NOAA

Final Stepdown Guidance for NOAA's Use of CESUs

Prepared by: Jen Lechuga for Dr. Richard Merrick

5/14/2015

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From: Dr. Richard Merrick, Director, Scientific Programs and Chief Science Advisor and NOAA Lead for Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU)
To: NOAA Wide

PURPOSE: Provide specific guidance on how NOAA can issue awards for CESU partnerships, including eligibility criteria that must be met, roles and responsibilities involved, and steps for establishing awards. NOAA staff can use this guidance to help ensure compliance with the Financial Assistance Instructions 14-01, "NOAA Process for Awarding Financial Assistance to Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units" (Attachment 1).

BACKGROUND: As described in the April 19, 2014 Memorandum from the Director of the Acquisition and Grants Office, Mitchell Ross, there are three options available to NOAA staff to issue financial assistance awards as Cooperative Agreements to NOAA's nine CESU partnerships. This guidance further describes how to pursue each of the three, including: 1) Federal Funding Opportunities (FFO) for competitive awards within a CESU or series of CESUs; 2) CESU Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) unique to a particular CESU; and 3) Request for Applications (RFA) for noncompetitive awards.

There are 17 CESUs across the nation. Of the 17, NOAA is a member of nine CESUs:

North and West Alaska	Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast
California	Chesapeake Watershed
Hawaii-Pacific Islands	North Atlantic Coast
South Florida-Caribbean	Pacific Northwest
Gulf Coast	

When CESUs Can Be Used

The following criteria must be met for NOAA to use the established partnerships with CESUs:

- The proposed funding opportunity must fit within the objectives of the National CESU Network Program outlined below:
    - To provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners in biological, physical, social, cultural, and engineering disciplines needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context.

- The proposed funding opportunity must fit the intent of the Cooperative and Joint Agreements, which means:
    - The research partnership will carry out or stimulate an activity (data, products or services) for a public purpose; and
    - NOAA will be significantly involved in the work.

- The research proposed must not fit within the scope of a Cooperative Institute (CI) (see Attachment 2) whereby a similar project has been completed by the CI in the past. Please refer to CESU - CI Decision Tree in Appendix 4.

Considerations When Choosing Among the FFO, RFA, and CESU Specific BAA mechanisms

- **Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) is appropriate when:** a research need has been identified with some specifics, within one or more CESU regions and multiple CESU members are qualified to participate.

- **A Request for Applications (RFA) is appropriate when:** a non-competitive or sole source award can be justified as outlined in Chapter 8, Section F.1.b, of the Department of Commerce Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual (DOC Grants Manual). As outlined in the Manual, a justification memo must be approved by the Assistant Administrator or designee. The memo would include the following text, for example: *This memorandum justifies making a non-competitive award to The University of Hawaii pursuant to the requirement of Chapter 8.F.1.b(#) of the Department of Commerce Grant and Cooperative Agreements Manual. These awards do not fall within the scope of a published competitive notice, they have merit, and [INSERT APPROPRIATE CITATION FROM DOC GRANTS MANUAL]*. NOTE: As government policy favors competitive awards, this mechanism should be used sparingly.

- **A CESU-specific Broad Agency Announcement (CESU-specific BAA)**: The CESU-specific BAA has more stringent requirements than the NOAA-wide BAA. Only members of the named CESU are eligible to apply. This is geared towards non-solicited proposals. The award mechanism is limited to Cooperative Agreements only. Further, proposals submitted under this opportunity must not only be consistent with NOAA's mission, but the objectives of the National CESU program that is implemented across Federal Bureaus and Agencies. This mechanism is best suited to promote competition among member partners of the referenced CESU when a project has not yet been identified to address a specifically named need (e.g., support U.S. leadership of Arctic Council activities or address marine mammal bycatch reduction efforts). However, there is an anticipation of multiple projects formulated if given the opportunity.

Roles and Responsibilities

NOAA Lead & NOAA Representative to the Federal Managers Committee of the National CESU Network	Dr. Richard Merrick	• Serves as the NOAA lead for all CESU matters; • Represents NOAA on the CESU National Network • Serves as the POC on CESU matters to the NOAA Research Council • Clears CESU specific BAAs (off-line)

NOAA CESU Program Manager	[acting: Jen Lechuga]	• Supports the NOAA CESU Lead; • Provides technical assistance to NOAA regarding CESU matters • Clears the FFO, RFA, and BAA off-line before they are reviewed by the Grants Management Division and Financial Assistance Law Division, and posted to Grants.gov. • Tracks posted FFO, RFA, or BAAs for reporting purposes • Tracks awards issued by NOAA through CESUs for reporting purposes
CESU Technical Representatives/ Selecting Officials	Those individuals/ positions named in each CESU Cooperative & Joint Venture Agreement NMFS Science Center Directors (for the 8 coastal CESUs & AK)	• Serve as NOAA's technical representatives to the corresponding CESU nearest geographically • Participate (or assign designee) in CESU meetings organized by Host University • Serves as the selecting official for CESU awards within their geographic jurisdiction, and makes recommendations (via a Selection Package) to NOAA Grants Officer on award selection made by NOAA for respective CESU • Lead the submission (in coordination with Federal Program Officer, Grants Officer, and FALD) of a CESU specific BAA • Provide annual summaries to NOAA Lead and NOAA CESU Program Manager on number of awards issued through CESU and any issues, risks, and opportunities for NOAA engagement with CESU
Program Point of Contact (POC)	Program staff/ scientist	• May serve as a first line of contact with university partners in CESU for potential research partnership opportunities • Helps identify and coordinate panel review during the award selection process, if applicable • Coordinates with FPO
Federal Program Officer (FPO)	Line Office specific; With specialized grants experience	• Uploads FFO, RFA, and BAA, in Grants Online • Handles all administrative issues in Grants Online • Coordinates and ensures that all off-line and on-line (Grants Online) actions and clearances are made • Notifies NOAA CESU Program Manager when FFOs, RFAs, and CESU specific BAAs, are posted to Grants.gov and when awards are made

NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD)	Grants Management Specialist & Officer assigned to CESU award	• GMD Grants Management Specialist serves as the second line of clearance in Grants Online after CESU Program Manager but before FALD • GMD Grants Officer issues award, following Grants Management Specialist review and FALD clearance
Federal Assistance Law Division (FALD)	FALD Attorneys	• Serves as third line of clearance before FFO, RFA, or BAA are posted to Grants.gov by GMD staff to ensure no legal inconsistencies exist

NOAA POCs by Member CESUs

CESU Connection & Host University	**Fisheries Science Center**	**Fisheries Science Center Director**
North and West Alaska *U of AK, Fairbanks*	Alaska Fisheries Science Center	Dr. Doug DeMaster
Pacific Northwest *U of WA*	Northwest Science Center	Dr. John Stein
California U of CA, Berkeley	Southwest Fisheries Science Center	Dr. Cisco Werner
Hawaii-Pacific Islands *U of HI, Manoa*	Pacific Islands Science Center	Dr. Michael Seki
South Florida-Caribbean *U of Miami* Gulf Coast *Texas A&M U* Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast *U of GA*	Southeast Fisheries Science Center	Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Chesapeake Watershed North Atlantic *U of RI*	Northeast Fisheries Science Center	Dr. William Karp

Process I: FFO/RFA/CESU BAA posting announcement in Grants.Gov:

1. a. NOAA Program POCs develop FFO (competitive) or RFA (non-competitive) using attached templates[1];
   b. Science Center Directors, in close coordination with the NOAA CESU Program Manager, develop CESU BAA documentation.

[1]FPO can copy and paste language from templates into Grants Online.

2. Federal Program Officer (FPO)[2] completes search on Grants Online to verify that a like award opportunity has not been solicited and completed by relevant CI (Per Decision Tree see Attachment 4).

3. FPO uploads template information to the FFO, CESU BAA, or RFA in Grants Online and coordinates reviews and clearances.

4. FPO identifies CESU Program Manger as "Optional Reviewer" in [step 6 for competitive and step 4 for noncompetitive] RFA Routing Slip so that CESU Program Manager provides necessary clearance in step 10 for competitive and 6 for noncompetitive. This will ensure that award opportunities are consistent with CESU requirements and policies. *Please refer to the workflows below for an understanding of the steps and necessary clearances.*

5. Once all clearances are obtained, the Grants Management Specialist coordinates the posting of the document to Grants.gov.

6. The FPO notifies CESU Program Manager of the Grants.gov posting.

[2] FPO is the same as RFA creator in workflow.

Figure 1. Workflow in Grants Online for competitive awards solicitations (FFOs/CESU BAAs).

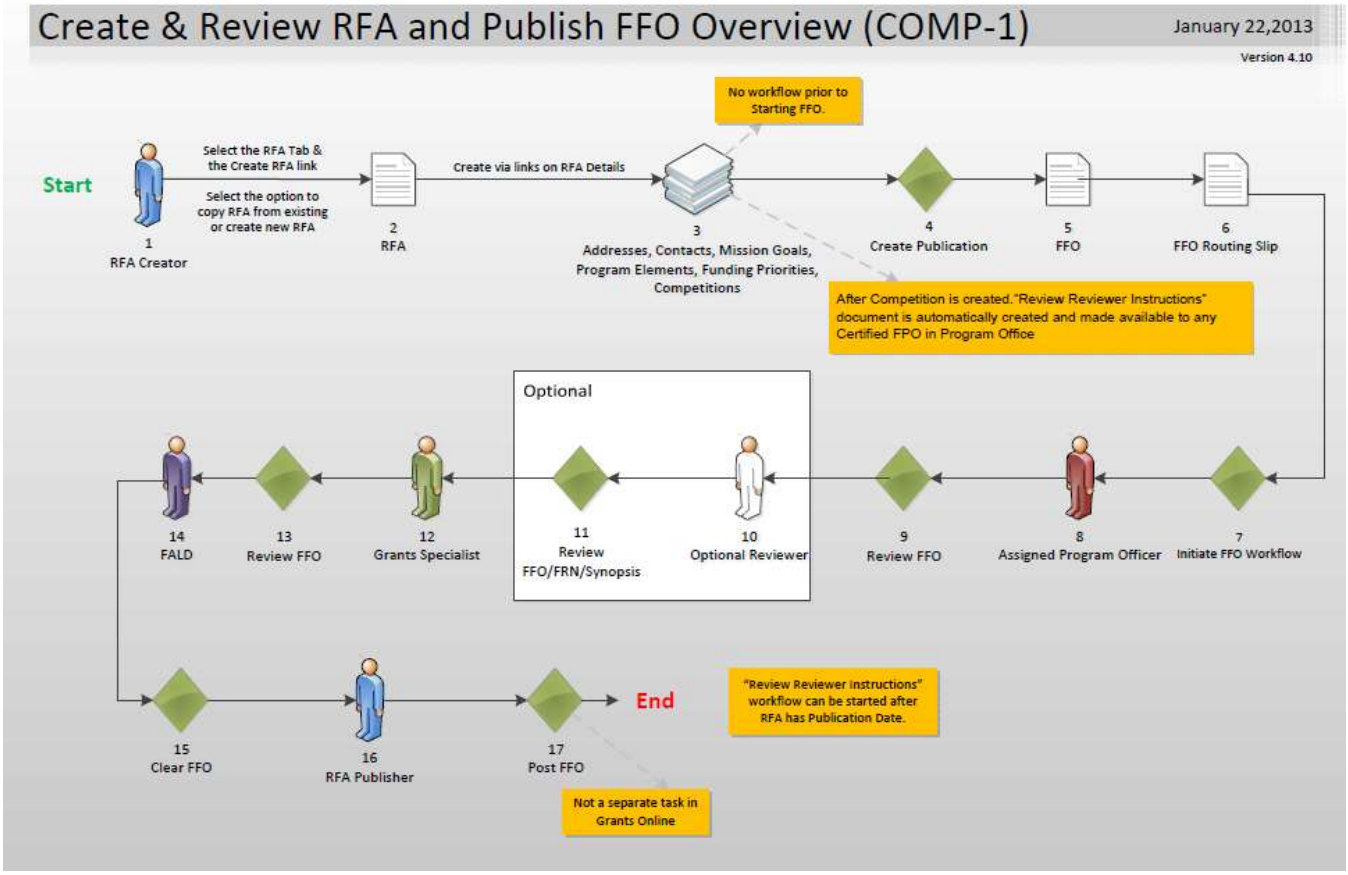
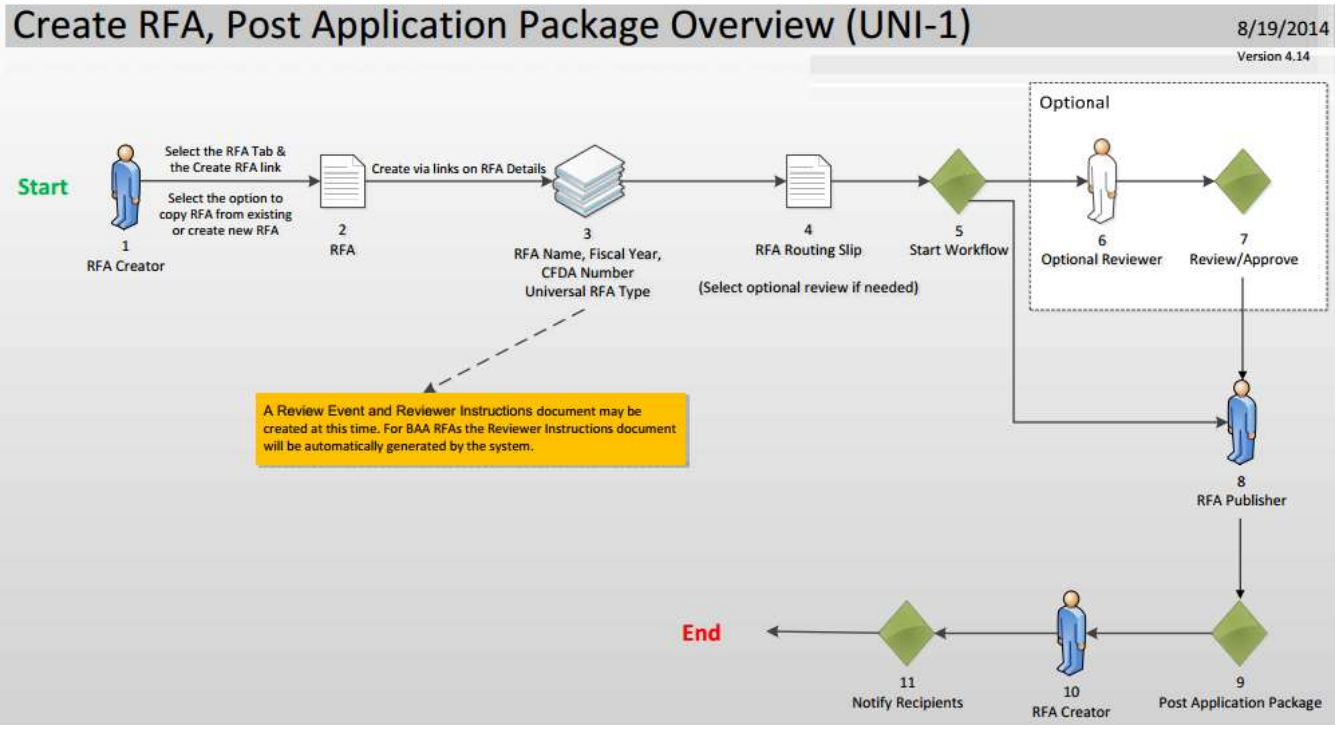


Figure 2. Workflow in Grants Online for noncompetitive awards solicitations (RFAs).

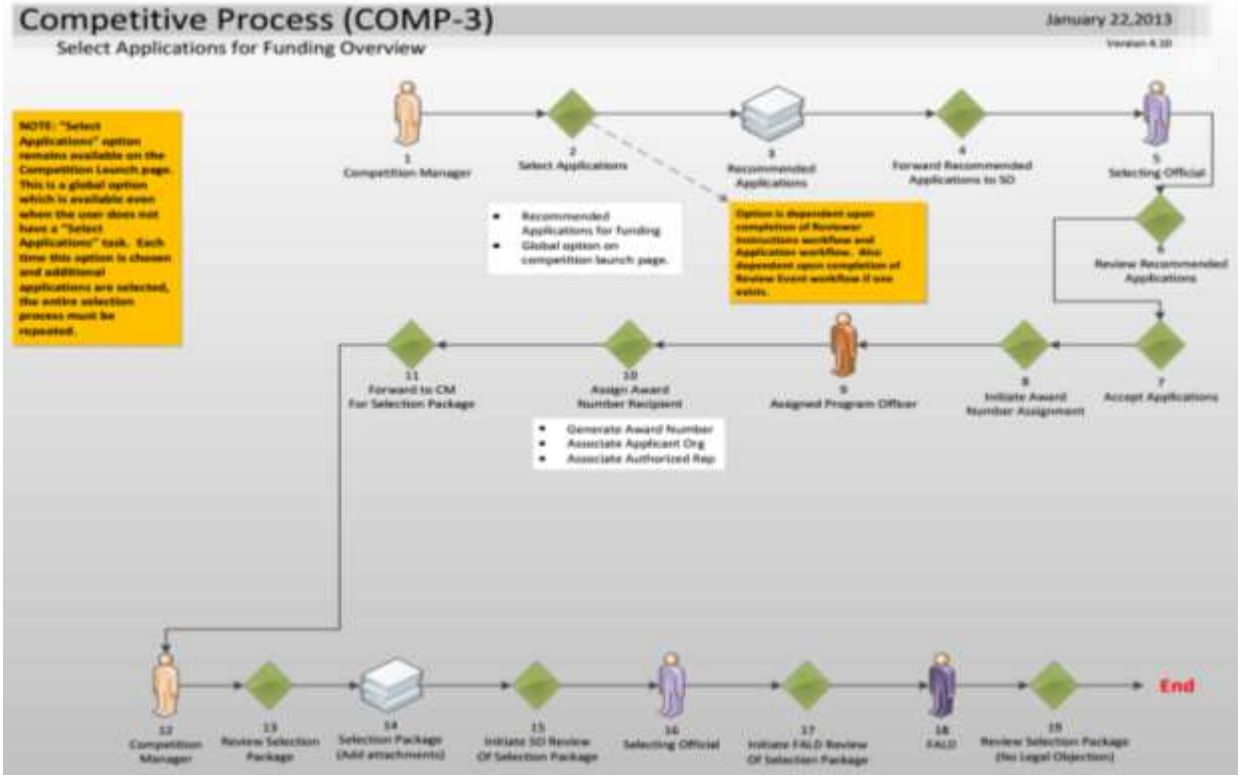


Process II: Issuing award Proposal Selection and Subsequent Approval (Comprehensively documented in Grants Online):

1. FPO[3], in coordination with the Program POC, reviews application(s) submitted in response to the FFO, RFA, or CESU BAA.

2. FPO, in coordination with Program POC, selects and coordinates the technical merit and/or panel review for proposals associated with FFOs, RFAs and CESU BAAs.

Figure 3. Workflow in Grants Online for award issuance.



3. Based on the meritorious reviews the FPO prepares the selection package (see steps 12-14 of Figure 3) and sends the package off-line to CESU Program Manager for clearance. CESU Program Manager will communicate with FPO via email whether the package has cleared.

4. a) For NMFS selection processes, once the package has cleared (off-line) through the CESU Program Manager, the FPO sends it to the selecting official (see step 16 in Figure 3).

   b) For selection packages originating in a Line Office other than NMFS, the FPO will forward the package and selection memo to the funding office director for a recommendation. Once cleared, the FPO sends the package to the selecting official (step 16).

5. The Selecting Official sends their award recommendation(s) as an approved selection package including the selection memo to the FPO.

[3] Same as "Competition Manager" in Figure 3.

6. The FPO includes the Selection Memo in the selection package that is sent to FALD (step 17 of Figure 3) for clearance[4] in Grants Online.

7. Upon receipt of FALD's clearance, the selection package is returned to the FPO. The FPO will conduct all appropriate reviews for recommended applications. This includes: PO checklist, NEPA, and review of the application as outlined by 2 CFR 200, and the FFO. FPO selects "CESU" in Program Officer (PO) Checklist. A dialogue box will appear requiring: 1) justification of why this will be a CESU award versus a CI (refer decision tree Attachment 4—ensuring that type of work has not been completed by relevant CI); and 2) add complete Special Award Condition for Substantial Federal Involvement in order to make this award a cooperative agreement.

8. After completion of review, FPO forwards the award(s) to the NOAA Grants Management Division for review and approval. (Grants Management Specialist to FALD to Grants Officer for signature).

9. After the Grants Officer signs the award, it is reviewed and cleared by NOAA's Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA).

10. After being released by OLA, the award(s) are forwarded to NOAA Finance for final obligation.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Jen Lechuga at: Jennifer.lechuga@noaa.gov or 240-533-9022.

Attachments:

1. Financial Assistance Instructions (AGO Guidance)
2. CI Research Themes & Profiles
3. Use of CESUs in NOAA Qs & As
4. CESU_CI Decision Tree
5. CESU BAA Template
6. FFO Template for CESUs
7. RFA Template

Cc: Mitchell J. Ross, Director of Acquisition and Grants Office
Arlene Simpson Porter, Director Grants Management Division
Debbie Chen, Branch Chief, Grants Management Division
Alan Conway, Branch Chief, Grants Management Division

[4] For non NMFS related projects, the respective LO Senior Selecting Official prepares selection package and includes their recommendation to the CESU Technical Representative named on the Cooperative & Joint Venture Agreement (i.e., NMFS Science Center Directors, serving as Selecting Officials)

Attachment 1

Financial Assistance Instructions (AGO Guidance)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
ACQUISITION AND GRANTS OFFICE

April 19, 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Assistant Administrators
Staff Office Directors

FROM: Mitchell J. Ross
Director

SUBJECT: Financial Assistance Instruction 14-01 NOAA Process for Awarding Financial Assistance to Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Members

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the attached Financial Assistance Instruction 14-01, which establishes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) process for awarding financial assistance to Cooperative Ecosystem Studies U nit (CESU) members.

CESUs provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies. NOAA financial assistance is currently limited to nine of the 17 established CESUs. The NOAA Acquisition and Grants Office (AGO) will follow the process described in the attachment to award financial assistance to CESU members.

Questions pertaining to this Financial Assistance Instruction may be addressed to Arlene Simpson Porter, Director of the NOAA Grants Management Division, at Arlene.S.Porter@noaa.gov. or by telephone at (30 I) 628-1314.

Attachment:
Financial Assistance Instruction 14-01

April 9, 2014

Financial Assistance Instruction 14-01

NOAA Process for Awarding Financial Assistance to Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Members

A. Purpose

This Financial Assistance Instruction establishes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) process for awarding financial assistance to Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) members. The Financial Assistance Instruction is effective immediately and remains in effect until rescinded.

B. Background

CESUs provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners. NOAA participates in nine of the 17 established CESUs. Each CESU is provided CESU status on a competitive basis through the U.S. Department of the Interior, and maintains a website that lists ongoing and completed projects conducted by member universities and partner institutions located at http://www.cesu.psu.edu. The nine CESUs are listed in the attached process.

C. Applicability

Funding eligibility is limited to the nine CESUs and their partner institutions. For financial assistance eligibility, each NOAA Line Office will provide focused criteria and a specific statement of work for each of the nine CESUs. The process to award financial assistance agreements will follow one of the following approaches:

1. Competitive Awards
    - Identify the project and the appropriate CESU
    - Prepare a Federal Funding Opportunity announcement
    - Post the Federal Funding Opportunity announcement
    - Conduct a Merit Review and Request for Proposal
    - Application Review Period
    - Financial and Progress Reporting
    - Options for Out-Year Funding

2. Non-Competitive Awards
   A justification for a non-competitive award must be based on the existence of one or more of the following conditions and receive the approval of the Grants Officer:
    - Only One Source Identified
    - Unusual and Compelling Urgency
    - International Agreement
    - National Security
    - Public Interest

3. Broad Agency Announcements

D. Point of Contact

Questions concerning this Financial Assistance Instruction should be directed to Arlene Simpson Porter, Director of the NOAA Grants Management Division, at Arlene.S.Porter@noaa.gov, or by telephone at (301) 628-1314.

Attachment:

NOAA Process for Awarding Financial Assistance to Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Members

Acquisition and Grants Office
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
U.S. Department of Commerce

NOAA Process for Awarding Financial Assistance to Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Members

The Unit Members/Host Universities are:

1. University of California System - California (NOAA, 2003)
2. University System of Maryland - Chesapeake Watershed (NOAA, 2001)
3. Northern Arizona University - Colorado Plateau
4. University of Arizona - Desert Southwest
5. University of Nevada - Great Basin
6. University of Minnesota - Great Lakes-Northern Forest
7. University of Nebraska - Great Plains
8. University of Missouri - Great Rivers
9. Texas A&M University; Gulf Coast (NOAA, 2002)
10. University of Hawaii System - Hawaii-Pacific Islands (NOAA, 2004)
11. University of Alaska System - North & West Alaska (NOAA, 2013)
12. University of Rhode Island - North Atlantic Coast (NOAA, 1999)
13. University of Georgia - Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast (NOAA, 2003)
14. University of Washington - Pacific Northwest (NOAA, 2001)
15. University of Montana - Rocky Mountains
16. University of Miami - South Florida-Caribbean (NOAA, 2000)
17. University of Tennessee - Southern Appalachian Mountains

As of fiscal year 2014, NOAA participates in nine of the established 17 Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU). Each CESU has a specific charter and purpose and is competitively provided CESU status by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Each CESU maintains a website that lists ongoing and completed projects conducted by the member universities and partner institutions. The CESU National Network website is located at http://www.cesu.psu.edu.

For financial assistance eligibility, each NOAA Line Office will provide focused criteria and specific statements of work for each of the nine CESUs in which NOAA participates:

University of California System - California
University System of Maryland - Chesapeake Watershed
Texas A&M University - Gulf Coast
University of Hawaii System - Hawaii-Pacific Islands
University of Rhode Island - North Atlantic Coast
University of Georgia - Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast
University of Washington - Pacific Northwest
University of Miami - South Florida-Caribbean
University of Alaska System – North and West Alaska

Funding eligibility is limited to the above-listed nine CESUs and their partner institutions. The process used by NOAA to award financial assistance agreements will generally follow one of two approaches: competitive awards through a Federal Funding Opportunity, and noncompetitive awards. A third option, use of a Broad Agency Announcement, may also be exercised on a less frequent basis.

Competitive Awards

Step 1

Identify the Project and Appropriate Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit

The first step in the competitive process is to identify an appropriate applied research project for financial assistance. Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners. Each CESU host university holds a competitively awarded cooperative or joint venture agreement. The partners serve the biological, physical, social, cultural, and engineering disciplines needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context. The multi-disciplinary structure of CESUs makes them well-suited to address federal agency needs for sustainability science. The CESU has the following objectives:

- provide usable knowledge to support informed decision making;
- ensure the independence and objectivity of research;
- create and maintain effective partnerships among the federal agencies and universities to share resources and expertise;
- take full advantage of university resources while benefiting faculty and students;
- encourage professional development of current and future federal scientists, resource managers, and environmental leaders; and
- manage federal resources effectively.

The principal purpose of the financial assistance agreement between NOAA and the CESU member shall be to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation that has been authorized by law and includes substantial involvement by NOAA. Substantial involvement often includes collaboration, guidance, and direction during performance, and review and approval of milestones. The proper use of financial assistance is best determined on a case by case basis by the Grants Officer and legal counsel.

Step 2

Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO)

After identifying an agency objective, the Federal Program Officer shall prepare an FFO.

An FFO is an announcement of funds. The amount available for award may be uncertain and contingent upon an appropriation, but programs can have reasonable expectations that funds will be available for award. On that basis, Federal Program Officers can determine the number of awards they expect to make and the range of amounts of the awards. Federal Program Officers establish a deadline and compile evaluation criteria. The applications are reviewed and the scores are compared to each other as a basis for deciding which application will be funded. It is possible to award lower-scoring awards instead of higher-scoring ones based on program policy factors stated in the FFO. However, the vast majority of competitions are awarded in rank order as established by the technical reviews.

The decision to prepare an FFO shall be based on an agency objective. The FFO shall describe the nature of the project and the components of the required response. The FFO may be directed towards all CESUs or may be targeted towards a specific CESU. The FFO shall be reviewed and cleared by the Grants Officer and the Financial Assistance Law Division.

Step 3

Posting the FFO

The posting of the FFO to grants.gov for public notice is the responsibility of the Grants Management Division, and is accomplished after review and clearance by the Grants Officer and the Financial Assistance Law Division.

Step 4

Merit Review and Request for Proposal

Since the CESU process must allow full competition between CESU universities and partner institutions within the targeted CESU, the selecting official within the Line Office must review all applications in response to the FFO and provide a recommendation to the Grants Officer. The recommendation must be supported by at least three merit reviews from federal personnel with expertise in the field of the proposed work. The complete application is then reviewed by the Grants Officer, and the award is made after it is determined that the application has adhered to all requirements.

Step 5

Application Review Period

After the application is received by NOAA, the anticipated application review period by the Federal Program Officer is two to three months. The application review period is separate from the sixty-day review, analysis, and award period accomplished by the Grants Management Division.

Step 6

Reporting

The financial and progress reporting requirements are outlined in the FFO.

Step 7

Options for Out-Year Funding

The award period is as outlined in the FFO.

Non–Competitive Awards

If the application warrants review on a non-competitive basis, the Federal Program Officer shall provide a written justification for the non-competitive award to the Grants Officer for approval.

If more than five percent (5%) of the total number of awards made under a program within one fiscal year are made on the basis of recipient initiative, the Program Officer and the Grants Officer should examine the current Federal Register notice and FFO, if they exist, and make any corrections deemed necessary to future notices so that the solicitation better reflects the goals or needs of the program. This provision does not prevent non-competitive awards, even if the 5% level is exceeded. However, based on usage of the non-competitive approach, NOAA may elect to request a permanent waiver from the requirement to examine program solicitations for the CESU program as a whole.

The justification for the non-competitive award must be based on the existence of one or more of the conditions listed below, and must provide sufficient information for a decision by the Grants Officer.

(1) **Only One Source Identified**. There may be instances where only one responsible applicant can perform the work of the proposed awardee. The following are some of the circumstances in which this may occur:

(a) The applicant organization has proprietary information necessary for the conduct of the work. In the case of the applicant organization having proprietary information, the Program Officer must describe what the proprietary information is that is offered by the applicant and why it is that no others could possibly possess the information. The Program Officer provides this non-competitive justification documentation. An applicant's claim is not sufficient justification. The Program Officer must state in writing that, based on his or her own expertise or the expertise of others he or she has consulted, the applicant has proprietary information necessary for the conduct of the work.

(b) The applicant organization has made a substantial investment in the activity. In the case of the applicant organization having made a substantial investment in the activity, the nature and amount of that investment should be described. The applicant's receipt of previous federal awards for the activity does not constitute substantial investment. The applicant's own resources must be involved.

(c) The applicant organization is proposing a project that involves a unique idea, method, or approach. In the case of the applicant organization proposing a project with a unique idea, method, or approach, the nature of the idea, method, or approach and what makes it unique should be described.

(d) The applicant organization is the only organization known to possess the capability to perform the work. In the case of the applicant organization being the only one known to possess the capability to perform the work, the Program Officer has to describe how that was determined. The justification could be based on the specific situation involving the project (for example, the recipient needs to be a university that awards doctoral degrees, and the identified recipient is the only one in the targeted geographic area which does that) or the Program Officer's efforts to determine if other organizations can do the work (for example, by contacting other potential recipients to determine if they have the capability or interest in carrying out the proposed project).

(2) **Unusual and Compelling Urgency**. The work to be conducted is of such an unusual and compelling urgency that the public interest would be seriously compromised unless the Program Office is allowed to limit or suspend competition for the proposed award.

(3) **International Agreement**. Competition is precluded by the terms of an international agreement or a treaty between the United States and a foreign government or international organization.

(4) **National Security**. Full and open competition is not required when the Secretary of Commerce determines in writing that public disclosure of the proposed support to be provided under the award would compromise national security.

(5) **Public Interest**. Competition is not required when the Head of the Operating Unit determines in writing that it is not in the public interest in a particular case to seek full and open competition for an award. That determination is delegated to the Assistant Administrator of a Line Office. A rational basis must be set forth in the written determination. This is likely to be the primary basis for CESU usage. Legal counsel has opined that use of a CESU member organization is in the public interest when usage is limited to the scope of the CESU charter.

Broad Agency Announcements

A third approach could be used and that is through the issuance of a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA). This is not an announcement of the availability of any specific amount of funds. It generally states NOAA's or a program's mission, and allows organizations to submit an application to find out if NOAA might be interested. The BAA is usually kept open for two years: applications can be submitted for the duration of the BAA. Applications are reviewed as they come in and decisions to fund are made individually, not in comparison to other applications. A BAA is considered competitive. It provides the standards that will be used when an application is reviewed. A BAA could be issued restricting applications to one, some, or all of the CESUs in which NOAA participates.

Attachment 2

CI Research Themes & Profiles

NAME	HOST INSTITUTE	MEMBER INSTITUTION(S)	RESEARCH THEMES	SOCIAL MEDIA	Director	LINE OFFICE
Cooperative Institutes Managed by NOAA Line Office National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service (NESDIS)						
Cooperative Institute for Climate and Satellites (CICS-M)	University of Maryland College Park	North Carolina State University University of California-Irvine Colorado State University Howard University University of Miami Duke University University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Princeton University City University of New York Columbia University Oregon State University Remote Sensing Systems	• Climate and Satellite Research and Applications • Climate and Satellite Observations and Monitoring • Climate Research and Modeling	CI Website: http://essic.umd.edu/cics	Prof. Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm fernando@essic.umd.edu Tel. 305-776-8128	NESDIS 301-683-3510
Cooperative Institute for Meteorological Satellite Studies (CIMSS)	University of Wisconsin-Madison		• Weather Nowcasting and Forecasting • Clouds and Radiation • Global Hydrological Cycle • Environmental Trends • Climate • Outreach, Education, and Training	CI Website: http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/CIMSS/277457832219	Dr. Steven A. Ackerman 608-263-3647 Steve.Ackerman@ssec.wisc.edu	NESDIS 301-683-3510
Cooperative Institutes Managed by NOAA Line Office National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS)						
Cooperative Institute for the Pacifica Island Region (CIPIR)	University of Hawaii		• Ecosystem Forescasting • Ecosystem Monitoring • Ecosystem - Base Management • Protection and Restoration of Resources • Equatorial Oceanography • Climate Researcha and Impacts Tsunamis and Other Long-period Ocean Waves • Tropical Meteorology	CI Website: www.soest.hawaii.edu/JIMAR	Dr. Mark Merrifield 808-956-7476 markm@soest.hawaii.edu	NMFS 206-860-3208
Cooperative Institutes Managed by NOAA Line Office Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR)						
Cooperative Institutefor Climate Science (CICS-P)	Princeton Univeristy		• Earth System Modeling and Analysis Data Assimilation System Model Applications • Earth	CI Website: http://princeton.edu/cics	Dr. Jorge Sarmiento 609-258-6585 JLS@princeton.edu	OAR 301-734-1091
Cooperative Institute for Alaska Research (CIFAR)	University of Alaska - Faribanks		• Climate Change and Variability • Coastal Hazards • Ecosystem Studies and Forecasting	CI Website: http://www.cifar.uaf.edu	Dr. Susan Sugai susan.sugai@alaska.edu 907-474-5415	OAR 301-734-1091
Cooperative Institute for Limnology and Ecosystem Research (CILER)	University of Michigan	Grand Valley State University Michigan State University Ohio State University Penn State University Stony Brook University University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign University of Minnesota University of Toledo University of Wisconsin	• Ecosystem Forecasting • Invasive Species Control, Impact and Assessment • Observing Systems • Protection and Restoration of Resources • Integrated Assessment	CI Website: http://www.ciler.snre.umich.edu Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cooperative-Institute-for-Limnology-and-Ecosystems-Research/108081629287646 Twitter: http://twitter.com/#!/CILER_UM	Dr. G. Allen Burton 734-763-3601 burtonal@umich.edu	OAR 301-734-1091
Cooperative Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Studies (CIMAS)	University of Miami	Florida Atlantic University Florida International University Florida State University NOVA Southeastern University University of Puerto Rico University of Florida University of South Florida University of the Virgin Islands	• Sustained Ocean and Coastal Observation • Climate Research and Impacts • Ocean Modeling • Ecosystem Modeling and Forecasting • Ecosystem Management • Tropical Weather • Protection and Restoration of Resources	CI Website: http://www.ci-mas.org	Dr. Peter B. Ortner 305-421-4619 portner@rsmas.miami.edu	OAR 301-734-1091
Cooperative Institute for Marine Ecosystems and Climate (CIMEC)	University of California - San Diego	Scripps Institution of Oceanography California State University, Los Angeles Humboldt State University of California, Davis University of California, Los Angeles University of California, Santa Barbara University of California, Santa Cruz	• Climate and Coastal Observations, Analysis, and Prediction • Climate Research and Impacts • Marine Ecosystems • Ecosystem Management	CI Website: http://cimec.ucsd.edu/	Dr. Dave Checkley 858-534-4100 checkley.ucsd.edu Dean Roemmich 858-534-2307 droemmich@ucsd.edu	OAR 301-734-1091

NAME	HOST INSTITUTE	MEMBER INSTITUTION(S)	RESEARCH THEMES	SOCIAL MEDIA	Director	LINE OFFICE
Cooperative Institute for Mesoscale Meteorological Studies (CIMMS)	University of Oklahoma		• Stormscale and mesoscale modeling research and development • Forecast Improvements Research and Development • Impacts of climate change related to extreme weather events • Weather radar research and Development • Social and socioeconomic impacts of severe weather systems.	CI Website: http://www.cimms.ou.edu	Dr. Randy Peppler (Acting) rpeppler@ou.edu Tel. 405-325-6667	OAR 301-734-1091
Cooperative Institute for Marine Resources Studies (CIMRS)	Oregon State University		• Seafloor processes including hydrothermal vents, volcanoes, and the microorganisms that thrive in their vicinity • Marine mammal acoustics which will use acoustic technology to locate and identify marine mammal species, study migration patterns, and study marine mammal responses to the changing ocean environment • Marine ecosystems research to understand how ecosystems function and change; will include efforts to monitor, model and forecast ecosystem processes • Protection and restoration of marine resources which includes development of technology, research tools, and scientific approaches coastal and marine management.	CI Website: http://oregonstate.edu/groups/cimrs/	Dr. Michael A. Banks 541-867-0420 Michael.Banks@oregonstate.edu	OAR/ NMFS 301-734-1091
Cooperative Institute for the North Atlantic Region (CINAR)	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution	Rutgers University University of Maryland-Center for Environmental Science University of Maine Gulf of Maine Research Institute	• Ecosystem Forecasting • Ecosystem Monitoring • Ecosystem Management • Protection and Restoration of Resources • Sustained Ocean Observations and Climate	CI Website: www.cinar.org	Don Anderson 508-289-2351 danderson@whoi.edu	OAR 301-734-1091
Cooperative Institute for Ocean Exploration, Research and Technology (CIOERT)	Florida Atlantic University	University of North Carolina-Wilmington	• Advanced Underwater Technology Development • Shelf Frontier Exploration • Vulnerable Coral Ecosystems Research	CI Website: http://cioert.org Twitter: @cioert YouTube: search by cioert flickr: http://www.flickr.com/photos/cioert	Dr. Sherley A. Pomponi 772-465-2400 ext. 449 spomponi@hboi.fau.edu	OAR 301-734-1091
Cooperative Institute for Research in the Atmosphere (CIRA)	Colorado State University		• Satellite Algorithm Development, Training and Education • Regional to Global Scale Modeling Systems • Data Assimilation • Climate-Weather Processes • Data Distribution	CI Website: http://www.cira.colostate.edu Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/CIRACSU?sk=wall	Dr. Christian Kummerow 970-491-8448 kummerow@cira.colostate.edu	OAR 301-734-1091
Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES)	University of Colorado		• Advanced Modeling and Observing Systems • Climate System Variability • Geodynamics • Planetary Metabolism • Regional Processes • Integrating Activities	CI Website: http://cires.colorado.edu Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/CIRESnews Twitter: http://twitter.com/theCIRESwire Education and Outreach Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/CIRESEducationOutreach	Dr. William Lewis 303-492-6378 william.lewis@colo.edu	OAR 301-734-1091
Joint Institute for the Study of the Atmosphere and Ocean (JISAO)	University of Washington		• Climate Research & Impacts • Seafloor Processes • Tsunami Observations & Modeling • Protection & Restoration of Marine Resources • Environmental Chemistry • Marine Ecosystems • Ocean & Coastal Oceanography	CI Website: http://www.jisao.washington.edu Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/pages/JISAO/134457109912669 YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/user/JISAOvideos?blend=10&ob=5	Dr. Thomas Ackerman 206-221-2767 ackerman@atmos.washington.edu	OAR 301-734-1091
Northern Gulf Institute (NGI)	Mississsippi State University	University of Southern Mississippi Louisiana State University Florida State University Dauphin Island Sea Lab	• Ecosystem Management • Geospatial Data Integration and Visualization in Environmental Science • Climate Change and Climate Variability Effects on Regional Ecosystems • Coastal Hazards	CI Website: www.northerngulfinstitute.org Facebook: : https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Northern-Gulf-Institute/139396636086675 YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/user/NorthernGulfInst	Dr. Robert Moorhead 662-325-2850 rjm@gri.msstate.edu	OAR 301-734-1091

Attachment 3

Use of CESUs in NOAA Qs & As

Use of CESUs in NOAA
Questions and Answers

January 30, 2015

1. What is the difference between the NOAA-wide BAA and the CESU specific BAA?

A NOAA-wide Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) requires that the proposal fit within NOAA's mission and Strategic Plan. It does not specify the type of award mechanism, and it is open to the public for competition.

The CESU-specific BAA has more stringent requirements than the NOAA-wide BAA. Only members of the named CESU are eligible to apply. The award mechanism is limited to Cooperative Agreements only. Further, proposals submitted under this opportunity must not only be consistent with NOAA's mission, but the objectives of the National CESU program that is implemented across Federal Bureaus and agencies.

2. When is it appropriate to create a CESU specific BAA?

This mechanism is best suited to promote competition among member partners of the referenced CESU when a project has not yet been identified to address a named need (e.g., support U.S. leadership of Arctic Council activities or address marine mammal bycatch reduction efforts). However, there is an anticipation of multiple projects formulated if given the opportunity. In short, this is geared for non-solicited proposals.

3. When is it appropriate to use a FFO for a competition?

It is anticipated that the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) mechanism will be the most widely used. This mechanism is appropriate when a research need has been identified with some specifics, within one or more CESU regions, and multiple CESU members are qualified to participate.

4. When is it appropriate to use a RFA?

The Request for Applications (RFA) mechanism is best suited for circumstances whereby a non-competitive award can be justified as outlined in Chapter 8, Section F.1.b of the DOC Grants Manual. As outlined in the Manual, a Non-Competitive Justification Memorandum must be approved by the Line Office Assistant Administrator or designee. The memo would include the following text: *This memorandum justifies making a non-competitive award to The University of [INSERT NAME] pursuant to the requirement of Chapter 8.F.1.b(#) of the Department of Commerce Grant and Cooperative Agreements Manual. These awards do not fall within the scope of a published competitive notice, they have merit, and [INSERT APPROPRIATE CITATION FROM DOC GRANTS MANUAL]*. NOTE: As government policy favors competitive awards, this mechanism should be used sparingly.

5. The top of Page 2 of the guidance refers to "proposed research must not fit within the scope of a Cooperative Institute whereby a similar project has been completed by the CI in the past." When is it appropriate to use a CESU versus a CI?

Please refer to CESU - CI Decision Tree in Appendix 4. The decision tree explains that if the proposed project does not fit within a CI theme (refer to Attachment 2) OR if it does fit into a CI theme but a similar project has not been implemented by the CI in the past, then a

CESU may be used. The FPO will need to do a project search for the CI in Grants Online to gather this information.

6. Why are we unable to use CESU if the research proposals fit within the scope of a Cooperative Institute? Who will determine applicability and or non-applicability?

CIs were competed broadly when they were first established, and NOAA has an interest and obligation to work with them when appropriate. The determination of applicability should begin with the program POC, who should be well-informed about the guidance. Following the decision tree (Attachment 4), if a CESU is appropriate, the FPO, in coordination with the project POC will provide the necessary justification of choosing a CESU rather than a CI in the Grants Online system under "other information" in the Program Officers Checklist.

7. Does the guidance provide provisions for CESU grants that are outside of NMFS Research and who would lead the process for the non-NMFS Line Offices?

As outlined in the Roles and Responsibilities section of the Stepdown Guidance, Line Offices will make recommendations to the respective Science Center Director as the Selecting Official for a specific CESU. The Federal Program Officer will be provided by the LO program where the initiative originates. Final clearance and official award selection is accomplished by the selecting official who is the NOAA Technical Representative of the particular CESU, e.g., the Science Center Director.

8. Will there be a process to coordinate Program priorities/themes to consolidate requirements and avoid duplication of effort?

We are working towards having representation in the Cooperative Research subcommittee of the NOAA Research Council to promote coordination and reduce duplication of effort.

9. Is the infrastructure to support the CESU awards going to be provided at the Regional and Science Center level?

The CESU awards will be processed similar to other grant awards. The infrastructure and support will come from the Federal Program Officer within the Line Office where the initiative originates. However, official award selection and clearance will be done by the Science Center Director or the other body named as NOAA Technical Representative in the Cooperative and Joint Venture Agreement that documents NOAA's membership in a particular CESU.

11. How will the certification of funds work in NOAA Grants Online for CESU grants? Will that happen at the level of office providing the funds? Or, will there be a statement from that office certifying funds availability if executed in Grants Online by another FMC authorizing official, such as the Budget Officer for the NWFSC?

The certification of funds will continue to be done in the Grants Online system. Likewise, if funds are transferred from one program/LO to another, the procedures do not change.

12. For planning purposes how will Program staff communicate their requirements and interest in using the CESU?

Program staff should first ensure that their proposal meets the requirements for a CESU award and have their proposal cleared through their supervisor. Once cleared, they should work with the FPO to have the award opportunity uploaded and cleared through the Grants Online system.

13. What is the lead-time?

The entire process may take approximately 4 to 6 months or longer depending on work load. Try to avoid processing in Quarter 4, the busiest time of year for grant experts. The grant proposal submittal cut-off time also applies to CESU awards (i.e., for FY 15 it is July 10, 2015). As such, please plan accordingly.

14. Who will decide on the best mechanism (e.g. FFO, RFA, BAA)?

The program POC may suggest based on responses to 2-4 of this document. The FPO makes the decision of which award mechanism to use. The choice of the best mechanism is cleared by the NOAA CESU program manager.

15. Will the designated Fisheries Science Centers (as identified in page 3 of the Stepdown Guidance) be expected to provide all the administrative support across several FMC's to include the use of field Federal Program Officers (FPO) to manage the CESU opportunities? Will there be support provided by other NMFS FPO's? If so, what type of support?

We recognize that there may be more administrative burden, and we will evaluate the needs to mitigate this burden as the work load related to CESUs evolves.

16. Will the Fisheries Science Center Advisors serve as selecting officials for just NOAA Fisheries-related projects or for all NOAA-related projects?

The Fisheries Science Center Advisors are identified as the NOAA technical representatives for their respective CESUs and serve on behalf of all of NOAA.

17. Can the Selecting Official delegate their authority to someone else in the Science Center?

Yes.

18. Will the Program Point of Contact be responsible for all Post Award responsibilities to include progress and final report reviews and the potential review of award action or amendment requests?

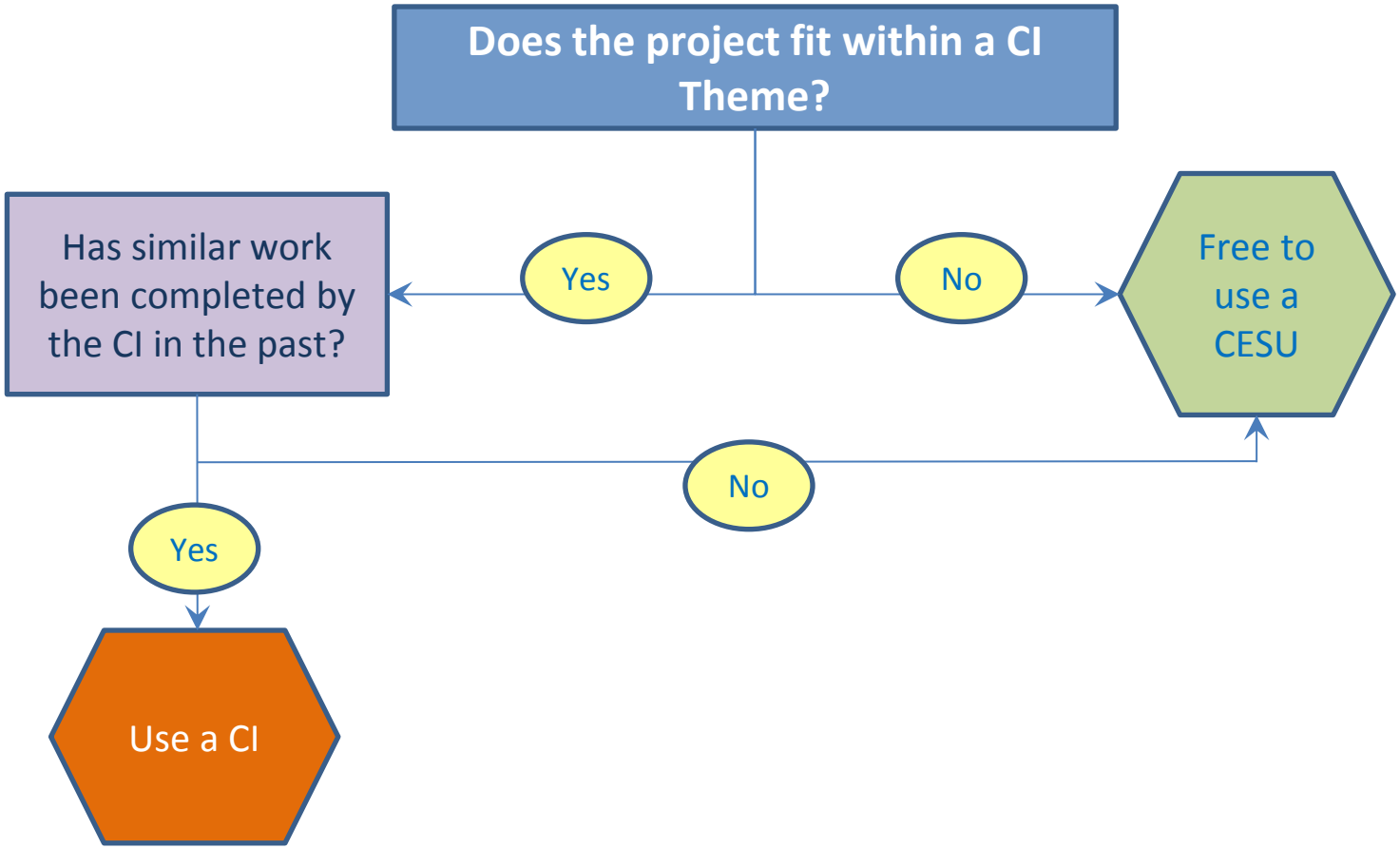
No. The FPO is responsible for ensuring that all post-award activities are completed. However, the Program POC may be needed for technical reviews of post-award progress reports.

Attachment 4

CESU_CI Decision Tree

CESU – CI DECISION TREE

Context: Based on the facts that NOAA has a long standing relationship with the Cooperative Institutes (CI), and each CI has been competed and as an aggregate is considered a NOAA Institutional Program, we need to carefully assess the appropriate award mechanism for future financial assistance in the form of Cooperative Agreements. The following Decision Tree is designed to help you identify the appropriate mechanism and help you formulate the justification language when using a CESU verses a CI. Past CI work is searchable through Grants on Line by LO FPO:



Attachment 5

CESU BAA Template

CESU BROAD AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): [*INSERT LINE OFFICE*], National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: [*INSERT YEAR AND TITLE*]

Announcement Type: [*IDENTIFY OPTIONS*]

Funding Opportunity Number: [*AGENCY-LINE OFFICE-PROGRAM OFFICE-YEAR-7 DIGIT NUMBER Generated by GrantsOnLine*]

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:

Dates: Full applications must be submitted to Grants.gov up to 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time September 30, 201X. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered for funding.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to request applications for special projects and programs associated with NOAA's mission goals. This notice provides the general public with information and guidelines on how NOAA will select proposals and administer discretionary Federal assistance under this CESU Broad Agency Announcement (CESU BAA). This CESU BAA is a mechanism to encourage research, education and outreach, innovative projects, or sponsorships that are not addressed through our competitive discretionary programs. It is not a mechanism for awarding Congressionally directed funds or existing funded awards. Funding for potential projects in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 201X and Fiscal Year 201X appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for any potential activities in this notice. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to review an application, or to award any specific project, or to obligate any available funds.

NOTE: The CESU-specific BAA has more stringent requirements than the NOAA-wide BAA. Only members of the named CESU are eligible to apply. The award mechanism is limited to Cooperative Agreements only. Proposals submitted under this opportunity must be consistent with NOAA's mission and the intent of the National CESU program that is implemented across Federal Bureaus and agencies.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NOAA is soliciting competitive cooperative agreement proposals from eligible applicants to support the management objectives of NOAA that fit within the intent of the National CESU Network Program: to provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners in biological, physical, social, cultural, and engineering disciplines needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context.

B. Program Priorities

As an agency with responsibilities for maintaining and improving the viability of marine and coastal ecosystems, for delivering valuable weather, climate, and water information and services, for understanding the science and consequences of climate change, and for supporting the global commerce and transportation upon which we all depend, NOAA must remain current and responsive in an ever-changing world. We do this in concert with our partners and stakeholders in federal, state, and local governments and private organizations, applying a systematic approach that links our strategic goals through multi-year plans to the daily activities of our employees. Every year we are committed to re-evaluate our progress and priorities, look for efficiencies, and take advantage of new opportunities to improve our information, products, and services.

C. Program Authority

The mission of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is 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. NOAA's authorities to participate in and conduct activities through the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Network include a number of statutes. [INSERT MAIN AUTHORITIES THAT APPLY: 16 U.S.C. 661, 16 U.S.C. 1881c. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. § 661 et seq., National Marine Sanctuaries Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1431 et seq., National Climate Program Act, 15 U.S.C. § 2901 et seq., Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act, 33 U.S.C. § 3601 et seq., Coast and Geodetic Survey Act, 33 U.S.C. § 883a et seq., *Endangered Species Act* 16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq., Marine Mammal Protection Act 16 U.S.C. § 1361 et seq., and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 16 U.S.C. § 1801 et seq.]

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

There are no funds specifically appropriated by Congress for this CESU BAA. Funding for potential projects in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 201X and Fiscal Year 201X appropriations.

B. Project/Award Period

The project budget period is recommended to be XX months in duration [INSERT DURATION. *Awards may be multi-year with a maximum duration of 5 years, depending on the availability of funds*]. Depended upon the availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA /applicant negotiations to include National Environmental Policy Act analysis, and provision of other supporting documentation as requested, Applicants recommended to receive Federal funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

NOAA will fund projects through a cooperative agreement, which requires substantial involvement by NOAA. A cooperative agreement is a financial assistance vehicle that requires substantial involvement by the awarding agency. Substantial involvement means that, after award, NOAA scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role; it is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities. The dominant role and prime responsibility resides with the awardee for the project as a whole, although specific tasks and activities may be shared among the awardees and NOAA. Examples of substantial NOAA involvement may include non-compensated collaboration in research or approval of key stages in the project before subsequent steps are undertaken. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between you and NOAA/Line Office representatives.

Please be specific in describing the substantial involvement by NOAA. Further, the work funded in the cooperative agreement is conducted to support the mission of NOAA and be consistent with the intent of the CESU Program (see I.A. of this document). **Please write the cooperative agreement application with these items in mind.**

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must be members of [INSERT NAME] CESU.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost sharing is not required unless it is determined that a project can only be funded under an authority that requires matching/cost sharing funds.

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., Forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at http://www.grants.gov (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 [INSERT POC AND ADDRESS].

B. Content and Form of Application

1. Format Requirements.

All pages should be single-spaced and must be composed in at least 11-point font with one-inch margins on 8 x 11 paper. The project description may not exceed 15 pages, exclusive of title page, project synopsis, literature cited, budget information, resumes of investigators, and letters of support (if any). Failure to follow the requirements may result in the rejection of the application and subsequent return. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out.

2. Content Requirements.

a. Title Page (1-page limit): The title page identifies the project's title, total budget, start and end dates; and the Principle Investigator's (PI's) and co-PI's names, affiliations, complete mailing addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers and fax numbers. The title page must also identify the specific NOAA office (e.g., NESDIS, NMFS, NOS, NWS, OAR or Office of Education) and the NOAA program targeted by the proposal.

b. Project Synopsis (1-page limit): It is critical that the project synopsis accurately describes the project being proposed and conveys all essential elements of the activities. It is imperative that potential applicants tie their proposals to one of the NOAA mission goals described in Section I.B. of this and state it here in the synopsis.

c. Project Description (15-page limit): The applicant should describe and justify the project being proposed and address each of the evaluation criteria as described below in

Section V. Project descriptions should include clear objectives and specific approaches to achieving those objectives, including methods, timelines, and expected outcomes.

d. Literature Cited: If applicable

e. Resumes for each major participant.

f. NEPA Questionnaire. NOAA may require additional information from the applicant regarding potential environmental impacts prior to reviewing the application.

3. A listing of directly awarded grants and contracts by federal agency, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number, dollar amounts separated by direct/indirect- total costs, period of performance, applicable cost principle, and the identification of any cost limitations and special award terms/conditions applicable to each.

4. Lobbying Certificate – A completed Certification must be signed on behalf of the organization by an official at a level no lower than executive director or chief financial officer. Completion of this form certifies the organization has complied with the requirements and standards on lobbying costs in the development of the indirect cost rate. See Attachment 2 for the required Certificate of Lobbying Costs to be used by Non-Profits and Commercial Entities.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Full applications will be accepted on a rolling basis starting from the publication date of this CESU BAA up to 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on SEPTEMBER 30, 201X.

Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Applications shall be evaluated for funding generally within 3 to 6 months of receipt. An applicant can expect to receive either a rejection notice based on the initial prescreening review (if found ineligible), a rejection notice based on merit review or program restrictions, a request for additional information, and/or an award within that timeframe.

D. 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 the SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372.

All entities receiving this Guidance desiring to claim indirect costs under federal awards using an indirect cost rate must prepare and maintain their completed indirect cost rate proposal for review, as set forth in OMB Circular A-87 (Cost Principles for State, Local, and Federally-recognized Tribal Governments). At a minimum, the following shall be included in each indirect cost proposal:

1. The rates proposed, including subsidiary work sheets and other relevant data, cross referenced and reconciled to the financial data (as noted below). Allocated central service costs will be supported by the summary table included in the approved central service cost allocation plan. This summary table is not required to be submitted with the indirect cost proposal if the central service cost allocation plan for the same fiscal year has been approved by the respective agency and is available to the funding agency.

2. A copy of the financial data (financial statements, comprehensive annual financial report, executive budgets, accounting reports, etc.) upon which the rate is based. Calculated rates should be based on audited data and must support an indirect cost rate type of 'fixed rate with carry-forward'.

3. The approximate amount of direct base costs incurred under federal awards. These costs should be broken out between salaries and wages and other direct costs.

4. A chart showing the organizational structure of the agency during the period for which the proposal applies, along with a functional statement(s) noting the duties and/or responsibilities of all units that comprise the agency.

5. Required certification. Applicants are required to include in the application, documentation of the organization's federally approved indirect cost rate. This Indirect Cost Rate Agreement would be provided to the organization by the organization's respective federal agency. The Agreement must be signed on behalf of the entity by an individual at a level no lower than chief financial officer (or equivalent).

For additional information concerning IDC rates, please see DOC Standard Terms and Conditions, revised January 2013 (pages 6-9) at:
http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/DOC_Standard_Terms_and_Conditions_01_10_2013.pdf

Recipients must complete the above steps applicable to their organization. If the applicant does not already have an approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement in place with another Federal agency, then applicants must submit their Indirect Cost Rate Proposals, per the DOC Standard Grant Terms and Conditions within 90 days after award start date, or indirect costs will not be allowed. The approval process by NOAA may take several weeks.

As of May 2013, recipients no longer shall submit Indirect Cost Rate Proposals to the U.S. Department of Commerce. Recipients shall submit their Proposals to the following:

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division
1325 East West Highway
9th Floor
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

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 Management and Budget's home page at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc

E. Funding Restrictions

We 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. 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 voluntary matching contribution.

CESU Program and NOAA's Grants Management Division staff will review budget information for recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic.

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the relevant OMB Cost Principles, which NOAA anticipates will be located at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. All cost reimbursement sub-awards (subgrants, subcontracts, etc.) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

F. Other Submission Requirements

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number will vary depending on the nature of the proposed project. The applicant should consult the CFDA series 11.400 - 11.481 as well as 11.008, 11.011, and 11.012 and select from the subset of CFDA's applicable to this CESU BAA to select the most accurate program for the proposed project. The CFDA will also provide the reader with the eligibility requirements in order to determine if an applicant can apply under that particular CFDA. Link to the catalog for NOAA programs: https://www.cfda.gov/?s=program&mode=list&tab=searchresults CFDA Line Office CFDA Line Office CFDA Line Office:

11.008 OED
11.011 OAR
11.012 NOS
11.400 NOS/NMFS
11.417 OAR
11.419 NOS
11.420 NOS
11.426 NOS
11.427 NMFS

11.429 NOS
11.430 OAR
11.431 OAR
11.432 OAR
11.433 NMFS
11.436 NMFS
11.437 NMFS
11.438 NMFS
11.439 NMFS
11.440 NESDIS
11.441 NMFS
11.443 NWS
11.444 NMFS
11.445 NMFS
11.449 OAR
11.450 NWS
11.452 NMFS
11.454 NMFS
11.455 NMFS
11.457 NMFS
11.459 OAR
11.460 NOS/OAR
11.462 NWS
11.463 NMFS/NOS
11.467 NWS
11.468 NWS/OAR
11.472 NMFS/NOS
11.473 NOS
11.477 NMFS
11.478 NOS
11.480 NOS
11.481 OED

Use of Grants.Gov is preferred. Applications submitted via the Grants.gov website visit http://www.grants.gov. For those applicants without internet access, applications should be sent to NOAA Federal Program Officer, [INSERT ADDRESS].

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 one-time 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, formerly CCR) 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, which requires renewal at least annually. New registrations take an average of fourteen (14) business days for new registrations. 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.

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 Federal Program Office POC to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and keep a record of it.

3. NOAA 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, NOAA staff 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

NOAA has standardized evaluation criteria for all competitive assistance announcements. The criteria for this CESU BAA are listed below. Applicants are required to adhere to all the noted submission requirements and to provide a demonstrable link and/or to emphasize manner in which study objectives results will serve to support NOAA's mission goals/priorities. Since proposals responding to this CESU BAA may vary significantly in their activities/objectives, assigning a set weight for each evaluation criterion is not feasible but is based on a total possible score of 100. The Program Office and/or Selection Official will determine which of the following criteria and weights will be applied. Some proposals, for example sponsorships, may not be able to address all the criteria like technical/scientific merit. However, it is in your best interest to prepare a proposal that can be easily evaluated against these five criteria.

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the mission goals:

This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities: i.e., How does the proposed activity enhance NOAA's mission goals? Proposals should also address significance/possibilities of securing productive results, i.e., Does this study address an important problem?; If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge be advanced?; What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts or methods that drive this field?; What effect will the project have on improving public understanding of the role the ocean, coasts, and atmosphere in the global ecosystem? Proposals may also be scored for innovation, i.e., Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches or methods? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?

2. Technical/scientific merit:

This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Proposals should address the approach/soundness of design: i.e., Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the audiences to be engaged through the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics? This criterion should also address the applicant's proposed methods for monitoring, measuring, and evaluating the success or failure of the project, i.e., What are they? Are they appropriate?

3. Overall qualifications of applicants:

This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. If appropriate, proposals should also address the physical environment and collaboration, if any, i.e.,

Does the environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Do the proposed experiments or activities take advantage of unique features of the intended environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements?

4. Project costs:

The Budget is evaluated to determine if the cost is reasonable, allowable, allocable and necessary it is realistic, and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

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 environmental resources. For example, how will the outcomes of the project be communicated to NOAA and the interested public to ensure it has met the project objectives over the short, medium or long term? Does the project address any of the goals or employ any of the strategies of the NOAA Education Plan (http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/NOAA_Ed_Plan.pdf)?

B. Review and Selection Process

If NOAA decides to review an application, an initial administrative review will be conducted to determine eligibility for award, compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. This review includes determining whether:

1. Sufficient funds are available in the budget of the program office receiving the application to support the proposed project;

2. Statutory authority exists to provide financial assistance for the project or organization;

3. A complete application package has been submitted;

4. The Project Description/Narrative is consistent with one or more of NOAA’s mission goals;

5. The proposal falls within the scope of an existing NOAA competitive announcement for Federal Funding Opportunities or duplicates an existing nondiscretionary project announced or awarded in FY09, FY10, FY11, FY12, FY13, FY14, or FY15 (if it does, it cannot be funded under this announcement);

6. The work in the proposal directly benefits NOAA (if it will, it should be supported by a procurement contract, not a financial assistance award which cannot be funded under this announcement, as provided in 31 U.S.C. 6303).

Applications not passing this initial review will not be considered further for funding through this CESU BAA, and will not receive further review. NOAA will evaluate

proposal(s) that pass this initial review and comply with all the requirements under this CESU BAA individually (i.e., proposals will be not compared to each other). A merit review will be conducted by mail reviewers and/or peer panel reviewers. Each reviewer will individually evaluate the proposal(s) using the evaluation criteria provided above; a minimum of three merit reviewers per proposal is required. More than three reviewers may be used based on the complexity of the application. The reviewers may be any combination of Federal and/or non-federal personnel. The proposal(s) will be individually scored (i.e., a consensus is not reached) unless all reviewers are Federal employees. If all of the reviewers are Federal employees, the program officer has the discretion to authorize a score based on consensus. NOAA selects evaluators on the basis of their professional qualifications and expertise as related to the unique characteristics of the proposal. The NOAA Program Officer will assess the evaluations and make a fund or do-not-fund recommendation to the Selecting Official with an explanation of the reasons for the recommendation. Any application considered for funding may be required to address the issues raised in the evaluation of the proposal by the reviewers, Program Officer, Selecting Official, and/or Grants Officer before an award is issued.

7. Applications not selected for funding in FY201X or FY201X may be considered for funding from FY201X, but may be required to revalidate the terms of the original application or resubmit in the next CESU BAA cycle if one is published. The Program Officer, Selecting Official and/or Grants Officer may negotiate the final funding level of the proposal with the intended applicant. The Selecting Official makes the final recommendation for award to the NOAA Grants Officer who is authorized to commit the Federal Government and obligate the funds.

C. Selection Factors

Not Applicable.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to be made three to six months after receipt by NOAA of the full application. Given this time frame, applicants applying in Fiscal Year 201X should take into consideration that submissions received after March 31, 201X may not be able to be awarded in FY201X (October 1, 201X through September 30, 201X).

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive notification from a CESU 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. Official notification of funding, signed by a 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 submission was not recommended for funding or it was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in IV.B (Content and Form of Application). Unselected paper applications will be returned to the applicant.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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 Management Division, 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.

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements.

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on December 17, 2012 (77 FR 74634). You may obtain a copy of this notice by contacting the agency contact, or by going to the website at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html. Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact should furnish information requested to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

2. Limitation of Liability.

Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of FY 2015 Congressional appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated 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.

3. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

If recommended for funding, applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact will be asked to furnish sufficient information to assist NOAA in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for each project which seeks NOAA funding. Detailed information on NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA web site: www.nepa.noaa.gov, including our NOAA Administrative order 216-6 for NEPA, www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.hhs.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm.

If needed by NOAA for NEPA assessment, applicants will be asked 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. The 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.

4. Unpaid or delinquent tax liability.

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives certifying that the corporation has no Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

5. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-

tier sub-awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over $25,000.

C. Reporting

Grant recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. All financial reports shall be submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division in accordance with the award conditions via NOAA's Grants Online. Performance reports should be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer (INSERT POC, ADDRESS). Electronic submission of performance reports via NOAA's Grants Online web based software is preferred method and is strongly encouraged; however in special circumstances the Program Officer will accept hard copies. All reports will be submitted in accordance to the NOAA Special Award Conditions. The comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration.

VII. Agency Contacts

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Daniel Namur
Phone Number: 301-427-8730
Hqtr. Route: F/MB2
Bldg: SSMC3 Rm: 14358
1315 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282

National Ocean Service (NOS)
Jane Piercy
Phone Number: 301-713-3050 x161
Hqtr. Route: N/MB3
Bldg: SSMC4 Rm: 13250, Rm 13267
1305 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring MD 20910-3281

National Weather Service (NWS)
Carla Kirby
Phone: 301-427-6923
Hqtr. Route: W/CFO2
Building: SSMC2 Room: 18366
1325 East West Hwy
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283

Office of Atmospheric Research (OAR)
Brenda Alford

Phone Number: 301-734-1174
Hqrt. Route: R/CF07
Bldg: SSMC3 Rm: 11618
1315 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring MD 20910-3282

NOAA Office of Education (OED)
Carrie McDougall
Phone Number: 202-482-0875
Bldg: HCHB Room: 6863
1401 CONSTITUTION AVE., NW
Washington DC 20230-0001

National Environmental Satellite Data Information Service (NESDIS)
Ingrid Guch
Phone Number: 301-683-3510
Bldg: NCWCP, Room: 2612
5830 University Research Court
College Park MD 20740

VIII. Other Information

FOIA- Freedom of Information Act

Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

Attachment 6

FFO Template for CESUs

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): [*INSERT LINE OFFICE*], National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: [*INSERT YEAR AND TITLE*]

Announcement Type: [*IDENTIFY OPTIONS*]

Funding Opportunity Number: [*AGENCY-LINE OFFICE-PROGRAM OFFICE-YEAR-7 DIGIT NUMBER Generated by GrantsOnLine*]

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:

Dates: To be considered timely, applications must be received and validated by http://www.Grants.Gov (Grants.gov) by 5:00 p.m., EST, on Month, Day, 201X. Use of Grants.Gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, applications postmarked or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., EST may be accepted. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received more than five calendar days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail (e-mail) applications will be accepted.

When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that you are encouraged to apply through Grants.Gov. This electronic submission system is relatively complex for the first time users and involves several preliminary registrations to be completed before your application can be submitted. If you have already used Grants.Gov, the required registrations may have already been completed. Please allow sufficient time for the application to be submitted electronically and for possible computer delays. IMPORTANT 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.

For those who do not have access to the internet, one signed original and two hard copy applications must be received by the established due date for the program at the following address: [INSERT ADDRESS].

Funding Opportunity Description: [Insert Summary]

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NOAA is soliciting competitive grant proposals from eligible applicants to support the management objectives of NOAA that fit within the intent of the National CESU Network Program: to provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners in biological, physical, social, cultural, and engineering disciplines needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context. Specifically, for this effort NOAA is seeking proposal that meet the following initiatives: 1) XXX, and 2) YYY, etc…

B. Program Priorities

Each application must address and list on the application cover sheet at least one of the priority areas listed below. Note: Priorities are not listed in order of importance:

1. XXX.
2. YYY.

C. Program Authority

The mission of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is 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. NOAA's authorities to participate in and conduct activities through the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Network include a number of statutes. [INSERT MAIN AUTHORITIES THAT APPLY: 16 U.S.C. 661, 16 U.S.C. 1881c. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. § 661 et seq., National Marine Sanctuaries Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1431 et seq., National Climate Program Act, 15 U.S.C. § 2901 et seq., Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act, 33 U.S.C. § 3601 et seq., Coast and Geodetic Survey Act, 33 U.S.C. § 883a et seq., **Endangered Species Act** 16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq., Marine Mammal Protection Act 16 U.S.C. § 1361 et seq., and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 16 U.S.C. § 1801 et seq.]

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Depending upon the availability of FY 201- appropriations, NOAA anticipates that approximately $XXX,000 may be available to fund new projects under this competition. The NOAA Program anticipates that typical awards range from [INSERT: X-X]. The number of awards made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for each project, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and the amount of funds made available to the specific NOAA Line Office Program. There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by the same applicant during this competitive solicitation: however, multiple applications submitted by the same applicant must clearly identify different

projects, and each application will be rated individually in the competitive review process. If you have several projects that you are seeking funding for, submit a separate application for each project; do not consolidate several projects into one application.

B. Project/Award Period

The project budget period is recommended to be XX months in duration [INSERT DURATION. *Awards may be multi-year with a maximum duration of 5 years, depending on the availability of funds*]. The earliest start date for the project will be [INSERT DATE]. Dependent upon the availability of Federal funding as provided by Congress, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations include National Environmental Policy Act analysis, and provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Applicants to receive Federal funding may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Under this solicitation, NOAA/[INSERT LINE OFFICE] will fund the projects under the 201X [INSERT PROGRAM NAME] as a cooperative agreement. The government will be substantially involved in the issuance of cooperative agreements A cooperative agreement is a financial assistance vehicle that requires substantial involvement by the awarding agency. Substantial involvement means that, after award, NOAA scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role; it is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities. The dominant role and prime responsibility resides with the awardee for the project as a whole, although specific tasks and activities may be shared among the awardees and NOAA. Examples of substantial NOAA involvement may include non-compensated collaboration in research or approval of key stages in the project before subsequent steps are undertaken. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between you and NOAA/Line Office representatives.

Please be specific in describing the substantial involvement by NOAA. Further, the work funded in the cooperative agreement is conducted to support the mission of NOAA and be consistent with the intent of the CESU Program (see I.A. of this document). **Please write the cooperative agreement application with these items in mind.**

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are non-federal partner institutions of [INSERT **CESU** NAME].

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or matching is required under this program

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., Forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at http://www.grants.gov (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 [INSERT POC AND ADDRESS].

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications must include all content items and form requirement referenced below. Failure to do so will result in the application being returned without review.

Where the applicant is an eligible nonprofit organization, which has not previously received NOAA support, it must submit proof of its status with its application. Any of the following would give evidence of such status:

1. A reference to the applicant in the Internal Revenue Service's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations under Section 501(c) of the IRS Code;

2. A copy of a currently valid IRS tax exemption certificate on which the applicant is named;

3. A statement from a state taxing authority or state's attorney general certifying that the applicant has non-profit status and that none of the net earnings accrue to any private shareholder;

4. A certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes nonprofit status; or

5. Any of the above proof regarding a parent organization, if one exists, and a statement signed by the parent organization that the applicant is a local nonprofit affiliate.

Proposals must adhere to all provisions set forth below. Failure to do so will result in the application being returned without review.

Proposals must include a project narrative giving detail on the proposed work to be performed by the recipient, how it plans to accomplish such tasks, and its related benefits and monetary costs. Proposals may not exceed 10 pages of double-spaced, white 8-1/2" x 11" bond paper exclusive of the required Application for Federal Assistance forms and documentation described below. A minimum 12-point font size is required. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations are not included in this 10-page limitation. Abbreviated CVs or resumes should be appended to each application; appended material must not exceed a total of 15-pages in length and can include any letters of endorsement, an indirect cost rate agreement, permit information, or any other supporting information. All information needed for a comprehensive review of the proposal should be found in the Project narrative and required Federal financial assistance application forms described below. The edition of the forms contained at the Grants.gov website or provided by NOAA in response to a request for hard copy must be used.

The following Standard Forms (SF) are required as part of each application: Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424); Budget Information, Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A);

Assurances, Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B); Certification Regarding Lobbying (CD-511); and, if applicable, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL). These forms are available for download from the NOAA Grants Online application package.

Proposals must include the following information:

1. Title Page

This page shall provide the project title, project duration, applicant name(s), name(s) of the Principal Investigator (or Project Manager) and any Co-Investigators (or Co-Managers), complete contact information (address, telephone, fax, email, and phone number) of the applicant(s), and a statement regarding the Federal, non-Federal, and total costs of the project.

2. Project Summary

Provide a brief summary 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. This summary 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. Project milestones and the timelines (e.g. the number of months) necessary to meet them should be discussed.

(c) 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.

(d) 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.

(e) 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.

(f) Project management: Describe how the project will be organized and managed and who will be responsible for carrying out project activities **in coordination with the NOAA program office**. 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.

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. Multi-year applications must include budget information for each year of the proposed activity.

Applications must include SF- 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.

5. Appendices

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 endorsement are strongly recommended.

C. Submission Dates and Times

To be considered timely, applications must be received and validated by http://www.Grants.Gov (Grants.gov) by 5:00 p.m., EST, on Month, Day, 201X. Use of Grants.Gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, applications postmarked or provided to a delivery service by 5:00 p.m., EST may be accepted. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received more than five calendar days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail (e-mail) applications will be accepted.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on Form 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.

E. Funding Restrictions

We 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. 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 voluntary matching contribution.

CESU Program and NOAA's Grants Management Division staff will review budget information for recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the relevant OMB Cost Principles, which NOAA anticipates will be located at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. All sub-awards or contracts under awards are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Applications submitted via the Grants.gov website visit http://www.grants.gov. For those applicants without internet access, applications should be sent to NOAA Federal Program Officer, [INSERT ADDRESS].

Registration Process for Grants.Gov

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 one-time 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, formerly CCR) 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, which requires renewal at least annually. New registrations take an average of fourteen (14) business days for new registrations. 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.

(d) The Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number will vary depending on the nature of the proposed project. The applicant should consult the CFDA series 11.400 - 11.481 as well as 11.008, 11.011, and 11.012 and select from the subset of CFDA's applicable to this CESU BAA to select the most accurate program for the proposed project. The CFDA will also provide the reader with the eligibility requirements in order to determine if an applicant can apply under that particular CFDA. Link to the catalog for NOAA programs: https://www.cfda.gov/?s=program&mode=list&tab=searchresults

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 Federal Program Office POC to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and keep a record of it.

3. NOAA 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, NOAA staff 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 of which is indicated below in parenthesis. Written comments are required to justify provided scores in 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 (30 points). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities.

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (30 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.

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. Reviewers will consider previous related experience and qualifications of the project's PM or PI, Co-Manager(s) or Co-Investigator(s) and other personnel, including designated contractors, consultants, and cooperators. Reviewers will also consider past award performance of the applicant(s) and PM/PI.

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.

5. Outreach and Education (10 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.

B. Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 3 steps: initial screening, technical review, and final selection by the Selecting Official. The Selecting Official will be the Science Center Director or the NOAA Technical Representative identified in the Cooperative and Joint Venture Agreement of the CESU.

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 nonresponsive 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. Technical Review - After the initial screening, independent written technical evaluations from three or more appropriate federal, private or public sector experts (e.g. industry, academia, or governmental experts) with subject matter expertise will be obtained to determine the technical merit of the proposal. Their evaluation will be based solely on the information included in the application based and in accordance with the criteria described in Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. No consensus advice will be given. 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 technical reviewer identity to the maximum extent permitted by law. Following completion of the technical review, the individual technical review scores will be averaged to determine the final technical score for each application. Applications will be ranked in descending order by their final technical scores.

3. Funding Recommendation - After applications have undergone technical review, the Selecting Official will make the final decision regarding which applications will be recommended for funding based upon the numerical rankings and evaluations of the applications

Not all activities submitted under a single application may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selection Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate. For the proposal to be selected for funding the applicant may be required to modify objectives, work plans and budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. Awards are not necessarily made to the highest ranked applications.

C. Selection Factors

The Science Center Director (or the NOAA Technical Representative identified in the Cooperative and Joint Venture Agreement of the CESU), as the Selection Official, will review the funding recommendation and comments to determine which applications will be recommended to the NOAA Grants Officer. The Selection Official shall recommend proposals to the NOAA Grants Officer for funding in the rank order unless the applicant is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funds;

2. Balance/distribution of funds;

   (a) geographically;

   (b) by research areas; and

(c) 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 noted in Section I.A. & I.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 and/or participation of targeted groups; and

7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the 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 Month year. The earliest start date for projects will be Month year, dependent upon the 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 CESU 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. Official notification of funding, signed by a 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 submission was not recommended for funding or it was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in IV.B (Content and Form of Application). Unselected paper applications will be returned to the applicant.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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.

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements.

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on December 17, 2012 (77 FR 74634). You may obtain a copy of this notice by contacting the agency contact, or by going to the website at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html. Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact should furnish information requested to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

2. Limitation of Liability.

Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of FY 2015 Congressional appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated 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.

3. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

If recommended for funding, applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact will be asked to furnish sufficient information to assist NOAA in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for each project which seeks NOAA funding. Detailed information on NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA web site: www.nepa.noaa.gov, including our NOAA Administrative order 216-6 for NEPA, www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.hhs.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm.

If needed by NOAA for NEPA assessment, applicants will be asked 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. The 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.

4. Unpaid or delinquent tax liability.

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives certifying that the corporation has no Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

5. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over $25,000.

C. Reporting

Grant recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. All financial reports shall be submitted to NOAA's Grants Management Division in accordance with the award conditions via NOAA's Grants Online. Performance reports should be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer (INSERT POC, ADDRESS). Electronic submission of performance reports via NOAA's Grants Online web based software is preferred method and is strongly encouraged; however in special circumstances the Program Officer will accept hard copies. All reports will be submitted in accordance to the NOAA Special Award Conditions. The comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration.

VII. Agency Contacts

Questions and answers can be found in [INSERT Link]. If you have any additional questions regarding this proposal solicitation, please contact either [INSERT POC, ADDRESS] or email at xxx.yyy@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

U.S. Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, "Public Information." These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information." Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

Data Sharing Plan - Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable

to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

1. Unless otherwise noted in this federal funding announcement, a Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as an appendix. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The Data/Information Sharing Plan will be reviewed as part of the NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria, Item 1 -- Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Mission Goals.

2. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data.

3. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions. Additionally, PIs must indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past. Information on NOAA's Data Management Policy is available under:

http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.pdf

Attachment 7

RFA Template

Application Instructions for CESU Cooperative Agreement
Request for Award (RFA) Non-Competitive Grant

Submission Date
Application must be submitted electronically via the grants.gov web site (http://www.grants.gov) for **_____ on or before Month Day, Year**.

Project Duration
The project duration date for the _____ project is: MM/DD/YY – MM/DD/YY. [*Awards may be multi-year with a maximum duration of 5 years, depending on the availability of funds.*]

Project Type/Structure
The project will be awarded as a non-competitive cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is a financial assistance vehicle that requires substantial involvement by the awarding agency. Substantial involvement means that, after award, NOAA scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role; it is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities. The dominant role and prime responsibility resides with the awardee for the project as a whole, although specific tasks and activities may be shared among the awardees and NOAA. Examples of substantial NOAA involvement may include non-compensated collaboration in research or approval of key stages in the project before subsequent steps are undertaken. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between you and NOAA/Line Office representatives.

Please be specific in describing the substantial involvement by NOAA. Further, the work funded in the cooperative agreement is conducted to support the mission of NOAA and be consistent with the intent of the CESU Program to provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners in biological, physical, social, cultural, and engineering disciplines needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context. **Please write the cooperative agreement application with these items in mind.**

Project Objective
The project must fit within the intent of the National CESU Network Program (see above).

Program Authority
The mission of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is 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. NOAA's authorities to participate in and conduct activities through the CESU Network include a number of statutes. [INSERT MAIN AUTHORITIES THAT APPLY: 16 U.S.C. 661, 16 U.S.C. 1881c. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. § 661 et seq., National Marine Sanctuaries Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1431 et seq., National Climate Program Act, 15 U.S.C. § 2901 et seq., Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act, 33 U.S.C. § 3601 et seq., Coast and Geodetic Survey Act, 33 U.S.C. § 883a et seq., ***Endangered Species Act*** 16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq., Marine Mammal Protection Act 16 U.S.C. § 1361 et seq., and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 16 U.S.C. § 1801 et seq.]

Funding Amount
Funding amounts for each applicant in FY20XX are as follows. Any outyear amounts should be negotiated in advance of submission if it is decided a multi-year application is appropriate.

Grantee	Total
[INSERT NAME]	$XX,XXX

Federal Program Officer Contact
[INSERT NAME, EMAIL, PHONE NUMBER]

Required Forms/Information
The following forms and documents are required to process your application. *All must be completed on the grants.gov website unless otherwise noted.*

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. Please note that the program under which these funds are available is Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number [XX.XXX].

- SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs

- SF-424B, Assurances, Non-Construction Program

- CD-511, Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Responsibility Matters, Drug Free Workplace Requirements, and Lobbying.

- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities---form should only be submitted to the government if the applicant is actually reporting lobbying activities.

- CD-512, Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Transactions, is a form that remains in the applicant's file. Applicants should not submit the CD-512 to the government. (Form unavailable at grants.gov. Download form at http://ocio.os.doc.gov/s/groups/public/@doc/@os/@ocio/@oitpp/documents/content/dev01_002531.pdf.

- Project Summary. The project summary should provide a brief (half 8.5" x 11" page maximum) description of work to be accomplished. (This description could be used for public notification of funding by the NOAA Grants Management Division and should be prepared to be readable by a broad audience.) Include a section describing substantial federal involvement in the project (specifically what role/activities will NOAA play/conduct). Also include the following information:

    - Project Name/Title

    - Project Dates

    - Recipient Institution

- Primary Contact (name, address, phone, fax, e-mail)
- Project Web site (if any)

- Project Description. The program description portion of the application should not exceed the equivalent of 10 pages (12 point font, 1 inch margins). Include the following information:
  - Background. Provide sufficient background information for NOAA and non-NOAA readers to understand the significance of the proposed project. Summarize the problem to be addressed and the status of ongoing efforts to address the identified needs. If the project has already received funding, describe the accomplishments of the project to date. Summarize the relationship of the proposed work to other regional or national efforts.
  - Goal(s) and Objective(s). Describe in the narrative the specific project goals and objectives to be achieved. Describe and define any collaborations and involvement of NOAA personnel in the project. Recipients will be required to submit quarterly progress reports in which progress against these goals and objectives will be reported.
  - Approach. Provide a general work plan that identifies specific tasks to be accomplished; explains any technical approach needed to accomplish the tasks; identifies the roles of any partners and cooperators; and identifies potential obstacles to successful completion of the goals and objectives.
  - Benefits. Identify the benefits that will be achieved as a result of this effort, both to the recipient and the general public as a whole.
  - Milestone Schedule. If applicable, display time lines for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products, and key project out comes.

- Budget Detail. The sub-totals by cost category should match the figures on the SF-424A and include a narrative justification of the budget. Categories should include the following:
  - Personnel: Identify principle investigator and other key personnel, and indicate number of months each individual will be working on the project, compensation rate, etc.
  - Equipment: Itemize and describe the intended use of equipment greater than $5,000 in value to be purchased under the award.
  - Travel: Provide detailed breakdown of known travel including destinations, airfare, per diem mileage and other associated costs.
  - Contractual: Each subcontract should be listed as a separate item.

- Other costs: As appropriate---photo copying, long distance charges, etc.

- Copy of most recent approved negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with the Federal government that covers the award period.

- Vitas of principal investigator(s).

- Conflict of Interest Statement. This applies if the applicant is employing a former (less than 5 years) Department of Commerce (DOC) employee who will represent the application before DOC or another Federal Agency regarding this application and/or subsequent award, or who has been involved in the merit review and/or selection process. If this is the case, identify person(s), list their period of DOC employment, and describe their involvement in this project and/or NOAA grant program. Supporting documentation must be submitted with the application. If there is no conflict of interest, a statement to this effect will suffice.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Review

As required by NEPA, NOAA must analyze the potential impacts of applications that request Federal Funding. New projects that have not undergone a NEPA review will be required to do so and should anticipate working with the Federal Program Office to satisfy this requirement. Continuing projects that have substantially changed their scope of work may also need to be reviewed.