

2018 Marine Education and Training Mini Grant Program

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: 2018 Marine Education and Training Mini Grant Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-PIRO-2018-2005476

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.452, Unallied Industry Projects

Dates: Proposals must be received by <http://www.Grants.gov>, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., Hawaii Standard Time, on February 21, 2018. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

When developing your application submission timeline, please keep in mind that you are encouraged to apply through the www.grants.gov website. This electronic submission system is relatively complex for first time users and involves several preliminary registrations to be completed before your application can be submitted (2-4 weeks). Please review section IV G. Other Submission Requirements for additional detail.

If you have already used the grants.gov website, the required registrations may have already been completed. Please allow sufficient time for the application to be submitted electronically and for possible computer delays.

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 not adhering to postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected and returned to the sender without further consideration.

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA/NMFS) is soliciting competitive applications for the 2018 Pacific Islands Region Marine Education and Training (MET) Mini-Grant Program. Projects are being solicited to improve communication, education, and training on marine resource issues throughout the region and increase scientific education for marine-related professions among coastal community residents, including indigenous Pacific islanders, Native Hawaiians and other underrepresented groups in the region.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NOAA/NMFS is soliciting competitive proposals for grants and cooperative agreements that will increase the sustainability, viability, and visibility of fishing and marine resource issues and communities in the Pacific Islands Region (PIR). Projects should prepare communities for employment in marine related professions, increase seafood and fishing safety, marketing, or management; or increase the sustainability of fishing practices through technology improvements or data collection. All projects must be developed with and identify beneficial and appropriate partnerships. These partnerships may include various government agencies (at all levels), non-governmental community organizations (NGO's), traditional and local knowledge practitioners, researchers, or industry. All projects must include partnerships that contribute to the success of the project and build on, or expand relationships in the fishing and marine community.

B. Program Priorities

All projects, regardless of priority, must leverage and develop effective partnerships. These partnerships may include: government agencies (island, local, state, or federal), non-governmental community organizations (NGO's), local and traditional knowledge practitioners, researchers, academic institutions, and industry. The partnerships should contribute to the success of the project and build on, or expand relationships in the fishing and marine community. In addition, projects may leverage NOAA's existing partnership efforts including: Habitat Blueprint priority areas, Sentinel Sites, other previous funded MET projects, and coral reef conservation programs that target sites of high risk from major threats. Projects are also encouraged to be place-based and community-driven, as appropriate.

Note that MET projects must include non-federal matching funds (See section III B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements for additional information), and in-kind support from partner organizations and non-federal agencies count towards this requirement. Projects must improve communication, education, and training on marine resource issues throughout the region and increase scientific education for marine-related professions among coastal community residents. Projects must fall into one or more of the following priorities, which are listed in no particular rank order of preference (i.e., no one factor carrying a higher priority than any another). If a project meets more than one of the listed priorities, the applicant should list first the priority that most closely reflects the objectives of the proposed project. Other priorities addressed in proposals should then be listed as applicable.

1. Marine Science and Technology: Education and training projects that are focused on preparing community residents for employment in marine related professions, including marine resource conservation and management, marine science, marine technology, and maritime operations.

2. Fisheries and Seafood-related Training: Projects addressing fishery observation, seafood safety and seafood marketing, focused on increasing the involvement of coastal community residents in fishing, fishery management, and seafood-related operations.

3. Outreach: Projects to educate and inform consumers about the quality and sustainability of wild fish or fish products farmed through responsible aquaculture in Hawaii; Projects that promote community education and outreach related to safe fishing and boating practices.

4. Technology: Projects that, with the fishing industry, not only identify methods and technologies that will improve the data collection, quality, and reporting, but also increase the sustainability of fishing practices, and ultimately transfer such methods and technologies among fisheries sectors and to other nations in the Western, Northern and Central Pacific.

5. Local and Traditional Knowledge: Projects that enhance science-based management of fishery resources of the region through local and traditional knowledge, including Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian knowledge.

C. Program Authority

16 U.S.C. 1855(j)

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total funding available under this notice is anticipated to be approximately \$150,000. Approximately 8-10 awards are anticipated to be granted for FY 2018 under this competition. Actual funding availability for this program is contingent upon FY 2018 Federal appropriations. Proposals in excess of \$15,000 are unlikely to be funded. Award amounts will be determined by the proposals and available funds. There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by the same applicant; however, multiple applications submitted by the same applicant must clearly identify different projects. If an application for a financial assistance award is selected for funding, NOAA/NMFS has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, pre-award costs are not allowed under the award unless approved by the NOAA Grants Officer.

B. Project/Award Period

The project budget period is recommended to be 12 months in duration. September 1,

2018 is the earliest recommended start date to be used on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the NOAA Program Officer. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete. If an application is selected for initial funding, NOAA/NMFS has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

NOAA/NMFS will fund the projects under the 2018 Pacific Islands Region Marine Education and Training Mini-Grant Program as grants and/or cooperative agreements. The government will be substantially involved in the management and/or operation of the program if a project is funded through a cooperative agreement. This substantial involvement may include but is not limited to partnering in collaborative efforts and/or alignment of activities to meet program priorities. Substantial involvement may also include assisting in the development of educational materials.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are individuals, institutions of higher education, nonprofits, commercial organizations, state, local and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies and instrumentalities, including their employees, , are not eligible to apply. Eligible applicants are limited to projects within the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management areas.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

All applications and funded projects must provide matching contributions of at least 50% of the federal share (2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal). For example, if a project is requesting \$15,000 in federal funds, \$7,500 in non-federal funds must be provided by the applicant. Non-federal share may be provided as cash or in-kind contributions from the applicant or key program partners.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application package, consisting of the standard forms, i.e., SF-424, SF-

424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at <http://www.grants.gov>. Users of Grants.gov 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.

If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

If you do not have internet access, an application package may be received by contacting: Penny Larin, NOAA Federal Program Officer, Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1845 Wasp Blvd, Building 176, Honolulu, HI 96818, Phone: (808) 725-5057.

B. Content and Form of Application

Application Format:

All application materials should be submitted in Adobe PDF or a common word processing format, and when printed out should meet all format requirements. All pages must be no less than double-spaced printed or typed, printed or typed in at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out. Failure to follow these requirements will result in the rejection/return of the application.

A complete standard NOAA grant application package is required in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Applications that are not complete on the closing date of this announcement will not be reviewed. Your application must contain all required forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they **MUST** be signed in ink. Paper applications without inked signatures on their forms will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

Each application must include:

- Federal application forms, including:
 - SF-424
 - SF-424A, Budget Information, Non-construction Programs must be completed, and also include all matching funds.
 - SF-424B, Assurances, Non-construction Programs must be completed for each submitted non- construction application.
 - CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying
 - SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).
 - Project Summary (described below, limit 1 page)
 - Narrative Project Description (described below, limit 10 pages)
 - Budget Justification: Detailed budget in narrative format (described below). Provide justifications for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget justification should be broken out and

detailed using the same budget categories as noted on the SF-424A budget form. The NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) has a template/narrative guidance that can be found on their website. <http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/training.html>.

- Attachments: Other Supporting Documentation and relevant attachments the applicant deems important to the overall understanding and evaluation of the proposed project (combined into one PDF document). All combined attachments must be no longer than 15 pages, excluding the required NOAA NEPA questionnaire. Attachment information can include: charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations; abbreviated CVs or resumes of key personnel; letters of endorsement, support, or collaboration; an indirect cost rate agreement; permit information; NOAA NEPA questionnaire; or any other supporting information.

If an applicant does not have internet access or if Grants.gov is inaccessible, paper applications will be accepted. Paper applications must be submitted with completed, signed inked signature, original forms in hard copy and an electronic copy of the entire application on CD, including scanned signed forms. If the applicant has completed the entire application in Grants.gov but is unable to submit it via Grants.gov, then this application package should be provided via CD along with printed and signed versions of forms SF-424, SF-424B, and CD-511. The authorized representative MUST sign and date these forms over the printed signature that will appear in the signature box. Paper applications should not be bound in any manner.

Content Requirements:

1. Title Page (Proposal Cover Sheet, 1 page maximum)
 - (a) Project title
 - (b) Principal Investigator (or Project Manager) and Financial Representative with complete contact information (address, fax, email, and phone number)
 - (c) Any co-investigators (or Co-managers) with contact information
 - (d) Start and end dates of proposed project
 - (e) Identification of programmatic priority(ies) applicable to the project
 - (f) Funding type request (grant or cooperative agreement)
 - (g) Total cost of the project, including federal and non-federal funding requested

2. Project Summary

Provide a brief summary (1 page maximum) of the project goals and objectives, the proposed activities, the geographic area where the project would occur, and expected outcomes and benefits of the proposed activities. The summary should be prepared to be readable to a broad audience, and may be posted on our website if the project is funded.

3. Project Description

Each project must be completely and accurately described. The main body of the proposal should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and should include: specific goals

and objectives; performance measures for the period of the proposed work and the expected results or outcomes; information that demonstrates the need for the project; descriptions of methodologies and time-lines for all phases of work; and, if applicable, the relationship to other ongoing work, or work planned, anticipated, or underway through Federal Assistance or other means. Multi-year applications must include such information for each year of the proposed activity. Each project should therefore be described as follows:

(a) Project goals and objectives: Identify the problem/opportunity the project intends to address and describe its significance. Identify the project objectives, which should be simple and understandable, as specific and quantitative as possible, and attainable within the time, money and human resources available.

(b) Project narrative: The project narrative is the technical or scientific plan of activities that are to be accomplished during each budget period of the project. This description should include detailed descriptions of the specific plan and/or methods that will be employed. Each discrete action or component activity of the project should be described in detail. Any activities that may occur in the marine environment should be described in detail including what permits are required, and whether they have been obtained, and what, if any, best management practices are in use to prevent or minimize impacts to the environment.

(c) Milestone Schedule. Display timelines for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products, and key project outcomes.

(d) Benefits or results expected: Identify the outcomes, results and benefits. Describe how these expected outcomes, results, or products will be applied and/or made available to any appropriate user groups.

(e) Need for Government financial assistance: Demonstrate the need for government financial assistance. List all other sources of funding that are or have been sought for the project.

(f) Federal, State and local government activities: List any plans or activities (Federal, State, or local government activities) this project would affect and describe the relationship between the proposed project and those plans or activities.

(g) Project management: Describe how the project will be organized and managed and who will be responsible for carrying out project activities. The lead organization/individual and person listed as the technical contact should be identified as the Project Manager (PM) or Principal Investigator (PI). Use of sub-contractors or volunteer staff time to complete project activities and oversight of those individuals should be discussed. The PM/PI is responsible for all technical oversight and implementation of the approved work plan as delineated in the proposal. One PM or PI must be designated on each project, but the PM/PI may or may not be the applicant. However, if the applicant is not the PM/PI, there must be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and PM/PI (e.g., applicant will be responsible for managing the grant funds and the PM will be responsible for completing the project milestones on time and within budget, etc.). Project participants or organizations that will

have a significant role in conducting the project should be listed as Co-investigators or Co-Managers. Organizations or individuals that support the project, for example, researchers contributing data or materials, should be referred to as Cooperators. Copies of the PM's or PI's and all Co-investigator's/Co-Manager's current resumes or curricula vitae must be included as appendices, see section 5. "Appendices," below. Resumes or curricula vitae for Cooperators are also encouraged.

4. Total project costs and budget justification

Each application must include clear and concise budget information, both on the required Federal forms and in the narrative detail of this section. Applications must include OMB standard form 424A, "Budget information - Non Construction Programs." All instructions should be read before completing the form, and the amounts per category and total amounts indicated on the form should correspond with amounts indicated in the budget narrative and justification. On a separate sheet or spreadsheet, list itemized costs per category and the corresponding Federal and non-Federal share and direct and indirect cost totals. Describe and justify the requested budget. For the non-Federal share, the itemized costs should be separated into cash and in-kind contributions. If in-kind contributions are included, describe briefly the basis for estimating the value of these contributions. Note that this year this program has a 50% non-federal match that is required.

If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division
1325 East West Highway
9th Floor
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
lamar.revis@noaa.gov

5. Appendices (maximum 15 pages)

(a) Applicants are required to submit answers to questions 1-19 and 20-37 of the NOAA NEPA questionnaire. The questionnaire can be found at:

<http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf>. Questions 20 - 37 may only apply to projects with hands-on fishing activity. See Section VI.B., Administrative and National Policy Requirements, below for additional NEPA information. The answers to these NEPA questions are not counted towards the 15 page limit for the appendix.

(b) The following documents can be included, as necessary, in the appendix and are counted towards the 15 page limited. Abbreviated curricula vitae or resumes of the PM/PI

and any Co-Managers/ Co- Investigators should be included with the application. Applicants requiring scientific research permits must also include evidence of such a permit (e.g., by providing the permit number) or evidence they have submitted a permit application. Additional material that is necessary or useful to the description of the project may also be provided (e.g., letters of endorsement, tables or visual materials). Letters of commitment or collaboration are strongly recommended.

(c) This announcement is not seeking proposals that generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required as part of the Proposal.

C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, which may be accessed at <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?ID=2dae4a7dcd5848a6364bb94d2d7786dd&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2subtitleA.tpl>

D. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by <http://www.Grants.gov>, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., Hawaii Standard Time, on February 21, 2018 Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Postmarked applications received more than 5 business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC's are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

F. Funding Restrictions

The NOAA MET Program will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, travel or salaries for Federal employees, or profit as allowable costs in the proposed budget. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Project costs can only include support for activities conducted between the effective start date and end date of the award, and cannot include activities undertaken either before or after the agreed upon dates. Applicants will not be reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award. Such expenditures may not be considered as part of the applicant's cost share or matching contribution.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Full Applications should be submitted through www.grants.gov. If you do not have internet access, an application package may be submitted to Penny Larin, Federal Programs Officer, NOAA/NMFS/PIRO, 1845 Wasp Blvd., Building 176, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96818.

Registration Process

1. Required registrations: You must complete and maintain the following registrations to be eligible to submit an application using the Grants.Gov website. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. Registration can take between 3 days to 4 weeks or more, so applicants should begin the registration process as soon as possible.

(a) Grants.Gov: The first step in submitting an application online is to complete a onetime registration process. Individuals wishing to submit a grant application, using Grants.Gov, are required to complete this one time registration process. Neither a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number nor the System for Award Management (SAM) registration is necessary for Individual Registration.

(b) Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) - All Applicant Organizations (optional for Individual Applicants) must be issued a DUNS number. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit identification number provided by Dun and Brad Street. It will be used as the Universal Identifier when applying for federal awards or cooperative agreements. You may request a DUNS number by calling 1-866-705-5711 (toll free) or through the internet at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Your DUNS Number assignment is free.

(c) System for Award Management (SAM) – All Applicant Organizations (optional for Individual Applicants) must complete and maintain an active registration. New registrations take an average of fourteen (14) business days. The renewal process may require as much time as the initial registration. SAM registration includes the assignment of a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code for domestic organizations which have not already

been assigned a CAGE Code. To register, go to: <http://www.SAM.gov>. Registration is free. You must renew and revalidate your entity's registration at least every 12 months from the date you last certified to and submitted the registration in SAM - and sooner, if your entity's information changes. The primary point of contact email address will receive a message alerting them to the entity's/entities' renewal requirements at 60 days, 30 days and 15 days prior to expiration. If you do not renew your registration, it will expire. You must have an active SAM registration in order to be eligible to receive contract awards or payments, submit assistance award applications via Grants.gov, or receive certain payments from some federal government agencies.

2. Only authorized individual(s) will be able to submit the application, and the system may need time to process a submitted application. After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic acknowledgment of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by NOAA.) Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt; the second confirms that there are no errors with an application submission; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). You should save and print the proof of submission. If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with both the Grants.gov help desk and the NOAA Pacific Islands Regional Office, Federal Programs Office staff to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission. You must obtain a Grants.gov support number.

3. Federal employees are not allowed to assist in the preparation of an application or proposal, except that these individuals may provide you with information on program goals, funding priorities, application procedures, and completion of application forms. Because this is a competitive program, Federal employees will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for an application or proposal.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors that the reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets the criterion. We encourage applicants to make explicit connections to the evaluation criterion and factors in their applications. Written comments are required to justify provided scores in each section of the review. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

1. Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Program

Goals (25 points). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities.

Does the proposal adequately describe its relevance to a MET Program Priority in section B? Will the project improve communication, education, and training on marine resource issues throughout the region? Will the project increase scientific education for marine-related professions among coastal community residents? Does the project include or showcase valuable and appropriate partnerships?

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (20 points). 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 should provide a clear definition of the project design, strengths and/or weaknesses and the means that are to be employed for securing productive results. Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Are the objectives in the proposal clearly defined and focused, realistic and can be reached within the proposed project period? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider ways to resolve the issues or implement alternative tactics? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies? Is sufficient detail provided in the proposal about the methods proposed for monitoring and evaluating the success of the project, and are they appropriate? Does the project demonstrate support, cooperation and/or collaboration with the fishing industry?

3. Overall Qualifications of the Applicants (15 points). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

Does the applicant have the capacity/knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners that show adequate administrative capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the proposed project? Does the proposal include resumes of the Principal Investigator(s)? In cases where subcontracts are proposed for carrying out specific tasks, are the quality/appropriateness of the personnel, facilities and procedures (laboratory methods, work plan and or quality oversight procedures) adequate?

4. Project Costs (15 points). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. This includes reviewing the reasonableness of the costs associated with the required tasks to be performed, and the overall relationship with the cost effectiveness for successfully completing the project. Is the proposed budget cost-effective and realistic based on the applicant's stated objectives, time frame, and amount of overall project budget already secured from other sources? Is the proposed budget sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification

of costs by object class? Does the project include the required non-federal matching funds?

5. Outreach and Education (25 points). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.

Does the proposal identify anticipated benefits, potential users, indicators of success, and methods of disseminating results? Is an effective method proposed for dissemination of project results? Are the various target audiences, such as the fishing community or the general public, identified? Will the outreach methods acknowledge NOAA Fisheries support of the project?

B. Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 3 steps: initial screening; panel review; and final selection by the Selecting Official (the NOAA/NMFS Regional Administrator).

1. Initial Screening - An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to determine compliance with application requirements and completeness of application materials. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete or non-responsive will be eliminated from further review. When applications are received they will be screened to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see Section IV. C. Submission Dates and Times); the applicant is eligible to apply; the proposed project addresses one of the funding priorities; and includes a project summary, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B. Content and Form of Application. We do not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause your application to be rejected so that you would have an opportunity to correct them. However, should we do so and provide you information about deficiencies, or should you independently decide it is desirable to do so, you may correct any deficiencies in your application before the deadline.

After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it. If your application does not conform to the requirements listed above, and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will be returned and rejected without further consideration.

2. Panel Review - After the initial screening, each application will be reviewed by three or more appropriate federal, private or public sector experts (e.g. industry, academia, or governmental experts) with subject matter expertise. The reviewers will meet and evaluate each proposal individually based on its own merit against the evaluation criteria described in Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria. All applications, regardless of priority, will be reviewed in this manner. Prior to the meeting or webinar, each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score prior to the panel meeting or webinar. During the panel meeting or webinar, reviewers may revise their scores and comments. Reviewers will

submit their final proposal scores to the MET manager by the end of the panel meeting or Webinar. After the panel scores are submitted, a compilation of all proposals in rank order is developed based on the average score from the reviewer scores. No consensus advice will be developed at the meeting, nor given to NOAA. These reviewers will be required to certify that they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the application(s) they are reviewing. NOAA will protect the identity of each reviewer to the maximum extent permitted by law.

3. Selection. After applications have undergone the technical review/merit panel, the Selecting Official will make the final decision regarding which applications will be funded based upon the numerical rankings and evaluations of the applications.

C. Selection Factors

The NOAA PIRO Regional Administrator, as the Selecting Official, will review the funding recommendation and comments of the reviewers to determine which applications will be recommended to the NOAA Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall recommend proposals to the Grants Officer for funding in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors listed in no order of significance:

1. Availability of funds;
2. Balance/distribution of funds;
 - a. By research area;
 - b. By project type;
 - c. By type of Applicant;
 - d. By type of partners;
 - e. Geographic distribution;
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies;
4. Program priorities as noted in Section I A. and B.
5. Applicant's prior award performance in conducting a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Selecting Official may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality:
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups; and
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications being considered for funding are expected to be complete by June of 2018. The earliest start date

for projects will be September 1, 2018, dependent upon availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive notification from a NMFS Regional representative that the application has been recommended for funding selection to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project, and is not a guarantee of funding. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. This notification will be issued to the Authorizing Representative of the project either electronically through use of Grants Online or in hard copy. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until the Applicant's Authorized Representative has received official notice of the award from the NOAA Grants Officer and has reviewed and accepted the terms of the award.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not recommended for funding or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in IV.B (Content and Form of Applications). Unsuccessful paper applications will be destroyed. Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

Award documents provided by the Grants Officer may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements. These special award conditions may also include other compliance requirements for the award as applicable and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award so they are fully aware of the relevant Standard Terms and Conditions as well as any Special Award Conditions that have been placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Review of Risk - After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.205. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems,

history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

2. DOC Terms and Conditions - Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>.

3. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements - Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

4. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements - The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

5. 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.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf. 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 an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for 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.

6. Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

7. Minority Serving Institutions - The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

8. Paperwork Reduction Act - This collection of information contains requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SFLLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0040, 0348-0044, 0348-0043, 0348-0046 and 0605-0001. 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 PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

9. Administrative Procedure Act/Regulatory Flexibility Act - Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required by the Administrative procedure Act or any other law for rules concerning public property, loans, grants, benefits, and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comments are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared, 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.

10. Executive Order 12866 - It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

11. Delinquent Tax Liability – In accordance with Section 523 of Division B and Sections 744 and 745 of Division E of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) or a future public law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) will be required to provide certain pre-award representations regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent

federal tax returns.

The form must be completed and submitted with grant applications for: (a) all for-profit and non-profit organization applicants (Part I, and if required, Part II); and (b) all non-Federal entity applicants anticipating receipt of \$5 million or more in the current Federal Fiscal Year appropriated funding (Part II only). The form can be found at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/forms.html>.

12. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

C. Reporting

1. Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. Financial Status Reports (SF-425) are required to be submitted to the Grants Officer semi-annually, or as outlined in the award conditions. Financial Status Reports should be entered directly into the Grants Online system.

2. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

3. Performance Progress Reports: - Basic information that should be in all report submissions includes the project title, award number, dates of the award period, dates of the reporting period, and the name(s) of the grantee and the principal investigator. Inclusion of media such as photography and statistics (tables, graphs, etc.) to help document programmatic activities in report submissions is also encouraged. Pertinent, captioned photographs of project activities are requested, and may be included within the progress report document submitted via Grants Online. Semi-annual progress reports should describe the tasks scheduled for the reporting period (from the proposal and amendments) and the tasks that were actually accomplished in the period. The report should also explain any special problems or differences between the scheduled and accomplished work.

- a. Report title, author, organization, grant number, date
 - b. Executive Summary: a brief and succinct summary of the project.
 - c. Purpose:
 - Detailed description of problem or impediment of fishing industry that was addressed by the project.
 - Objectives of the project.
 - d. Approach - Detailed description of the work that was performed.
 - e. Project Management - List individuals and/or organizations actually performing the work and how it was done.
 - f. Findings:
 - Actual accomplishments and findings.
 - If significant problems developed which resulted in less than satisfactory or negative results, these should be discussed.
 - Description of need for additional work, if any.
 - g. Evaluation:
 - Describe the extent to which the project goals and objectives were attained. This description should address the following: Were the goals and objectives attained? How? If not, why? Were modifications made to the goals and objectives? If so, explain.
 - Dissemination of project results: Explain, in detail, how the project's results have been and will be disseminated.
4. Publications, Videos and Acknowledgement of Sponsorship: Publication of the results or findings of the funded award activities in appropriate professional journals, outreach materials, or press releases, and production of video or other media is encouraged as an important method of recording and reporting scientific information. These are also constructive means to expand access to federally funded research. The recipient is required to submit a copy of any publication to the funding agency, and when releasing information related to a funded project, include a statement that the project or effort undertaken was or is sponsored by NOAA Fisheries Service. The recipient is also responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including Internet sites and videos) based on or developed under an award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following acknowledgement and disclaimer: "This project received funding under award [number] from NOAA Fisheries PIRO. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA Fisheries." The final report is a public document and may be posted, partially or in its entirety, on the NOAA Fisheries website.

VII. Agency Contacts

If you have any questions regarding this proposal solicitation, please contact Ms. Penny

Larin, NOAA Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1845 Wasp Blvd, Building 176, Honolulu, HI 96818; Phone: (808) 725-5057; Email: Penny.Larin@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information