

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: A North Atlantic Regional Cooperative Institute

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: OAR-CIPO-2008-2001597

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.432, OAR Joint and Cooperative Institutes.

Dates: Proposals must be received by OAR no later than January 5, 2009 5 p.m., E.T. Proposals submitted after that date will not be considered.

Funding Opportunity Description: The NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the NOAA Office of Ocean and Atmospheric Research (OAR) invite applications for the establishment of a cooperative institute (CI) that will focus on the themes of 1) Ecosystem Forecasting, 2) Ecosystem Monitoring, 3) Ecosystem Management, Protection and Restoration of Resources, 4) Sustained Ocean Observations and 5) Climate Research. These 5 themes will be supported by a variety of research activities, which may include:

- * Research on the linkages among productivity, fish and fisheries, pollution, climate change, and ecosystem health
- * Research to improve the integration and availability of ocean observations across spatial scales, from global to regional and local
- * Research to distinguish marine resource changes due to human impacts from those resulting from natural forcing, including climate variability and change
- * Development and application of new tools and approaches for monitoring ecosystem health and forecasting ecosystem change
- * Examination of the expected increases in socioeconomic benefits accrued from a better understanding of the effects of climate change, food webs, physical-chemical coupling, and ecosystem production dynamics
- * Collaborative research and education leading to closer linkages between scientific assessments and management actions.

This research, conducted within the New England and the Mid-Atlantic regions, is described in the full Federal Funding Opportunity notice. Through this new CI, NOAA also seeks to augment its existing North East Regional climate research with an expanded fisheries forecasting capability, and to develop an integrated capability

to research emerging issues from an ecosystem perspective. The CI may consist of one or more research institutions with expertise and capabilities in the NOAA priority areas that contribute to the areas of research described as research themes above. Through this competition, NOAA intends to establish competitively a new CI according to the policy and procedures described in NOAA Administrative Order 216-107 and the Cooperative Institute Interim Handbook both available at <http://www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci/>.

This announcement provides requirements for the proposed CI and includes details for the technical program, evaluation criteria, and competitive selection procedures. Applicants should review the CI Interim Handbook prior to preparing a proposal for this announcement.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The purpose of this announcement is to invite the submission of proposals to establish a North Atlantic Regional CI which will operate along the eastern U.S. Continental Shelf frontier to conduct exploration, research, and technology development, and to provide details on the application, review, and selection process.

CI Concept/Program Background:

A CI is a NOAA-supported, non-Federal organization that has established an outstanding research program in one or more areas that are relevant to the NOAA mission "to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our Nation's economic, social, and environmental needs." CIs are established at research institutions that also have a strong education program with established graduate degree programs in NOAA-related sciences. The CI provides significant coordination of resources among all non-government partners and promotes the involvement of students and post-doctoral scientists in NOAA-funded research. The CI provides mutual benefits with value provided by all parties.

NOAA establishes a new CI competitively when it identifies a need to sponsor a long-term (5-10 years) collaborative partnership with one or more outstanding non-Federal, non-profit research institutions. For NOAA, the purpose of this long-term collaborative partnership is to promote research, education, training, and outreach aligned with NOAA's mission; to obtain research capabilities that do not exist internally; and/or to expand research capacity in NOAA-related sciences. More specifically, the new CI will perform the following types of research activities:

- * Research on the linkages among productivity, fish and fisheries, pollution, climate change, and ecosystem health
- * Research to improve the integration and availability of ocean observations across spatial scales, from global to regional and local
- * Research to distinguish marine resource changes due to human impacts from those resulting from natural forcing, including climate variability and change
- * Development and application of new tools and approaches for monitoring ecosystem health and forecasting ecosystem change

* Examination of the expected increases in socioeconomic benefits accrued from a better understanding of the effects of climate change, food webs, physical-chemical coupling, and ecosystem production dynamics

* Collaborative research and education leading to closer linkages between scientific assessments and management actions.

A CI will consist of one or more research institutions that demonstrate outstanding performance within one or more established research programs in NOAA-related sciences. These institutions may include Minority Serving Institutions and universities with strong departments that can contribute to the proposed activities of the CI. CIs conduct research under approved scientific research themes (see Section I.B of the full funding opportunity announcement) and Tasks (additional tasks can be proposed by the CI).

i. Task I activities are related to the management of the CI, as well as general education and outreach activities. This task also includes support of postdoctoral and visiting scientists conducting activities within the research themes of the CI that are approved by the CI Director, in consultation with NOAA, and are relevant to NOAA and the CI's mission goals.

ii. Task II activities usually involve on-going direct collaboration with NOAA scientists. This collaboration typically is fostered by the collocation of Federal and CI employees.

iii. Task III activities require minimal collaboration with NOAA scientists and may include research funded by other NOAA competitive grant programs.

B. Program Priorities

NOAA has identified a need to blend the themes of global climate observations and ecosystem approaches to management as adapted to the LME scale. This strategy requires a better understanding of the diverse factors that affect ecosystem function and the productivity of living marine resources especially in the context of decadal changes in climate. This research will be conducted in support of NOAA's Strategic Plan, NOAA's 5-year Research Plan, and NOAA's 20-year Research Vision (all available at www.spo.noaa.gov). Activities at the CI will support the research themes described below. The CI should collaborate and share results with other NOAA programs and CIs that would benefit from such an exchange.

The CI is expected to possess, develop and implement mechanisms to facilitate collaborative research, education, and outreach with NOAA (e.g., post-doctoral appointments, graduate research assistantships and research appointments) and, as

necessary, with relevant local, state and Federal agencies. The CI's primary sponsor will be OAR and NMFS.

NOAA has identified five research themes that will address identified needs within the mission to Protect, Restore, and Manage the Use of Coastal and Ocean Resources through an Ecosystem Approach to Management under the NOAA Ecosystem Goal Team and the mission of Understand Climate Variability and Change to Enhance Society's Ability to Plan and Respond under the NOAA Climate Goal Team, which would benefit from collaborations with the CI. (For a complete description of these NOAA programs, see www.ppi.noaa.gov/prog_charters.htm.)

Themes in Detail

I. Ecosystem Forecasting _ Research will lead to improved forecasting of the frequency and magnitude of ecosystem processes, particularly in the NES LME. This research includes: monitoring and extensive use of current and past environmental, ecological and socio-economic data; large-scale environmental and ecological studies as well as focused process studies for understanding ecosystem functions and change; and model development, parameterization and verification. Forecasting will include: human health (e.g., beach closings, fish contaminants and harmful algal blooms), fish recruitment and productivity, protected species sustainability and recovery all of which will be used in the assessment and management of living marine resources and their habitats. Research under this theme will also identify and improve the understanding of cause and effect of climate variability and change on ecosystems. Efforts will likely be interdisciplinary in nature and involve the physical, natural, and social sciences to be brought to bear on the complexity of interactions between people and natural systems at the regional and local level.

II. Ecosystem Monitoring _ Research associated with the use of coastal observing systems and deep ocean observations to understand and describe the present state of the various ecological and environmental parameters in the NES LME. The parameters that will be the focus of research are those that are determined or hypothesized to be key to predicting the impacts that climate change, population growth along the coastal zone, natural resource use, and episodic events can have on the ecosystem. This theme includes research on data integration techniques and geospatial technologies (GIS and remote-sensing), as well as the prototype development of decision-support tools that enable improved regional ecosystem forecasting, ecosystem management and ecosystem policy decisions.

III Ecosystem Management _ Research will focus on promoting sustainable coastal development, facilitating community resiliency and enabling an ecosystem approach to management in the NES LME. These foci are based upon enhanced scientific understanding of the interconnections between the marine ecosystem and the adjacent watershed including their human health and resource stewardship implications, including the effects of climate change.

IV. Protection and Restoration of Resources_Research that leads to prototype development of technology, research tools, and scientific approaches to effective restoration as well as biogeographical characterizations, that will enable improvements in defining, observing, forecasting, and protecting components of protected areas and restoring habitats and populations to form healthy productive systems. Research under this theme will cover a wide range of problems from removing contaminants to providing new materials and techniques to protect underwater cultural resources, focused on the NES LME.

V. Sustained Ocean Observations and Climate Research - Research conducted under this theme is associated with the collection and analysis of observations of the ocean environment that are important for understanding climate processes on various time scales. Research activities under this theme include the development and improvement of ocean observation platforms and instruments that measure the ocean environment, including biological, physical, and chemical characteristics, which are important for understanding climate processes on various time scales. The theme also includes research that identifies optimum configurations for observation networks.

C. Program Authority

15 U.S.C. 1540

33 U.S.C. 883 (d)

15 U.S.C. 313

15 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.

118 Stat. 71 (Jan. 23, 2004)

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

The award period will be 5 years, and may be renewed for an additional 5 years based on the outcome of a CI review in the fourth year. All funding is contingent upon the availability of Federal appropriations. NOAA expects that approximately \$7M will be available for the CI in the first year of the award. The Task I budget should not exceed \$350,000. The final amount of funding available for Task I will be determined during the negotiation phase of the award based on availability of funding. Funding for subsequent years is expected to be constant throughout the period and will depend on the quality of the research, the satisfactory progress in achieving the stated goals described in the proposal, continued relevance

to program objectives, and the availability of funding.

B. Project/Award Period

The award period will be five years and may be renewed for up to an additional five years based on the outcome of a peer review in the fourth year, as described in the NOAA CI Interim Handbook. A copy of the Handbook is available at www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for this award will be a cooperative agreement since several NOAA organizations will be substantially involved in working with the CI. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, proposals for collaboration between NOAA scientists and a CI scientist and/or assistance by NOAA personnel in developing curricula. If this CI is awarded to a consortium of more than one institution, the consortium is strongly encouraged to propose a governance structure that includes a single director. NOAA will consider issuing a cooperative agreement to each of the member institutions, if requested in the proposal or if a determination is made by NOAA and the CI that separate awards would be in the best interest of all parties. NOAA will make the final determination of how many cooperative agreements will be issued for the CI.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility is limited to non-Federal public and private non-profit universities, colleges and research institutions that offer accredited graduate level degree-granting programs in NOAA-related sciences.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

To stress the collaborative nature and investment of a CI by both NOAA and the research institution, cost sharing is required. There is no minimum cost sharing requirement; however, the amount of cost sharing will be considered when determining the level of the CI's commitment under NOAA's standard evaluation criteria for overall qualifications of applicants. Acceptable cost-sharing proposals include, but are not limited to, offering a reduced indirect cost rate against activities in one or

more Tasks, waiver of indirect costs assessed against base funds and/or Task I activities, waiver or reduction of any costs associated with the use of facilities at the CI, and full or partial salary funding for the CI director, administrative staff, graduate students, visiting scientists, or postdoctoral scientists.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Not Applicable.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply online through the Grants.Gov website <http://www.grants.gov>. Paper submissions are acceptable only if internet access is not available. Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system prior to submitting an application. This registration process can take several weeks, involving multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, you should register as soon as you decide that you intend to apply, even if you are not yet ready to submit your proposal. If an applicant has problems downloading the application package from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at (800)518-4726 or support@grants.gov. For non-Windows computer systems, please see www.grants.gov/MacSupport for information on how to download and submit an application through Grants.gov.

If a hard copy application is submitted, the original and two unbound copies of the proposal should be included. Paper submissions should be sent to: Mr. Philip L. Hoffman, 1315 East West Highway, Room 11308, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910; telephone (301)734-1096. No email or facsimile proposal submissions will be accepted.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals must adhere to the provisions under "Proposals" and the requirements under "Required Elements" in this section 90 days after the publication of the RFA.

i. Proposals

a. Proposals must include elements requested on the Grants.gov portal. If a hard copy application is submitted, NOAA requests that the original and two unbound copies of the proposal be included.

b. Proposals, electronic or paper, should be no more than 75 pages (numbered) in length, excluding budget, investigators vitae, and all appendices. Federally mandated forms are not included within the page count. Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of full proposals will not be accepted.

ii. Required Elements

Failure to include the following elements will result in proposals being returned to the submitter without review:

a. Signed title page. The title page should be signed (electronically or on paper) by the principal investigators (PIs) and the institutional representative and should clearly indicate the proposed name of the CI. The Principal Investigators and institutional representative should be identified by full name, title, organization, telephone number, and address. The total amount of Federal funds being requested should be listed for the award period.

b. Abstract. An abstract must be included and should contain a brief description of the CI, research themes, and proposed activities. The abstract should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, institution's investigators, total proposed cost, and budget period.

c. Results from prior research. The results of related projects supported by NOAA and other agencies should be described, including their relation to the currently proposed work. Reference to each prior research award should include the title, agency, award number, Principal Investigators, period of award, and total award. The section should be a brief summary and should not exceed two pages.

d. Project Description. The information provided in this section will be used to evaluate the proposal according to NOAA's standard evaluation criteria described in Section V of this document. The project description includes several sections:

- (1) Goals Section - a description of the goals for the CI,
- (2) Research Theme Section - a description of the three research themes,
- (3) Education Section - a description of the graduate degree program and other education and outreach activities,
- (4) Business Plan Section - a business plan, and
- (5) Performance Measures Section - proposed performance measures for the five year award.

The Goals Section should clearly describe the mission and vision of the CI, and what the CI expects to accomplish during the award.

The Research Theme Section includes information that will help NOAA determine the quality of the CI's capabilities and the expertise at the CI needed to conduct outstanding research in each of the three research themes described in Section I.B. This Section also includes project descriptions of research projects that will or could be conducted by the CI under each theme (or combination of themes), if sufficient funding during the five year award is provided.

The Education Section should describe the NOAA-related degree programs that are offered at the CI's institutions, including terminal degrees in these programs. This Section should also describe how the CI will integrate students and post-docs into the research projects at the CI, as well as conduct outreach and education activities in support of these three research themes.

The Business Plan should be well-developed and include details regarding fiscal and human resource management, as well as strategic planning and accountability. It must describe the organizational structure of the CI, how it will operate, the responsibilities of the participants from multiple institutions, and how the CI will use the Executive Council and Council of Fellows described in the CI Interim Handbook (available at www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci). The Business Plan must describe how the CI chooses projects, reviews its progress, as well as how the CI will support enhanced communication and collaborations with NOAA.

The Performance Measures Section must include proposed measures to be used by the CI to gauge, quantify, and/or evaluate progress on projects and the overall performance of the CI. After the award is made, NOAA will work with the CI to finalize a set of performance measures that are acceptable to the CI and NOAA. Immediately after the CI award has been established, the CI must consult with the OAR and CI Program Managers and produce an annual research plan that provides specific information about the research projects described in the Research Themes Section that will be accomplished during the first year. The plan will be developed after consultations with NOAA programs that will provide project funding to the CI. This plan must state the goals and objectives of each project, along with a description of the research that the CI expects to accomplish and a detailed budget for these projects. CI funding for the projects described in this plan will be released upon NOAA's approval of the annual research plan. Funding for subsequent years of the award will require additional annual research plans.

e. Budget. Applicants must submit a Standard Form 424 "Application for Federal Assistance," including a detailed budget using the Standard Form 424A, "Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs." These and other forms, including Commerce Department Form CD-511 "Certification Regarding Lobbying" and if applicable Standard Form SF-LLL "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," are provided in the Grants.gov application package. The proposal must include total and annual budgets corresponding to the descriptions provided in the project description. Annual and total budgets should be stratified by Task and Institution, particularly if No special restrictions apply.

f. Vitae. Abbreviated curriculum vitae are sought with each proposal. Reference lists should be limited to all publications in the last 3 years with up to five other relevant papers.

g. Current and pending support. For each investigator, submit a list which includes project title, supporting agency with grant number, investigator months, dollar value,

and duration. Requested values should be listed for pending support.

C. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for receipt of proposals at the NOAA/OAR office is 5 p.m., ET, January 5, 2009.

Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. NOAA uses information from Grants.gov to determine whether an application has been submitted before the deadline. Hard copy applications will be date/time stamped as they are physically received in the NOAA/OAR office. No email or facsimile proposal submissions will be accepted.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

E. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Universal Identifier. Applicants should be aware that they are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number during the application process. See the October 30, 2002 Federal Register, Vol. 67, No. 210, pp. 66177-66178 for additional information. Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at (866) 705-5711 or via the internet (www.dunandbradstreet.com). All applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals through the Grants.gov portal. If unable to do this, hard copy proposals will be accepted. The hard copies must be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery. Proposals must be submitted to: NOAA/OAR, 1315 East West Highway, Room 11326, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Attn: Mr. Philip L. Hoffman. Hard copies must be received at the NOAA/OAR office by 5 p.m., ET, January 5, 2009.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the standard NOAA evaluation criteria. Various questions under each criterion are provided to ensure that the applicant includes information that NOAA will consider important during the evaluation, in addition to any other information provided by the applicant.

i. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (25 percent): 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 include research goals and projects that address the critical issues identified in NOAA's 5-year Research Plan, NOAA's Strategic Plan, and the priorities described in the program priorities (see Section I.B. of the full funding opportunity announcement)?

* Is there a demonstrated commitment (in terms of resources and facilities) to enhance existing NOAA and CI resources to foster a long-term collaborative research environment/culture?

* Does the proposal meet the geographical constraints described in the announcement?

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

* Does the project description include a summary of clearly stated goals to be achieved during the five year period that reflect NOAA's strategic plan and goals?

* Does the project description include innovative approaches to meeting the undersea technology development, exploration and research goals of the proposal?

* Does the CI involve partnerships with other universities or research institutions, including Minority Serving Institutions and universities with strong departments that can contribute to the proposed activities of the CI?

iii. Overall qualifications of applicants (30 percent): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

* If the institution(s) and/or Principal Investigators have received current or recent NOAA funding, is there a demonstrated record of outstanding performance working with NOAA and/or NOAA scientists on research projects?

* Is there nationally and/or internationally recognized expertise within the appropriate disciplines needed to conduct the collaborative/interdisciplinary research described in the proposal?

* Is there a well-developed business plan that includes fiscal and human resource management, as well as strategic planning and accountability?

* Are there any unique capabilities in a mission-critical area of research for NOAA?

* Does the CI possess the necessary undersea technical expertise and resources, and/or provide access to the technical resources outlined in the proposal?

* Has the applicant shown a substantial investment to the NOAA partnership, as demonstrated by the amount of the cost sharing contribution?

iv. Project costs (5 percent): The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

v. Outreach and education (10 percent): 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.

* Is there a strong education program with established graduate degree programs in NOAA-related sciences that also encourages student participation in NOAA-related research studies.

B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review/screening is conducted to determine compliance with requirements/completeness. All proposals will be evaluated and individually ranked in accordance with the assigned weights of the above-listed evaluation criteria by an independent peer review panel. At least three experts, who may be Federal or non-Federal, will be used in this process. If non-Federal experts participate in the review process, each expert will submit an individual review and there will be no consensus opinion. The merit reviewers' ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals. The Selecting Official selects proposals after considering the peer reviews and selection factors listed below. In making the final selections, the Selecting Official will award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the selection factors.

C. Selection Factors

The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. 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:

- i. Availability of funding.
- ii. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. Geographically.
 - b. By type of institutions.

- c. By type of partners.
 - d. By research areas.
 - e. By project types.
-
- iii. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies.
 - iv. Program priorities and policy factors.
 - v. Applicant's prior award performance.
 - vi. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups.
 - vii. 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 Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Review of the proposals will occur within 30 days of the close of the announcement. July 1, 2009 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals.

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 electronic notification or postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization. The OAR will notify unsuccessful applicants in writing either electronically or by postal mail. Those proposals that are not ultimately selected for funding will be destroyed.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of February 11, 2008 (73 Fed. Reg. 7696), are applicable to this solicitation.

i. Limitation of Liability. Funding for years 2-5 of the CI is contingent upon the availability of funding. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application 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.

ii. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by NEPA, for each project seeking NOAA funding. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: www.nepa.noaa.gov, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, 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. After the award has been made, the recipient is 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) for each project proposed under this award. In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, the recipient may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines such assessment is required. The recipient will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of its proposal. The failure to cooperate with NOAA shall be grounds for not funding a particular project. In cases where additional information is required after a project is selected, funds can be withheld by the NOAA Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to assess any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

C. Reporting

Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer and Performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer annually. Near the end of each award year, NOAA will provide the CI with guidance on what information should be submitted as part of the annual performance report. This information will be used by NOAA to assess the quality of the research and provide NOAA with general information about the quality of activities at the CI, including how many students are participating, scientific output, and number of

employees associated with the CI receiving NOAA support. Reports should be submitted electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system or on paper if no computer access is available.

VII. Agency Contacts

For a copy of the Federal Funding Opportunity announcement and/or an application package, please access Grants.gov, the NOAA Cooperative Institute website (www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci) or contact Mr. Philip L. Hoffman, 1315 East West Highway, Room 11308, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910; telephone (301)734-1096; email: Philip.Hoffman@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

To use grants.gov, applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and be registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Allow a minimum of five days to complete the CCR registration. [Note: Your organizations Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.] Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through grants.gov

Permits and Approvals:

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary Federal, state and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work to be conducted are obtained and effective before any research begins. Permits for proposed projects can be held by any formally and substantially involved collaborator, including a NOAA collaborator, provided the collaborator is receiving or providing resources associated with this announcement and related awards. Failure to apply for and/or obtain Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analysis, when necessary, will eliminate any further consideration of a proposed project for funding.