ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: FY2010 Integrated Ocean Observing System Implementation

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-IOOS-2010-2001799

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

Dates: Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service on or before 5 p.m. EDT, October 30, 2009. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) is working to link national and regional observations, data management, and modeling to provide required data and information on local to global scales. IOOS Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (RCOOS) complement the observing systems managed directly by federal agencies to meet national priorities. With the guidance of Regional Associations to understand regional priorities, RCOOS provide the data, information, and products needed to address estuarine and coastal issues of importance to the nation's ocean and coastal regions and the Great Lakes. NOAA views this announcement as an opportunity to enhance the regional coastal component of IOOS. In addition, NOAA views the testing and development of sensor technologies to study and monitor coastal and ocean environments as essential to a sustained and operational IOOS. Thus, this announcement includes two focus areas for proposals: 1) Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems by Geography and 2) Verification and validation of sensors for coastal and ocean observing systems. The program priorities for this funding 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.

For focus area one, NOAA seeks proposals for one-year cooperative agreements to continue the implementation and development of the regional component of IOOS within the following regions of the United States: Northeast (Maine to Rhode Island), Mid-Atlantic (Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras), Southern California (Point Conception to the Mexico border), Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon, and northern California), and Pacific Islands (Hawaii). Proposed projects must build upon the progress already made by IOOS Regional Associations. It is expected that these efforts will result in a regional system that is optimized to provide data and products that meet regional needs and national IOOS specifications, and that are available in forms and at rates designed to meet the needs of regional decision makers. To accomplish that task, the regional systems will integrate existing observing system components, and construct products and data management processes to deliver data and information to the regional stakeholders for the benefit of the region. Proposals should demonstrate the approach and benefits of integration and implementation at the scale of the Regional Association (not sub-regional) 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 IOOS Regional Associations as representative of their stakeholders.

b) Regional participation in developing a standards-based data integration framework (DIF) for data streams, quality assurance procedures, and data delivery.

c) Generation of regional or appropriately-scaled products, including data and model output, and improved interoperability of these outputs based on emerging standards and protocols, to facilitate the development of value-added, targeted products for identified users.

For focus area two, NOAA seeks proposals that will provide information useful for selecting the most appropriate sensor technologies to study and monitor ocean and coastal environments, and to test, validate, and verify such technologies.

NOAA anticipates making six (6) total awards in response to this announcement - five (5) awards in focus area one and one (1) award in focus area two.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

A. Program Objective

On March 24, 2009, Congress passed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009, which includes authorization for the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) as part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Designed to be user-driven and provide sustained data and information in forms and at rates required by decision makers, 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 Nino event.

To provide the data at the time and space scales required by these decisions, 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 (Ocean.US, 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) are currently 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 and those infrastructure components managed at the regional level, termed Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (RCOOS). The two are co-dependent components of a national 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) Accurate and timely ocean observations are made available through a common data integration framework to a range of consumers including national, state, and local governmental; operational; scientific; and commercial entities.

c) IOOS data are integrated into user-specified tools and information products (observations, model output, forecasts) at local and regional scales and made available to stakeholders.

Accomplishing these objectives will require the IOOS Regional Associations to coordinate efforts across and among IOOS Regions and with NOAA and other Federal IOOS Partners 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 and clear documentation of how these activities link to or extend from data management priorities identified at the Regional DIF Integration Workshop (March 10-11, 2009, in press).

-Generation of regional or appropriately-scaled products, including data and model output, that facilitate the development of value-added targeted products for identified users, and documented progress towards improved interoperability of model outputs and related products based on emerging IOOS protocols and standards.

B. Program Priorities

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.

1. Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems by Geography

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 build upon prior investments in regional observing systems. For this announcement, NOAA requests single-year proposals for the following regions: Northeast (Maine to Rhode Island), Mid-Atlantic (Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras), Southern California (Point Conception to the Mexico border), Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon, and northern California), and Pacific Islands (Hawaii). NOAA also desires to further the development, implementation and operation of those assets for the benefit of the regions. It is imperative that these 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 priorities. This entails that system design, operation, and information delivery be done in a manner that takes advantage of existing capabilities and assets within the region, including data integration frameworks already established and those presently being improved through community efforts that target Data Management and Communication goals for IOOS. 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-year cooperative agreements that will assist in the implementation and development of the regional component of IOOS in the geographic areas identified above. Proposals that work with the Regional Associations to test, validate, and verify ocean observing sensors will also be considered. NOAA expects to fund five (5) awards. Funding amounts will range from approximately $500,000 to $3,000,000 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) Demonstrate 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, especially those identified at the IOOS Regional DIF Implementation Workshop (March 10-11, 2009, in press).

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 focus area must demonstrate how the project builds on and furthers prior progress in observing system development funded by this agency. It is expected that projects address the substantiated requirements of stakeholders as determined by the IOOS Regional Associations and that project personnel will fully coordinate and collaborate with the appropriate Regional Associations.

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), and the priorities identified at the IOOS Regional DIF Implementation Workshop (March 10-11, 2009, in press). Recipients are expected to participate in community endeavors to advance the DMAC component of IOOS. It is expected that data collected by the applicants will be made widely available via existing avenues, such as the NOAA National Data Buoy Center, NOAA Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services, services being developed for the IOOS Data Integration Framework, and 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, and in systems that address integration across regional and national priorities, such as climate change, alternative energy, harmful algal bloom forecasting, coastal marine ecosystem assessments, and coastal inundation modeling.

Observing systems should consist of multiple platforms and sensors, including

autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), High Frequency Radar (HFR), satellites, and in situ measurements from buoys and gauges, among others. Award recipients are expected to share these interests and to identify the specific means within funding applications to accomplish these objectives.

2. Verification and validation of sensors for coastal and ocean observing systems

Testing and development of sensor technologies that are effective, reliable, and appropriate for the study and monitoring of coastal and ocean environments is essential to a sustained and operational coastal and ocean observing system.

Through this funding announcement, NOAA seeks to further the testing, development, implementation and operation of sensors for coastal and ocean observing systems. NOAA intends to fund one (1) award from this focus area in an amount ranging from $500,000 to $3,000,000.

Proposals submitted to this focus area must demonstrate how the project:

1. Provides a test-bed for verification and validation of sensors for coastal and ocean observing systems in different environments;

2. Builds capacity related to development and use of sensors for coastal and ocean observing systems; and

3. Makes information on such technologies widely available to the community.

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).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for all awards is subject to the availability of appropriations. The anticipated federal funding per award (min-max) is approximately $500,000 to $3,000,000 per year. The anticipated number of awards ranges from five (5) to six (6),

approximately, and will be adjusted based on available funding.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications should cover a project period of one year.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications should be written as cooperative agreements and the proposal should clearly identify this funding instrument in the proposal abstract and cover sheet. 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 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; coordinate with other Federal agencies towards regional and national IOOS objectives, and/or designing of Geographic Information System (GIS), Internet products, and system architectures. If the NOAA IOOS Program Office 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. If requesting funds under this award, federal partners must identify the relevant statutory authorities that will allow for the receipt of funds.

If a federal partner is a NOAA office, the funds will be transferred internally. If the Federal partner is an agency other than NOAA, they must demonstrate that they have legal authority to accept funds in excess of their appropriation. Because they would be receiving funds from a non-Federal source, the Economy Act (31 USC 1535) would not be an appropriate authority.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There is no requirement for cost sharing.

NOAA appreciates that IOOS Regional Associations are seeking additional support (in-kind or cash) to support development of regional observing systems under the umbrella of IOOS. While a cost share of funding is not required, applicants are encouraged to provide a description of complementary funding and in-kind contributions from project partners.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

N/A

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages for proposals are available through Grants.gov APPLY. If an applicant does not have Internet access, application packages can be requested from Gabrielle Canonico, NOAA IOOS; 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1225, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910; or by phone at 301-427-2428, fax at 301-427-2073, or e-mail at Gabrielle.Canonico@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

If an applicant chooses to submit via surface mail to the NOAA IOOS Program, one set of originals (signed) and two copies of the proposal and related forms are required. No e-mail or fax copies will be accepted. Application packages submitted by mail must be received by the NOAA IOOS Program no later than 5:00 p.m. ET, October 30, 2009. Correspondence should be directed to the attention of Gabrielle Canonico, NOAA IOOS; 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1225, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910; or by phone at 301-427-2428, fax at 301-427-2073, or e-mail at Gabrielle.Canonico@noaa.gov.

Applications that do not include all required documentation and information as listed below will not be reviewed.

Letter of Intent: Letters of Intent are not requested under this announcement.

Proposal: Proposal narrative must total no more than 20 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font). The 20-page limit does not include the proposal title page, a table of contents, 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) and may not exceed 50 pages in length.

Applicants should paginate their proposal and any appendices. Appendices may be paginated as stand alone documents (individually) or collectively. Applicants should present their workplan in priority order such that if less money is available than is requested the process of modifying proposals is simplified.

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 (cooperative agreement), and funding request. If funds are to be transferred to a NOAA partner on the project, also state the amount to NOAA on the cover.

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. Recipients will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports in which progress against these goals and objectives will be reported.

b. 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 efforts.

c. 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.

d. 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. If the project includes federal partners, the roles and responsibilities of the federal partners must be clearly identified.

e. 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.

f. Milestone Schedule. Display time lines for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products, and key project outcomes.

g. 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.

Applicants must itemize and describe the intended use of equipment costing $5,000 or greater that will be purchased under the award; applicants should provide a brief narrative in the proposal and detailed budget information in the appendix. Applicants must complete a lease versus purchase analysis for any equipment $5,000 or greater. The applicant, to the extent possible, is requested to state who will be requested to retain ownership of any equipment purchased through grant funds after the project ends.

The budget narrative must also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, the number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If actual trip details are unknown, applicants must state the basis for the proposed travel charges. Applicants should allocate travel funds for any coordination meetings at regional or national levels. Foreign travel must receive prior approval, and therefore, should be included in the proposal to avoid having to request prior approval after the project starts. Applicants may factor in travel costs for participation in a NOAA Grants Management Division workshop for recipients.

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.

Additional detailed budget information, including a description of complementary funding and in-kind contributions from project partners, should be included in an appendix (see IV.B.4 for additional information).

4. Appendices

a. Detailed Budget Information, including budgets of subawards and contracts, information on equipment costing $5,000 or greater, detailed information on travel, etc. Information should include the names of all entities receiving funds, the locations of the entities receiving funds (city, state, and Congressional district), and the locations of the primary places of performance under the contract/subaward. In this appendix, the budget narrative also shall clearly identify the priority and 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.

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.

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 website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.gc.noaa.gov/documents/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf , and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.hss.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 Helen Farr, SSMC4, Room 11209, 1305 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. The valid OMB Control Number is 0648-0538, which expires on June 30, 2009.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service on or before 5 p.m. EDT, October 30, 2009. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

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 (SPOC) 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

None

All proposal package material, including any letters of support, must be submitted through Grants.gov. Applicants without internet access may submit proposals by surface mail to Gabrielle Canonico, NOAA IOOS; 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1225, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. No e-mail or fax copies will be accepted.

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.

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.)

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (35 percent): This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, State, or local activities. Questions relevant to this criterion include: Will the proposed project achieve the specific program goals as stated in the announcement, including objectives for designing and implementing the regional component of the IOOS? Does the proposal demonstrate broad-based support from a range of stakeholders (e.g. industry, state and local agencies, other federal agencies, user groups), which might include complementary funding, in-kind contributions, and/or other types of participation?

2. Technical and scientific merit (35 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. Proposals will also be evaluated on how effectively the proposed project builds upon prior NOAA investments in regional ocean and coastal observing technologies and systems. 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 (10 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: 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 (10 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: Are the cost, schedule, and deliverables clear, reasonable, and logically

presented? 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 (10 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

Proposal Review and Selection Process: An initial administrative screening is conducted to determine compliance with requirements/completeness. All proposals will be evaluated and individually scored in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by at least three independent peer evaluations. The merit reviewers' 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 partners

c. By project types

d. By research areas

e. By type of institutions

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 October 1, 2010; or the first day of the month of any month after October 2010.

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 NOAA IOOS 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 February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696). 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 Contacts

For questions regarding this announcement, contact: Gabrielle Canonico, NOAA IOOS; 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1225, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910; or by phone at 301-427-2428, fax at 301-427-2073, or e-mail at Gabrielle.Canonico@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 NOAA IOOS Program Office will not release the names of applicants submitting 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)."

References:

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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/docs/march2005_dmac_plan/dmac_covers_3.15.05.pdf

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