven such Regional Associations (RAs), presently in differing stages of formation, are addressing stakeholder needs for data and information products. The IOOS Development Plan distinguishes between those observing and data infrastructure components managed directly by federal agencies to meet national priorities (termed the National Backbone) and those infrastructure components managed at the regional level, termed Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (RCOOS). The two are co-dependent components of one IOOS.

This funding opportunity is designed to make significant progress towards the following long-term outcomes with respect to the implementation of the regional component of IOOS:

- a) Regions have a coordinated, functioning observing and data management infrastructure, developed with federal agencies, sub-regional system components, and local data network nodes, to create sustained collection and sharing of data and information at local, regional, and national levels.
- b) Data providers within the regions deliver accurate and timely ocean observations through a common data integration framework to a range of consumers including

national, state, and local governmental; operational; scientific; and commercial entities.

- c) Regions provide IOOS data that are integrated into user-specified tools and information products to demonstrate improved predictions and products at local and regional scales.

Accomplishing these objectives will require the Regional Associations to coordinate efforts to integrate and build the infrastructure for acquiring observations, implement data transport and management processes, and to develop models and information products. Steps toward implementation include the collection and delivery of data and information products that address priorities for integrating and maintaining existing regional assets as well as for acquiring additional assets. These priorities should be communicated by the Regional Associations and driven by needs for data and information that are clearly articulated by the regional stakeholders. Implementation also includes coordination, management, and operation of assets and measurable progress towards an IOOS that clearly demonstrates its integrated nature.

Proposals submitted should address the following:

- Regional deployment, operation and maintenance of sensors and platforms to address needs for data and information that have been clearly articulated by the Regional Associations as representative of their stakeholders.
- Regional participation in developing a data integration framework for data streams, quality assurance procedures, and data delivery.
- Generation of regional or appropriately-scaled products, including data and model output, that facilitate the development of value-added targeted products for identified users.

The program priorities for this opportunity support NOAA's mission goals to:

- Serve society's needs for weather and water information;
- Protect, restore, and manage the use of coastal and ocean resources through an ecosystem approach to management;
- Understand climate variability and change to enhance society's ability to plan and respond;
- Support the Nation's commerce with information for safe, efficient, and environmentally sound transportation.

#### B. Program Priorities:

The IOOS is envisioned as a sustained and operational coastal and ocean observing system with Regional Associations (RAs) providing coordination with stakeholders at the regional level. Under guidance by the RAs to understand regional priorities and coordinate activities, the RCOOS shall be developed in a manner that addresses the regional priorities and optimizes the data collection infrastructure, data delivery, and product development within the region.

Through this funding announcement NOAA desires to maintain prior investment in observing system assets deployed within the region and further the implementation and

the operation of those assets for the benefit of the region. It is imperative that regions optimize the capabilities of sub-regional systems developed by individual institutions, companies, and agencies, and that the RCOOS be developed in concert with National Backbone assets if we are to achieve the goals of the Integrated Ocean Observing System. This entails that system design, operation, and information delivery be done in a manner that takes advantage of existing assets within the region as well as data integration frameworks already established and those presently being improved through community efforts that target Data Management and Communication goals for IOOS. As such, it is desired that progress made during this award should allow the region to be in position to generate a cost-benefit analysis of regional integration. Applicants are highly encouraged to submit performance metrics for the observing system components proposed.

To assist in meeting the objectives for regional IOOS implementation, NOAA seeks proposals for one- to two-year grant or cooperative agreements that will result in a regional system that has been optimized to provide data and products that are tailored to regional needs. A third year of funding may be considered. NOAA expects to fund four (4) to ten (10) awards, approximately. Funding amounts will range from approximately \$500,000 to \$3,500,000 per year.

The goals for this funding opportunity are to create regional systems that:

- a) Optimize data collection according to stakeholder needs for data and information.
- b) Deploy and/or maintain observing system assets that contribute timely and accurate coastal and ocean meteorological and oceanographic data to complement existing national data streams.
- c) Integrate existing regional assets and contribute data and information to address regional priority issues.
- d) Provide data to a range of consumers including government, academic, and private sector users, utilizing a data integration framework common across all providers. Full life cycle management of observations from collection to public delivery should be considered.
- e) Develop information products that exceed our current capability to meet the needs of defined users within the region and improve their decision-making capacity.
- f) Contribute to the overall development of IOOS through participation in IOOS planning and implementation at regional and national levels.

Proposals submitted to this announcement should make a compelling case for the role of the proposed observing system as part of a comprehensive regional system that has been optimized to provide data and products that are tailored to regional needs. It is expected that applicants to this focus area will communicate and coordinate with the appropriate Regional Associations. Though the focus is on regional observing systems, proposals that address cross-regional model and product development will also be considered.

Applicants are encouraged to work closely with potential applicants to other NOAA funding opportunities for IOOS support, as NOAA desires close coordination between

the Regional Associations and design, integration, and deployment of observing system assets.

Applicants are expected to be cognizant of and in compliance with the standards and protocols for sharing and archiving of data in support of IOOS. Applicants should be familiar with the Ocean.US Development Plan and the Ocean.US/DMAC guidance documents (see Section VIII for References). Recipients are expected to participate in community endeavors to advance the DMAC component of IOOS. It is expected that data will be made widely available via existing avenues, such as the NOAA National Data Buoy Center, NOAA Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services, and/or other means that ensure broad access.

NOAA is particularly interested in observing systems that provide timely and appropriate information to public mission agencies at the national, state, and local levels. Award recipients are expected to share this interest and to identify the specific means within funding applications to accomplish these objectives.

#### C. Program Authority

Statutory authority for this program is provided under Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1456c (Technical Assistance); 33 U.S.C. 883d; and 33 U.S.C. 1442 (Research program investigating possible long-range effects of pollution, overfishing, and anthropogenically-induced changes of ocean ecosystems).

#### D. Cost Principles

N.A.

### II. Award Information

#### A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for all awards is approximately \$25,000,000 and is subject to the availability of FY 2008 appropriations. Multiple awards are anticipated from this announcement. The anticipated federal funding per award (min-max) is approximately \$500,000 to \$3,500,000 per year. The anticipated number of awards ranges from four (4) to ten (10), approximately, and will be adjusted based on available funding.

#### B. Project / Award Period

This is a multi-year funding opportunity. Proposed projects may request funding for one to two years with an optional third year. Multi-year awards may be funded incrementally on an annual basis, but, once awarded, those awards will not compete for funding in subsequent years.

When a multi-year proposal is approved, funding initially will be provided for only the

first year of the program. Funding in years two and three is contingent upon availability of funds from Congress, satisfactory performance, and is at the sole discretion of the agency.

### C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for these awards may be grants or cooperative agreements. If a cooperative agreement is awarded, the federal government will agree to be substantially involved by (for example) acquiring, increasing access to, and enhancing capacity to use data and tools; convening partners and building diverse teams to accomplish broad based work; providing meeting planning and facilitation; assisting with instructional design; developing spatial databases, models, and analyses to address the identified management needs; guiding in the development of social, economic and other human dimension information and analyses; and/or designing of Geographic Information System (GIS), Internet products, and system architectures. If the NOAA Coastal Services Center is proposed as a partner in a cooperative agreement, applicants should clearly articulate those roles and responsibilities and discuss prospective roles in the project after notification that the proposal is successful.

## III. Eligibility Information

### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible funding applicants are institutions of higher education, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and state, local and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies or institutions and foreign governments may not be the primary recipient of awards under this announcement, but are encouraged to partner with applicants when appropriate. Federal partners must identify the relevant statutory authorities that will allow for the receipt of funds.

If applicants will have partners who would receive grant funds, the lead grantee will be expected to provide funds using subcontracts or other appropriate mechanisms to the project partners. If the partners are federal agencies other than NOAA, the grantee and the federal partner must use interagency agreements or otherwise take steps relevant to their organizations to ensure that funds can be transferred by the primary grantee and received by any federal partners.

If a federal partner is a NOAA office, the funds will be transferred internally. Before non-NOAA Federal applicants may be funded, they must demonstrate that they have legal authority to accept funds in excess of their appropriation. Because of the nature of this competition, the Economy Act (31 USC 1535) is not an appropriate authority.

### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There is no requirement for cost sharing.

### C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

N/A

## IV. Application and Submission Information

### A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages for full proposals are available through Grants.gov APPLY. If an applicant does not have Internet access, application packages can be requested from James Lewis Free at 2234 South Hobson Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina, 29405-2413; or contact him at 843-740-1185 or via e-mail <James.L.Free@noaa.gov>.

### B. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Applicants must follow the LOI and full proposal application requirements stated in this announcement or LOIs and full proposal applications will not be considered.

The Letter of Intent (LOI) process is intended to provide potential funding applicants with information regarding the relevance of their project idea to the program objectives in advance of preparing a full proposal. A LOI is required prior to submitting a full proposal.

The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the IOOS community and the program objectives. The LOI should include the components listed below. If these components are not included, the funding applicant risks not being encouraged to submit a full proposal application. The LOI should include the following information on a cover page:

1. Identification of the NOAA Coastal Services Center as the target of the LOI
2. Project title
3. Names and institutions of all principal investigators (PI), and specification of the Lead PI and contact information for that person

The body of the LOI should be no more than 2 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, and should include the following components:

1. Statement of the Purpose - state the intent, goal, and output of proposed work
2. Summary of work to be completed, including the methodology, products, and approximate cost
3. Description of intended benefits to the IOOS community and expected use of the results by the community
4. Description of the partnerships to be employed in the development and completion of the proposed work.

Full proposal applications must total no more than 30 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font and exclusive of appendices). The 30-page limit does not include the proposal title page, a table of contents if one is included, the project summary referenced below under



item two (2), and any appendices. Appendices should be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (e.g., detailed budget information, support letters, resumes, references, lists of data sources, and maps).

Applicants should paginate their proposal and any appendices. Appendices may be paginated as stand alone documents (individually) or collectively.

All funding application packages must contain the following components:

1. Title Page (Proposal Cover Sheet). Include proposal title, complete contact information for the Principal Investigator and Financial Representative, duration of proposed project, funding type (grant or cooperative agreement), and funding request by year (as appropriate).
2. Project Summary. Provide a one to two-page summary of the proposed project. The summary should be prepared to be readable to a broad audience and contain the following sections:
  - a. Project Name/Title
  - b. Primary Contact (name, address, phone, fax, e-mail)
  - c. Recipient Institution
  - d. Other Investigators (name, affiliated institution or agency)
  - e. Brief Project Summary including objectives and intended benefits
  - f. Partners
3. Project Description.  
All project descriptions (proposals) must include the following sections:
  - a. Goal and Objective(s). Describe in the narrative the specific project goals and objectives to be achieved. Goals and objectives should be specific for each year of the work plan presented.
  - b. Project goals and objectives must include objectives specific to supporting the design and implementation of the regional components of IOOS. Recipients will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports in which progress against these goals and objectives will be reported.
  - c. Background. Provide sufficient background information for NOAA and non-NOAA reviewers to independently assess the significance of the proposed project. Summarize the problem to be addressed and the status of ongoing efforts to address the identified needs. Summarize the relationship of the proposed work to other regional or national efforts to develop IOOS.
  - d. Audience. Identify specific users of the results of the project, describe how they will use the results, and identify any training that will be needed for users to make full use of the results.
  - e. Approach. Provide a work plan that: identifies specific tasks to be accomplished; explains the technical approach (including quality assurance) needed to accomplish the tasks; identifies the roles of partners

and cooperators; and identifies potential obstacles to successful completion of the goals and objectives. Describe how users are involved in the planning and design process. The work plan must clearly address data management requirements, and the steps to be taken to achieve efficient and effective data access and archive that is compliant with federal regulations and the emerging standards for IOOS. Describe the specific steps that will be taken to ensure that the proposed project is consistent with, and supportive of the IOOS development plans. If the project includes federal partners, the roles and responsibilities of the federal partners must be clearly identified.

- f. Benefits. Identify, with a high degree of specificity, the users of the information derived from the work, and the benefits that will be achieved for those users, as well as society as a whole. Document how valid user requirements are guiding the proposed work. Describe how the information from the project will be delivered to those users, and any special considerations or requirements for ensuring or improving the delivery of information. Explain how this project contributes to the establishment of IOOS at the regional and national level.
- g. Milestone Schedule. Display time lines for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products, and key project outcomes.
- h. Project Budget. Provide a budget description that follows the categories and formats in the NOAA grants package (Standard Form 424-A) and a brief narrative justification of the budget.

Detailed budget information, such as a repeat of the information in Form SF-424A along with more details should be included in an appendix. In this appendix, the budget narrative also shall clearly identify the cost of separable elements of the proposed work and shall identify the elements of the project that the cooperator would recommend for revision or elimination in the event that sufficient funding is not available for all proposed activities. Applicants must itemize and describe the intended use of equipment greater than \$5,000 in value to be purchased under the award. The budget narrative must also provide the cost and description of anticipated travel. Applicants should allocate travel funds for IOOS coordination meetings at regional and national levels. Foreign travel must receive prior approval and should be anticipated in the proposal to the extent possible.

If NOAA is requested to perform any work as part of the project, please be advised that the work to be performed must be reflected in the project description and budget. The budget should clearly show where all funds will go and how the funds will be used. Applications for federal assistance (form 424 and 424a) must show the total amount LESS what goes to NOAA partner. Detailed budget and budget justification in proposal should show the total amount including that which goes to NOAA partner and should include text stating that the applicant wishes for

NOAA to retain those funds and have them used by partner NOAA office.

4. Appendices

- a. Mandatory Detailed Budget Information, including budgets of subawards.
- b. Resumes. Provide resumes of the Principal Investigator for the project and other key personnel critical to the success of the project. Ensure that resumes address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work. Please limit resumes to a maximum of two pages for each key investigator.
- c. 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 Web site: < <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).

NOAA may require follow-up information after the application process has been completed. 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 an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing 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 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.

Applicants are required to answer the questions indicated in this Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity. Applicants should answer

the NEPA questions to the best of their ability with as much detail as possible. If the applicant does not answer all of the questions indicated in the Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity the application may be considered incomplete.

Some of the questions may overlap with material provided in other parts of the application. This overlap occurs because the answers to the questionnaire are provided to NOAA staff who do not review the other parts of the application. If appropriate, the applicant may copy the information from other parts of the application and paste it into the answers to the questionnaire. Many questions have a “yes” or “no” response. If the response is “no” the applicant does not need to elaborate on their answer. If the response is “yes” the question will have a second part asking the applicant to provide more information.

Applicant NEPA questions are as follows:

Question C1. Is the proposed activity going to be conducted in partnership with NOAA or would the proposed activity require NOAA’s direct involvement, activity, or oversight? If yes, describe NOAA’s involvement, activity, or oversight, including the name of the office or program that is involved.

Question C2. Would the proposed activity involve any other federal agency(ies) partnership, direct involvement, activity, or oversight? If yes, provide the name(s) of the agency(ies) and describe its involvement, activity, or oversight.

Question D1. Provide a brief description of the location of the proposed activity.

Question E1. List any federal, state, or local permits, authorizations, or waivers that would be required to complete the proposed activity. Provide the date the permit, authorization, or waiver was obtained or will be obtained. Provide copies of the permit, authorization, or waiver as appropriate. Was a NEPA analysis prepared for the permit, authorization, or waiver? If yes, state the title of the NEPA analysis and provide copies of the NEPA analysis.

Question F1. Is there the potential for the proposed activity to cause changes that would be different from normal ambient conditions (e.g., temperature, light, turbidity, noise, other human activity levels, etc.)? If yes, describe the changes and the circumstances that would cause these changes.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

Public reporting burden for this collection of NEPA information is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other suggestions for reducing this burden to Ms. Shelby Mendez, NOAA Office of Program Planning and Integration, SSMC 3, Room 15718, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The information collection does not request any proprietary or confidential information. No confidentiality is provided.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subjected to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

#### C. Submission Date and Time

The deadline for receipt of LOIs is 5:00 p.m. ET on September 12, 2007. For LOIs submitted by e-mail, the date and time indication of the receiving server will be the basis of determining timeliness. Note that receipt may be delayed if e-mail servers are not functioning efficiently. LOIs may not be considered if received by the Coastal Services Center after 5:00 p.m. ET on September 12, 2007.

Applicants submitting multiple LOIs must use a unique project title for each LOI and may send all LOIs in one e-mail or in multiple e-mails.

Full proposals must be received through Grants.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. ET, November 15, 2007. If applicants do not have Internet access and submit through surface mail, full proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. ET, November 15, 2007.

For proposals submitted through < <http://www.grants.gov> >, a date and time receipt indication by Grants.gov will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy applications delivered by mail will be date and time stamped when they are received. Applications received after that time will not be reviewed or considered.

#### D. Intergovernmental Review

Funding applications under the Center are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." It is the state agency's responsibility to contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPCO) to find out about and comply with the state's process under EO 12372. To assist the applicant, the names and addresses of the SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's Web site < <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html> >.

#### E. Funding Restrictions

N/A

#### F. Other Submission Requirements

A letter of intent (LOI) must be sent via e-mail to <[IOOSfy2008@noaa.gov](mailto:IOOSfy2008@noaa.gov)>. Applicants submitting a LOI should reference the Funding Opportunity Title (FY 2008 Implementation of Regional Integrated Ocean Observing Systems) as the subject line of the e-mail containing the LOI.

If an applicant does not have Internet access, the applicant must submit through surface mail one original and two copies of the LOI to the Coastal Services Center. No fax copies will be accepted. LOIs submitted by mail must be received by NOAA Coastal Services Center no later than 5:00 p.m. ET, September 12, 2007. Any U.S. Postal Service correspondence should be sent to the attention of James Lewis Free, NOAA Coastal Services Center, 2234 South Hobson Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina, 29405-2413.

Full proposal application packages should be submitted through Grants.gov APPLY. The standard NOAA funding application package is available at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Please be advised that potential funding applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. An organization's one time registration process may take up to three weeks to complete so please allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date. The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, the application package (forms), and is also where the completed application is submitted.

If an applicant does not have Internet access, the applicant must submit through surface mail one set of originals (signed) and two copies of the proposals and related forms to the Coastal Services Center. No e-mail or fax copies will be accepted. Full proposal application packages submitted by mail must be received by NOAA Coastal Services Center no later than 5:00 p.m. ET, November 15, 2007. Any U.S. Postal Service correspondence should be sent to the attention of James Lewis Free, NOAA Coastal Services Center, 2234 South Hobson Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina, 29405-2413.

Applicants using Grants.gov must locate the downloadable application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.473). Applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. Grants.gov will provide information about submitting a proposal through the site as well as the hours of operation. After electronic submission of the application, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two e-mail messages from Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their application. The first e-mail will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected due to errors. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive another e-mail when the application has been downloaded by the federal agency.

To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and be registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Allow a minimum of five days to complete the CCR registration. (Note: Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.)

All proposal package material must be submitted through Grants.gov or through surface mail by the submission deadline, including any letters of support.

## V. Application Review Information

### A. Evaluation Criteria

#### Evaluation Criteria for LOIs

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (60 percent): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities and objectives for developing the regional component of the IOOS. Proposals will be evaluated on how well the proposed project will achieve the specific goals of the announcement.
2. Technical and scientific merit (40 percent): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Questions relevant to this criterion include: Is the approach appropriate for the stated goals and objectives? Does the proposed approach incorporate current guidance, scientific, and/or technical advancements in the design and implementation of the Integrated Ocean Observing System? Does the proposal promote interoperability with other components of a regional and national ocean observing system?

#### Evaluation Criteria for Full Applications

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (30 percent): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities and objectives for designing and implementing the regional component of the IOOS. Proposals will be evaluated on how well the proposed project will achieve the specific goals of the announcement.
2. Technical and scientific merit (25 percent): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Questions relevant to this criterion include: Is the approach appropriate for the stated goals and objectives? Are the project goals and objectives achievable within the proposed time-frame? Do the proposed approaches incorporate current guidance, scientific, and/or technical advancements in the development and implementation of the Integrated Ocean

Observing System? Does the proposal promote interoperability with other components of a regional and national ocean observing system?

3. Overall qualifications of the funding applicants (15 percent): This criterion ascertains whether the funding applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Questions relevant to this criterion include: Does the proposal demonstrate regional and institutional support for the project? Are the investigators qualified and is the organizational framework appropriate to conduct a project of the nature and scope proposed? Are investigators from other agencies and institutions within the region included as key personnel on the project to capitalize on available expertise and promote a regional approach?
4. Project costs (15 percent): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. Questions relevant to this criterion include: Does the proposal demonstrate that the budget is commensurate with project needs? Is the cost effectiveness of the project optimized through strategic partnerships with collaborating institutions, agencies, or private sector partners?
5. Outreach and education (15 percent): This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to understand and protect the Nation's natural resources. Questions relevant to this criterion include: Does the proposed project demonstrate that the target user community has been fully engaged in development of the desired project outcomes? Does the proposal demonstrate that information generated by the project will reach its target audience and have a positive impact on the development of regional and national observing system infrastructure?

B. Review and Selection Process:

LOI Review Process: All LOIs will be evaluated by federal program staff in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation to determine whether the proposed project is responsive to the goals as advertised in this notice. The Coastal Services Center will respond to each LOI by e-mail informing the applicant (i.e., the lead PI) whether or not they are encouraged to submit a full proposal. Responses will be sent from NOAA no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on September 21, 2007. Applicants who are not encouraged to submit a full proposal will not be prohibited from submitting a full proposal package; however, applicants who do not submit an LOI will be precluded from submitting a full proposal.

Proposal Review and Selection Process: An initial administrative screening is conducted to determine compliance with requirements/completeness. All proposals will be evaluated and individually ranked in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by at least three independent peer reviewers through a full merit review process (i.e., a mail and panel review process). The merit reviewer's ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals. The Selecting Official will award in the rank order unless proposals are justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the selection factors provided below. The Selecting Official or designee may



negotiate the funding level of the proposal.

### C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award according to 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. 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.

### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The start date on proposals should be on August 1, 2008; or the first day of the month of a month after August 2008.

## VI. Award Administration Information

### A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office by e-mail that their application was recommended for funding. The applicant must be aware that the notification by the program office is NOT the official award notice. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice from the Grants Officer either by postal mail or electronically.

Unsuccessful applications for all Coastal Services Center programs will be destroyed and not returned to the applicant.

### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in 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). A copy of the notice may be obtained at < <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/search.html> >.

2. Limitation of Liability: In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to provide special fishing privileges.

### C. Reporting

Grant recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) progress reports electronically through the NOAA Grants On-Line System. Instructions for submitting financial and progress reports will be provided by NOAA Grants Management Division.

### VII. Agency Contact(s)

For administrative questions, contact James Lewis Free, NOAA CSC; 2234 South Hobson Avenue, Room B-119, Charleston, South Carolina, 29405-2413; or by phone at 843-740-1185, or by fax 843-740-1290, or via e-mail at < [James.L.Free@noaa.gov](mailto:James.L.Free@noaa.gov) >.

For technical questions regarding this announcement, contact: Mary Culver, NOAA CSC; 2234 South Hobson Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina, 29405-2413; or by phone at 843-740-1250, or by fax 843-740-1298, or via e-mail at < [Mary.Culver@noaa.gov](mailto:Mary.Culver@noaa.gov) >; or Geno Olmi, NOAA CSC; 2234 South Hobson Avenue, Room 1-132, Charleston, South Carolina, 29405-2413; or by phone at 843-740-1230, or by fax 843-740-1313, or via e-mail at < [Geno.Olmi@noaa.gov](mailto:Geno.Olmi@noaa.gov) >.

### VIII. Other Information

Official notification of an award notice is provided by the Grants Management Division, not the program office. If one incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement from an authorized NOAA grant official, one would do so solely at one's own risk of these costs not being included under the award.

The Coastal Services Center will not release the names of applicants submitting LOIs or proposals unless ordered by a court or requested to do so by an appropriate NOAA official and administrative protocol. Applicants can use a NOAA public search feature to find out information about NOAA awards < <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/publicSearch/begin.do;jsessionid=GbZDVT7JqmXqNlm84y2DBn5CpmGR2vJvQKfnX5CLd94YvywZQTZq!-1742093309> > or go through the Freedom of Information Act process to request more information about grant competitions. More information about the NOAA FOI process is on-line at <

<http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~foia/> >.

Successful applicants will be requested to ensure that all progress reports a) clearly state the resulting impact of their project and products in the coastal management community; and b) indicate whether financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and are up-to-date. Applicants in their final progress report will be asked to certify that "Final financial reports have been submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division and a final funding draw-down has been made through the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP)."

Please be advised that potential funding applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. An organization's one time registration process may take up to three weeks to complete so please allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and be registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Allow a minimum of five days to complete the CCR registration. (Note: Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.)

The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, the application package (forms), and is also where the completed application is submitted. Applicants using Grants.gov must locate the downloadable application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number (11.473). Applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site.

After electronic submission of the application, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two e-mail messages from Grants.gov updating them on the progress of their application. The first e-mail will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected due to errors. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive another e-mail when the application has been downloaded by the federal agency.

#### References:

Ocean.US, 2002. Building Consensus: Toward an Integrated and Sustained Ocean Observing System (IOOS). Ocean.US, Arlington, VA. 175pp.

< [http://www.ocean.us/documents/docs/Core\\_lores.pdf](http://www.ocean.us/documents/docs/Core_lores.pdf) >.

Hankin, S. and the DMAC Steering Committee, 2005. Data Management and Communications Plan for Research and Operational Integrated Ocean Observing Systems: Interoperable Data Discovery, Access, and Archive. Ocean.US, Arlington, VA. 304 pp.

< [http://dmac.ocean.us/dacsc/imp\\_plan.jsp](http://dmac.ocean.us/dacsc/imp_plan.jsp) >.

Ocean.US 2006. The First Integrated Ocean Observing System Development Plan: A Report of the National Ocean Research Leadership Council and the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration. Ocean.US, Arlington, VA. 86 pp. < <http://www.ocean.us/documents/docs/FINAL-ImpPlan-NORLC.pdf> >.