

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name(s):** Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research (CSCOR), National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Oceans and Human Health Initiative, External Grants Program
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** OHHI 2005
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 11.478, Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research, Coastal Ocean Program
- **Program Authorities:** Public Law 108-447
- **Dates:** Proposals must be received by NCCOS/CSCOR/COP office by 3 p.m., local time, April 26, 2005.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The purpose of this document is to advise the public that NOS/CSCOR is soliciting proposals for the Oceans and Human Health Initiative External Grants Program. This funding opportunity is offered as part of NOAA's new Oceans and Human Health Initiative (OHHI), recently established by the Oceans and Human Health Act passed by Congress December 8, 2004.  
The OHHI is a competitive suite of programs designed to enhance understanding of the connections between the oceans and human health, with the goal of providing useful research and predictive information to NOAA, public health officials, and natural resource managers. For the purposes of this announcement, "oceans" are defined as inclusive of the Great Lakes, estuaries and the ocean. The OHHI is designed to enhance NOAA's capability in oceans and human health through partnerships with academia, the private sector, and other Federal, State, and local agencies. Toward that end, this funding opportunity is intended to

engage the non-federal research community in research across the physical, chemical, biological, medical, public health and social sciences on priority issues for the OHHI. A non-federal partner shall lead the proposal. Participation of federal scientist(s) on the team is allowed but no federal expenses will be covered. Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with the NOAA Oceans and Human Health Centers of Excellence (<http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/ohi/index.htm>), the National Science Foundation/National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Centers of Excellence in Oceans and Human Health, NOAA scientists and other federal and non-federal researchers working on OHHI or related issues as described in this announcement. Applicants will be required to provide a plan for management and submission of data to NOAA from any supported research, to participate in an annual OHHI research meeting, and to provide information for the development of an annual OHHI report required by Congress.

- **Electronic Access:** The following web sites furnish additional information on OHHI, and on the OHHI External Grants Program: <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/ohi/index.htm> and <http://www.cop.noaa.gov/>

#### FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

#### I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective: The OHHI is a competitive suite of programs designed to enhance understanding of the connections between the oceans and human health, with the goal of providing useful research and predictive information to NOAA, public health officials and natural resource managers. For the purposes of this announcement, "oceans" are defined as inclusive of the Great Lakes, estuaries and the ocean. The OHHI is designed to enhance NOAA's capability in oceans and human health through partnerships with academia, the private sector, and other Federal, State, and local agencies. Toward that end, this funding opportunity is intended to engage the non-federal research community in research across the physical, chemical, biological, medical, public health and social sciences on priority issues for the OHHI. A non-federal partner shall lead the proposal. Participation of federal scientist(s) on the team is allowed but no federal expenses will be covered. Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with the NOAA Oceans and Human Health Centers of Excellence

(<http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/ohi/index.htm>), National Science Foundation/National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Centers of Excellence in Oceans and Human Health, NOAA scientists and other federal and non-federal researchers working on OHHI or related issues as described in this announcement. Applicants will be expected to provide a plan for management and submission to NOAA of data from any supported research, to participate in an annual OHHI research meeting, and to provide information for the development of an annual OHHI report required by Congress.

#### B. Program Priorities:

The OHHI is looking for innovative and leading-edge research proposals to advance its objectives. Examples of desirable approaches include:

- Framing the research proposal in a multidisciplinary, ecosystem context so that complex cause-and-effect mechanisms and ecosystem pathways that underlie ocean and human health issues can be more completely understood and thereby managed;
- Developing or utilizing new technologies that permit more rapid and accurate detection of ocean health threats (e.g. via observing systems) or that lead to improved understanding (including predictive capabilities) of processes leading to ocean-related health threats;
- Exploring emerging threats that may not now be well understood but could pose serious threats to human health in the near future and may be more effectively prevented or mitigated with increased scientific understanding.

The OHHI has several priority areas described below by focus questions and specific areas of interest; these can be examined individually or in combination:

Pathogens. What is the risk of human disease occurrence as a function of exposure to pathogens in marine and coastal environments (including water contact recreation and consumption of fish, shellfish, and other marine organisms)? Of specific interest are: 1) development of methods to rapidly identify and determine the source of pathogens (viral, bacterial, and protozoan) of human or animal origin; 2) development of models, forecasts, and other approaches (including integration of ecosystem and epidemiological modeling) for incorporating

information on pathogens in the marine environment into assessments of ecological condition and related public health threats; and 3) persistence and fate of pathogens that affect humans in coastal environments including evaluating the effects of human activities (recreation, pollutant inputs, etc.) and behavior on pathogen abundance and transmission.

Marine Biotoxins. What is the risk of human disease as a function of exposure to marine biotoxins in the environment, and how do the effects of specific environmental stressors (e.g., changes in habitats, nutrient enrichment, environmental pollutants, climate, extreme events, land use, etc.) affect the risk of human exposure to biotoxins? Of specific interest are: 1) the development of methods to rapidly identify biotoxins present in the marine environment, marine organisms and humans; 2) identification of new toxins and determination of modes of action of all toxins; 3) effects of toxins on humans and model or sentinel organisms; 4) incorporation of information on marine biotoxins into risk assessment models for natural resource and public health management.

Chemical Pollutants. What are the ecological and human health risks from contaminants in the marine and Great Lakes environment? Of specific interest are: 1) quantifying emerging chemical contaminants of concern and their associated risks including, but not limited to, pharmaceuticals and personal care products, flame retardants, current-use pesticides, surfactants and stain repellants; 2) mathematical modeling, in an ecosystem context, of fate and effects of contaminants that pose a serious health risk; 3) developing biomarkers (sub-lethal measures) and appropriate test models (e.g. multiple generational tests, life cycle tests and food web/population tests) for assessing the effects of emerging and conventional contaminants of concern on estuarine/marine biota and humans; 4) development of analytical methods that will provide scientists and managers with more sensitive, accurate and inexpensive tests for contaminants that pose a human health risk in environmental matrices or in seafood.

Seafood and Public Health. What is the potential for seafood to be a vector for chemical contaminants, biotoxins, and microbial pathogens to humans? Of specific interest are: 1) identification of critical pathways, in an ecosystem context, by which contaminants, biotoxins, and pathogens of significant risk to human health accumulate in fish, shellfish, and other marine organisms consumed by humans; these pathways would ideally be quantified in an overall ecosystem modeling framework; 2)

identification and characterization of the role of wild and farmed shellfish and finfish as reservoirs of pathogens, biotoxins and/or contaminants that may be transmitted to humans, including an evaluation of measures that can be taken to reduce clearly identified risks and; 3) identification and characterization of the role of consumption of wild and farmed shellfish, finfish and other marine organisms in exposing humans to biotoxins leading to illness and death, including an evaluation of measures that can be taken to reduce the risks.

Sentinel and Model Species. How can investigations of sentinel species (living in or dependent upon estuarine, coastal, Great Lake or oceanic ecosystems) better inform our understanding of risks to human health or inform our understanding of ocean health as it relates directly or indirectly to changes in risk for human or public health? Of specific interest are: 1) whether there are emerging diseases or health effects that can be detected in sentinel species (including finfish, shellfish, marine mammals and other marine organisms) that indicate future threats to human health; 2) whether sentinel species can be used to indicate future threats to, or improvements in, ecosystem integrity that are linked to public or human health; and 3) development of useful models of human disease processes and mechanisms resulting from any of the marine stressors described in this announcement.

Marine Natural Products, Pharmaceuticals, and Biomedical Research. What is the biomedical value of marine natural products (including, but not limited to, providing pharmaceuticals, medical devices, molecular probes, nutritional supplements, diagnostics and pigments)? Of specific interest are: 1) the evaluation of potential biomedical compounds produced by, or extracted from, organisms in marine environments; 2) the application of advanced biomolecular, chemical or other approaches to elucidate modes of action of marine natural compounds derived from marine organisms.

All research proposals should include outreach and education components that facilitate the transfer of research findings to user groups such as public health officials and natural resource managers at local, state and federal levels. Ideally, these user groups would be engaged early in the research process, with their documented interest in the outcome of the proposed research included in the proposal.

C. Program Authorities: Public Law 108-447

## II. Award Information

### A. Funding availability

Funding is contingent upon availability of Federal appropriations. NOAA is committed to continual improvement of the grants process, and to accelerated award of financial assistance to qualified recipients in accordance with recommendations of the NOAA Program Review Team (information available at [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)). In meeting these responsibilities, this solicitation announces that: individual award amounts will be determined by the proposals, after negotiation; and that total available funds of approximately \$5.880 million are available to support proposed projects, which can have durations from 1-3 years. Approximately 5 to 20 awards are expected from this announcement.

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs, if this program fails to receive funding or is cancelled because of other agency priorities.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to provide an award for any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If any costs are incurred by a proposer -- prior to receiving an award agreement that is signed by an authorized NOAA official, the proposer does so solely at the risk of these costs not being covered under the award.

Publication of this notice does not obligate any part of the agency to provide any specific award or to obligate any part of the entire amount of funds available. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures that are applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

### B. Project/Award period

Full proposals may cover a project/award period of up to 3 years. Multi-year awards may be funded incrementally on an annual basis, but, once awarded, those awards will not compete for funding in subsequent years. Each award shall require a project description that can be easily divided into annual increments of meaningful work representing solid accomplishments (if prospective funding is not made available, or is discontinued).

The following is a description of multi-year awards for those applicants subsequently recommended for award. Multi-year awards are awards which have an award/project period of more than 12 months of activity. Multi-year awards are partially funded when the awards are approved, and are subsequently funded in increments. One of the purposes of multi-year awards is to reduce the administrative burden on both the applicant and the operating unit. For example, with proper planning, one application can suffice for the entire multi-year award period. Funding for each year's activity is contingent upon the availability of funds from Congress, satisfactory performance, submission and approval of a progress report, and is at the sole discretion of the agency. Multi-year funding is appropriate for projects to be funded for 2 to 3 years. Once approved, full applications are not required for the continuations into the out years.

### C. Type of funding instrument

Funding instruments available are Research Project Grants and Cooperative Agreements.

(1) Research Project Grants: A research project grant is one in which substantial programmatic involvement by NOAA is not anticipated by the recipient during the project period. Applicants for grants must demonstrate an ability to conduct the proposed research with minimal assistance, other than financial support, from NOAA.

(2) Cooperative Agreements: A cooperative agreement implies that NOAA will assist recipients in conducting the proposed research. The application should be presented in a manner that demonstrates the applicant's ability to address the research problem in a collaborative manner with NOAA. A cooperative agreement is appropriate when substantial NOAA involvement is anticipated. This means that the recipient can expect substantial agency collaboration, participation, or intervention in project performance. Substantial involvement exists when: responsibility for the management, control, direction, or performance of the project is shared by the assisting agency and the recipient; or the assisting agency has the right to intervene (including interruption or modification) in the conduct or performance of project activities.

(3) Determination of which instrument to use: Applicants must specify the type of award for which they are applying, either a grant or a cooperative agreement. The funding agency will review the applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria. Before issuing awards, NOAA will determine whether a

grant or cooperative agreement is the appropriate instrument based upon the need for substantial NOAA involvement in the project.

(4) Applications will be competed against one another.

(5) OHHI funds will be provided solely through CSCOR. Other Federal funds may be used to support projects through NOAA partnerships with other Federal offices and agencies.

#### D. Permits and Approvals

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work to be conducted, with special, but not exclusive, attention given to permits associated with: a) the Institutional Review Board (regarding research on human subjects); b) the Marine Mammals Act; c) the Endangered Species Act; and d) the National Environmental Policy Act. Permits for proposed projects can be held by any formally and substantially involved co-investigator, provided that the co-investigator is receiving funds associated directly with this announcement and related awards. Only one co-investigator needs to hold a valid permit for operations conducted under the proposal and related awards. Applicants are expected to design their proposed operations so that they minimize any potential adverse impact on the environment. Documentation of all required permit requests and all existing approvals must be submitted with the proposal. The submitted documentation will not count against any page limitations. Any required permit approval that is not received by one of the co-investigators (and faxed to the Program Officer by 3:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time, June 30, 2005) will preclude any further consideration of the proposal for funding, regardless of the point of the peer review process on that date.

Applications will be reviewed to confirm that they have sufficient environmental impact documentation for program staff to designate the proposal as Categorically Excluded from further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, or as needing an Environmental Assessment in conformance with requirements of NEPA. For those applications needing an Environmental Assessment, and not already having it done, by the proposal due date, affected applicants will be allowed to prepare the assessment, and fax a copy to the Program Officer until 3:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time, June 30, 2005.

Failure to apply for and/or obtain Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analysis where necessary (i.e. NEPA environmental assessment) will preclude and further

consideration of the proposed project for funding. No waiver will be granted.

### III. Eligibility Information

#### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, hospitals, other non-profit institutions, commercial organizations, state and local governments, and Indian Tribal Governments. Minority Serving Institutions are encouraged to apply(<http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/%7Egrants/noaa-msi.html>). Federal agencies are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this notice.

#### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements

None

#### C. Other Requirements

Each proposal must also include the fifteen elements listed under Proposal Submission/Required Elements, (a)-(o) or it will be returned to sender without further consideration.

### IV. Application and Submission Information

#### A. Address to Submit Application Package

Applications submitted in response to this announcement are strongly encouraged to be submitted through the Grants.gov Web site. Electronic Access to the full funding announcement for this program is available via the Grants.gov Web site:

<http://www.grants.gov> This announcement will also be available at the NOAA Web site:

<http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/%7Egrants/index.html> or by contacting the program official identified below.

After October 1, 2004, you will be able to access, download and submit electronic grant applications for NOAA Programs in this announcement at <http://www.grants.gov>. The closing dates will be the same as for the paper submissions noted in this announcement. NOAA strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

Getting started with Grants.gov is easy! Go to <http://www.Grants.gov>. There are two key features on the site: Find Grant Opportunities and Apply for Grants. Everything else on the site is designed to support these two features and your

use of them. While you can begin searching for grant opportunities for which you would like to apply immediately, it is recommended that you complete the remaining Get Started steps sooner rather than later, so that when you find an opportunity for which you would like to apply, you are ready to go.

Get Started Step 1B Find Grant Opportunity for Which You Would Like To Apply. Start your search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities and register to receive automatic e-mail notifications of new grant opportunities or any modifications to grant opportunities as they are posted to the site by clicking the Find Grant Opportunities tab at the top of the page.

Get Started Step 2B Register With Central Contractor Registry (CCR) Your organization will also need to be registered with Central Contractor Registry. You can register with them online. This will take about 30 minutes. You should receive your CCR registration within 3 business days. Important: You must have a DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet before you register with CCR. Many organizations already have a DUNS number. To determine if your organization already has a DUNS number or to obtain a DUNS number, contact Dun & Bradstreet at 1- 866-705-5711. This will take about 10 minutes and is free of charge. Be sure to complete the Marketing Partner ID (MPIN) and Electronic Business Primary Point of Contact fields during the CCR registration process. These are mandatory fields that are required when submitting grant applications through Grants.gov.

Get Started Step 3B Register With the Credential Provider You must register with a Credential Provider to receive a username and password. This will be required to securely submit your grant application.

Get Started Step 4B Register with Grants.gov The final step in the Get Started process is to register with Grants.gov. This will be required to submit grant applications on behalf of your organization. After you have completed the registration process, you will receive e-mail notification confirming that you are able to submit applications through Grants.gov.

Get Started Step 5B Log on to Grants.gov After you have registered with Grants.gov, you can log on to Grants.gov to verify if you have registered successfully, to check application status, and to update information in your applicant profile, such as your name, telephone number, e-mail address, and title. In the future, you will have the ability to determine if you are authorized to submit applications through Grants.gov on behalf of your organization.

If Internet Access is unavailable, hard copies of proposals will also be accepted - a signed original and two copies on or

before the due date and time specified above. Included must be any color or high-resolution graphics, unusually sized materials, or otherwise unusual materials that are part of the proposal. For color graphics, either color originals or color copies can be submitted. Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of full proposals will not be accepted. Submit the hard copy original and the 2 copies of your proposal to Attn. Oceans and Human Health Initiative, Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research (N/SCI2), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1305 East-West Highway, SSMC4, 8th Floor Station 8243, Silver Spring, MD 20910. If you are submitting hard copy proposals, you are encouraged but not required to submit an additional 15 copies, in order to facilitate the review process and ensure all color graphics and images are appropriately conveyed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Program Management Information: Hal Stanford, NCCOS HQ, 301-713-3020, ext.135, Internet: [Hal.Stanford@noaa.gov](mailto:Hal.Stanford@noaa.gov).

Business Management Information. Leslie McDonald, NCCOS/CSCOR/COP Grants Administrator, 301-713-3338/ext 155, Internet: [Leslie.Mcdonald@noaa.gov](mailto:Leslie.Mcdonald@noaa.gov).

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

It is strongly encouraged that applications responding to this announcement be submitted through the Grants.gov web site. The full funding announcement for this program is available via the Grants.gov Web site: <http://www.grants.gov>. This announcement can also be found at the NOAA Web site:

<http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/%7Egrants/index.html> or obtained by contacting the program official identified below.

If you are unable to access this information, you may call NCCOS/CSCOR at 301-713-3338 and leave a mailing request.

This announcement requires full proposals only. The provisions for proposal preparation provided here are mandatory. Proposals received after the published deadline (refer to DATES) or proposals that deviate from the prescribed format will be returned to the sender without further consideration.

Information regarding this announcement or additional background is available on the NCCOS/CSCOR Home Page

<http://www.cop.noaa.gov/> and on <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/ohi/index.htm>.

1. Proposals

Applications should be submitted through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) unless an applicant does not have internet access. In that

case, hard copy proposals will be accepted (refer to IV. Application and Submission Information).

## 2. Required Elements

For clarity in the submission of proposals, the following definitions are provided for recipient use: Funding and/or Budget Period - The period of time when Federal funding is available for obligation by the recipient. The funding period must always be specified in multi-year awards, using fixed year funds. This term may also be used to mean "budget period". A budget period is typically 12 months. Award and/or Project Period - The period established in the award document during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends. The term "award period" is also referred to as project period in 15 CFR 14.2(cc).

Each proposal must include the following fifteen elements or it will be returned to sender without further consideration:

(a) Standard Form 424. At time of proposal submission, all applicants anticipating direct funding shall submit the Standard Form, SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance," to indicate the total amount of funding proposed for the whole project period. This form is to be the cover page for the original proposal and all requested copies. Multi-institutional proposals must include signed SF-424 forms from all institutions requesting funding.

(b) Signed Summary title page. The title page should be signed by the Principal Investigator (PI). The Summary title page identifies the project's title, starting with the acronym: OHHI 2005, a short title (less than 50 characters), and the PI's name and affiliation, complete address, phone, FAX and E-mail information. The requested budget for each fiscal year should be included on the Summary title page. Multi-institution proposals must also identify the lead investigator for each institution and the requested funding for each fiscal year for each institution on the title page, but no signatures are required on the title page from the additional institutions. Lead investigator and separate budget information is not requested on the title page for institutions that are proposed to receive funds through a subcontract to the lead institution; however, accompanying budget justification must be submitted for each subcontractor. For further details on budget information, please see Section (g) Budget of this Part.

(c) One-page abstract/project summary. A project summary (abstract) to be submitted at time of application, shall include an introduction of the problem, rationale, scientific objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work to

be completed. The summary should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, institution(s), investigator(s), total proposed cost, and budget period. It should be written in the third person. The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly and allows the respondents to summarize these key points in their own words.

(d) Project description. The description of the proposed project must be complete and divided into annual increments of work that include: identification of the problem, scientific objectives, statement of work, proposed methodology, relevance to the Oceans and Human Health Initiative goals and its scientific priorities. The project description (including relevant results from prior support) should not exceed 25 pages. Page limits are inclusive of figures, and other visual materials, but are exclusive of references, a milestone chart, letters of collaboration from unfunded collaborators, letters of endorsement, and curriculum vitae which may not exceed 5 pages for each principal, co-, or senior investigator.

This section should clearly identify project management with a description of the functions of each PI within a team. It should provide a full scientific justification for the research, rather than simply reiterating justifications presented in this document. It should also include:

(i) The objective for the period of proposed work and its expected significance;

(ii) The relation to the present state of knowledge in the field and relation to previous work and work in progress by the proposing principal investigator(s);

(iii) A discussion of how the proposed project lends value to the OHHI goals;

(iv) Potential coordination with other investigators.

(e) References cited. Reference information is required. Each reference must include the names of all authors in the same sequence they appear in the publications, the article title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publications. While there is no established page limitation, this section should include bibliographic citations only and should not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the 25 page proposal descriptions.

(f) Milestone chart. Provide time lines of major tasks covering the duration of the proposed project.

(g) Standard Form 424A. At time of proposal submission, all applicants are required to submit a SF424A Budget Form for each fiscal year increment. Multi-institution proposals must include a SF424A for each institution, and multi-investigator proposals using a lead investigator with a contractor/subgrantee approach must submit a SF424A for each contractor/subgrantee.

Each contractor or sub grantee should be listed as a separate item. Describe products/services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Provide separate budgets for each sub grantee or contractor regardless of the dollar value and indicate the basis for the cost estimates. List all sub grantee or contractor costs under line item 6.f. contractual on the SF424A.

(h) Budget Justification. All applications must include a budget narrative and a justification to support all proposed budget categories.

Any ship time needs must be clearly identified in the proposed budget. The proposer is responsible for requesting ship time through appropriate channels and for meeting all requirements to ensure the availability of requested ship time. Copies of relevant ship time request forms should be included with the proposal.

(i) Biographical sketch. All principal, co-, and senior investigators must provide summaries of up to 2 pages that include the following:

(i)    A listing of professional and academic credentials and mailing address;

(ii) A list of up to five publications most closely related to the proposed project and five other significant publications. Additional lists of publications and lectures should not be included;

(iii) A list of all persons (including their organizational affiliation) in alphabetical order, with whom the investigator has collaborated on a project or publication within the last 48 months, including collaborators on the proposal and persons listed in the publications. If no collaborators exist, this should be so indicated;

(iv) A list of persons (including their organizational affiliation) with whom the individual has had an association like thesis advisor or postdoctoral scholar sponsor;

(v)    A list of the names and institutions of the individual's own graduate and postgraduate advisors.

The information contained in the Biographical Sketch is used to ensure correct institutional information and additional material to assist in identifying potential conflicts or bias in the selection of reviewers.

(j) Current and pending support. Describe all current and pending federal financial/funding support for all principal and co-investigators, including subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. Describe the capability of the investigator and collaborators to complete the proposed work in light of present commitments to other projects. Therefore, please discuss the percentage of time investigators and

collaborators have devoted to other Federal or non-Federal projects, as compared to the time that will be devoted to the project solicited under this notice.

(k) Data Management Plan. In conformance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements section 15 CFR 14.36, any data collected in projects supported by NCCOS/CSCOR shall be delivered to a National Data Center (NDC), such as the National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC), and the National Climate Data Center (NCDC), in a format to be determined by the institution, the NDC, and the Program Officer. It is the responsibility of the institution for the delivery of these data. A plan for data management and submission that includes the timeline for delivery and the location is to be detailed by the applicants; the DOC will not provide additional support for delivery beyond the award. Additionally, all biological cultures established, molecular probes developed, genetic sequences identified, mathematical models constructed, or other resulting information products established through support provided by NCCOS/CSCOR shall be made available to the general research community at no or modest handling charge (to be determined by the institution, Program Officer, and DOC).

(l) Evaluation of Project. The applicant is required to provide a plan for evaluation of project accomplishments with specific criteria and performance measures. If the project is selected for funding the evaluation plan may be further refined with the Program Manager.

(m) Federal, state and local government activities. The proposal should include a list of related Federal, state and local government activities, including other efforts funded through OHHI, that the proposed work would affect and describe the relationship between the proposed project and those plans or activities.

(n) List of suggested reviewers. The cover letter may include a list of individuals qualified and suggested to review the proposal. It also may include a list of individuals that applicants would prefer to not review the proposals. Such lists may be considered at the discretion of the Program Manager.

(o) Proposal format and assembly. Proposals submitted via Grants.gov APPLY should follow the format guidelines set out on the [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) Web site. If internet access is not available to the applicant hard copy proposals should be clamped in the upper left-hand corner, but left unbound. The 2 additional copies can be stapled in the upper left-hand corner or bound on the left edge. Electronically submitted or hard copy page margin must be one inch (2.5 cm) at the top, bottom,

left, and right, and the typeface standard 12-point size must be clear and easily legible. Proposals should be single spaced.

#### C. Submission Date and Time

The deadline for receipt of proposals at the NCCOS/CSCOR office is 3 p.m., local time, April 26th, 2005. (Note that late-arriving applications provided to a delivery service on or before April 26<sup>th</sup> with delivery guaranteed by 3 p.m., local time on April 26<sup>th</sup>, will be accepted for review if the applicant can document that the application was provided to the delivery service with delivery to the address listed below guaranteed by the specified closing date and time; and, in any event, the proposals are received in the NCCOS/CSCOR office by 3 p.m., local time, no later than 2 business days following the closing date.)

#### D. Intergovernmental review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(a) (2), an opportunity for public notice and comment is not required for this notice relating to grants, benefits and contracts. Because this notice is exempt from the notice and comment provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required, and none has been prepared. It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

#### E. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Costs: Regardless of any approved indirect cost rate applicable to the award, the maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which DOC will reimburse the recipient shall be the lesser of (a) the line item amount for the Federal share of indirect costs contained in the approved budget of the award or (b) the Federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on the indirect cost rate approved by a cognizant or oversight Federal agency and current at the time the cost was incurred, provided the rate is approved on or before the award end date.

#### V. Application Review Information

## A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals: This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities (30 percent):

2. Technical/scientific merit: This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives (30 percent).

3. Overall qualifications of applicants: This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project (20 percent).

4. Project costs: The Budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame (10 percent).

5. Outreach and education: NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources (10 percent). For the Oceans and Human Health Initiative External Grants Program this includes engaging appropriate public health, natural resource management, or other partners to ensure provision of useful information for policy and decision-making, or relevance of research findings for public or private sector use.

## B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. All proposals will be evaluated and scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by independent peer mail review and/or by independent peer panel review. Both Federal and non-Federal experts in the field may be used in this process. The peer mail reviewers will be individuals with expertise in the subjects addressed by particular proposals. Each mail reviewer will see only certain individual proposals within his or her area of expertise, and score them individually on a scale of one to five, where scores represent respectively: Excellent (5), Very Good (4), Good (3), Fair (2), Poor (1).

The peer panel will be comprised of 10 to 20 individuals, with each individual having expertise in a separate area, so

that the panel, as a whole, covers a range of scientific expertise. The panel will have access to all mail reviews of proposals, and will use the mail reviews, if available, in discussion and evaluation of the entire slate of proposals. All proposals will be evaluated and scored individually. The peer panel shall rate the proposals using the evaluation criteria and scores provided above. The individual peer panelist scores shall be averaged for each application and presented to the Program Officer. No consensus advice will be given by the independent peer mail review or the review panel.

The Program Officer will neither vote nor score proposals as part of the independent peer panel nor participate in discussion of the merits of the proposal. Those proposals receiving an average panel score of "Fair" or "Poor" will not be given further consideration, and proposers will be notified of non-selection.

For the proposals rated by the panel as either "Excellent", "Very Good", or "Good", the Program Officer will (a) rank the proposals to be recommended for funding by average panel ratings, and/or by applying the project selection factors listed below; (b) determine the total duration of funding for each proposal; and (c) determine the amount of funds available for each proposal subject to the availability of fiscal year funds. Awards may not necessarily be made in rank order. In addition, proposals rated by the panel as either "Excellent", "Very Good", or "Good" that are not funded in the current fiscal period, may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without having to repeat the competitive, review process.

Recommendations for funding are then forwarded to the selecting official, the Assistant Administrator (AA) of NOS, for the final funding decision. In making the final selections, the AA will award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the selection factors listed below.

Investigators may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), verbatim anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the proposer upon applicant request. Declined applications will be held in the NCCOS/CSCOR for the required 3 years in accordance with the current retention requirements, and then destroyed.

### C. Selection Factors

The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order to the

Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. A program officer may first make recommendations to the Selecting Official applying the selection factors below. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
  - a. Geographically
  - b. By type of institutions
  - c. By type of partners
  - d. By research areas
  - e. By project types
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies.
4. Program priorities and policy factors as set forth in section I.A. and B. and I.V.B.
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups.
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA 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

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will begin in April, 2005 with a projected start date of October 1, 2005. October 1, 2005 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the Program Officer.

## VI. Award Administration Information

### A. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is provided by postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization.

### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389) are applicable to this solicitation.

#### Limitation of Liability

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

#### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6\\_TOC.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc\\_ceq.htm](http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm)). Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of 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 an application.

Please note that NOAA is developing a policy on internal overhead charges, NOAA scientists considering submission of proposals should contact the appropriate NCCOS/CSCOR Program Officer for the latest information.

### C. Reporting

All financial and progress reports shall be submitted electronically through the Grants Online system unless the recipient does not have internet access. In that case, hard copy financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer and Performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer. Financial reports are semi-annual and Performance reports are annual.

### VII. Agency Contact(s)

Program Management. Hal Stanford, NCCOS HQ, 301-713-3020 ext. 135, Internet: [Hal.Stanford@noaa.gov](mailto:Hal.Stanford@noaa.gov).

Business Management Information. Leslie McDonald, NCCOS/CSCOR/COP Grants Administrator, 301-713-3338 ext 155, Internet: [Leslie.Mcdonald@noaa.gov](mailto:Leslie.Mcdonald@noaa.gov)

### VIII. Other Information

#### Collection of information requirements

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

This notification involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0043, 0348-0044, 0348-0040 and 0348-0046.

Send comments regarding these requirements and the burden estimate, or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to [leslie.mcdonald@noaa.gov](mailto:leslie.mcdonald@noaa.gov).