

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: Climate Program Office for FY 2012

Announcement Type: Initial

Federal Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-CPO-2012-2003041

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.431, Climate and Atmospheric Research.

Dates: Full applications for all Competitions (except for the International Research and Applications Project) must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, October 3, 2011. Full applications for the International Research and Applications Project must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, November 2, 2011.

#### Funding Opportunity Description:

Changing climate confronts society with significant economic, health, safety, and national security challenges. NOAA advances scientific and technical programs to help society cope with, and adapt to, today's variations in climate and to prepare for tomorrow's. Toward this end, the agency conducts and supports climate research, observations, modeling, information management, assessments, interdisciplinary decision support research, outreach, education, and stakeholder partnership development. These investments are key to NOAA's mission of "Science, Service, and Stewardship" and are guided by the agency's vision to create and sustain enhanced resilience in ecosystems, communities, and economies, as described in NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan (NGSP)<sup>1</sup>.

Fostering climate adaptation and mitigation, and, specifically, the development of an informed society anticipating and responding to climate and its impacts – is one of the primary pathways through which NOAA plans to advance its mission. The NGSP outlines NOAA's five-year climate objectives: 1) Improved scientific understanding of the changing climate system and its impacts; 2) Assessments of current and future states of the climate system that identify potential impacts and inform science, service, and stewardship decisions; 3) Mitigation and adaptation choices supported by sustained, reliable, and timely climate services; and 4) A climate-literate public that understands its vulnerabilities to a changing climate and makes informed decisions. NOAA works in

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.noaa.gov/ngsp.html>

partnership with Federal, academic, private, and international research entities, and places a substantial emphasis on productive partnerships and interactions with decision makers and other stakeholders.

Within this context, NOAA's Climate Program Office (CPO) manages competitive research programs conducted in regions across the United States, at national and international scales, and globally. The CPO also provides strategic guidance and oversight for the agency's climate science and services programs and helps to integrate capabilities from across the agency to provide enhanced services to its constituents.

Achieving the first of the NGSP climate objectives, an improved scientific understanding of the changing climate system and its impacts, requires a number of core capabilities be supported. These core capabilities can be broadly categorized to include: (a) understanding and modeling, (b) observing systems, data stewardship, and climate monitoring, (c) predictions and projections, and (d) integrated service development and decision support.

These core capabilities, in turn, will focus initially on the following societal challenges identified in the NGSP as early evidence of progress to be made by NOAA in providing sustained, reliable, and timely climate services:

- Climate Impacts on Water Resources
- Coasts and Climate Resilience
- Sustainability of Marine Ecosystems
- Changes in Extremes of Weather and Climate
- Information for Mitigating Climate Change

Each of the Competitions announced in this Federal Funding Opportunity addresses one or more of these core capabilities or societal challenges. It is expected that applications submitted in response to this Opportunity will identify their relevance to NOAA's climate science and services by indicating which core capabilities and/or societal challenges will be addressed by the proposed work. Application abstracts must include a paragraph describing the work's relevance to the NGSP's long-term goal of climate adaptation and mitigation as well as to the Competition that is being targeted.

In FY 2012, we estimate that \$15.5 million will be available for approximately 60 new awards, pending budget appropriations. It is anticipated that most awards will be at a funding level between \$50,000 and \$200,000 per year, with some exceptions for larger awards. Investigators are highly encouraged to visit the CPO website <http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/opportunities> for information prior to submitting applications.

## FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

#### A. Program Objective

Changing climate confronts society with significant economic, health, safety, and national security challenges. NOAA advances scientific and technical programs to help society cope with, and adapt to, today's variations in climate and to prepare for tomorrow's. Toward this end, the agency conducts and supports climate research, observations, modeling, information management, assessments, interdisciplinary decision support research, outreach, education, and stakeholder partnership development. These investments are key to NOAA's mission of "Science, Service, and Stewardship" and are guided by the agency's vision to create and sustain enhanced resilience in ecosystems, communities, and economies, as described in NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan (NGSP)<sup>2</sup>.

Fostering climate adaptation and mitigation, and, specifically, the development of an informed society anticipating and responding to climate and its impacts – is one of the primary pathways through which NOAA plans to advance its mission. The NGSP outlines NOAA's five-year climate objectives: 1) Improved scientific understanding of the changing climate system and its impacts; 2) Assessments of current and future states of the climate system that identify potential impacts and inform science, service, and stewardship decisions; 3) Mitigation and adaptation choices supported by sustained, reliable, and timely climate services; and 4) A climate-literate public that understands its vulnerabilities to a changing climate and makes informed decisions. NOAA works in partnership with Federal, academic, private, and international research entities, and places a substantial emphasis on productive partnerships and interactions with decision makers and other stakeholders.

Within this context, NOAA's Climate Program Office (CPO) manages competitive research programs in which NOAA funds high-priority climate science, assessments, decision support research, outreach, education, and capacity-building activities designed to advance our understanding of Earth's climate system, and to foster the application of this knowledge in risk management and adaptation efforts. The CPO supports research that is conducted in regions across the United States, at national and international scales, and globally. The CPO also provides strategic guidance for the agency's climate science and services programs and supports NOAA's contributions to the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) and the interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force. It also plays an active role in numerous international climate activities, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Global Framework for Climate Services initiative launched by the 2009 Third World Climate Conference.

In seeking to advance the NGSP climate objective of an improved scientific

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.noaa.gov/ngsp.html>

understanding of the changing climate system and its impacts, the CPO supports research that advances core capabilities in (a) understanding and modeling, (b) observing systems, data stewardship, and climate monitoring, (c) predictions and projections, and (d) integrated service development and decision support.

These core capabilities are, in turn, intended to advance NOAA's ability to provide sustained, reliable, and timely climate services dealing initially, according to the NGSP, with the following broad, societal challenge areas: (a) climate impacts on water resources, (b) coasts and climate resilience, (c) sustainability of marine ecosystems, (d) changes in extremes of weather and climate, and (e) information for mitigating climate change. The CPO, therefore, supports research that addresses these societal challenges.

## B. Program Priorities

In FY 2012, NOAA will accept individual applications for 12 Competitions, organized around CPO's four major Programs: Climate Observations and Monitoring; Earth System Science (ESS); Modeling, Analysis, Predictions, and Projections (MAPP); and Climate and Societal Interactions (CSI). Investigators are highly encouraged to learn more about CPO, its Programs in general, and specific Program priorities for FY2012 prior to submitting applications. *This information, along with the names and contact information of relevant Competition Managers, is provided in Program information sheets that can be found at the following website: <http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/opportunities>.*

The 12 competitions are as follows:

### **Climate Observations and Monitoring Program**

**ESS - Understanding and Improving Prediction of Tropical Convection in Support of DYNAMO**

**ESS - Global Carbon Cycle**

**ESS - Aerosols, Atmospheric Chemistry, and Climate**

**MAPP – Advance intra-seasonal to decadal climate prediction**

**MAPP – Develop an experimental National Multi-Model Ensemble climate prediction system**

**MAPP – Modeling of Intra-Americas Sea climate processes associated with extremes over North America**

**CSI-International Research and Applications Project (IRAP)**

**CSI-Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) teams**

**CSI-Sectoral Applications Research Program (SARP)**

**CSI-Coastal and Ocean Climate Applications (COCA)**

**CSI-COCA and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System partnership on coastal adaptation**

Note that the competition for the CSI-International Research and Applications Project (IRAP) is intended to support elements of work done previously by the International Research Institute for Climate and Society under a long-standing cooperative agreement with NOAA that is expiring.

### 1. Climate Observations and Monitoring Program

The Climate Observations and Monitoring (COM) Program designs, deploys, and maintains an integrated global network of oceanic and atmospheric observing instruments to produce continuous records and analyses of a range of oceanic and atmospheric

parameters. Within the monitoring activities of COM, a key goal is to ensure that the data sets researchers need to understand the climate system are available for analysis. The monitoring effort also provides data and information management support for national and international climate assessment projects.

This year's COM competition focuses on monitoring. Proposals are not being solicited to support the observational elements of the program. An overarching theme is elucidation of historical and projected weather and climate extremes, represented by activities in the following three research areas:

1. *Climate data set development and diagnostics* - development of long and continuous data sets of sufficient quality to identify climate variability and change
2. *Climate change detection and attribution* - documenting and attributing changes at continental to regional scales (in joint partnership with DoE)
3. *Paleoclimatology* - observation and model-based, high-quality reconstructions of the climate of the late Holocene

An information sheet containing further details and Points of Contact can be found at <http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/opportunities/>

## 2. Earth System Science

The Earth System Science (ESS) program aims to provide a process-level understanding of the climate system through observation, modeling, analysis, and field studies to support the development of improved climate models and predictions. Research supported by ESS advances understanding of: 1) the behavior and predictability of land-atmosphere-ocean-cryosphere system interactions giving rise to climate variability and change on multiple timescales, 2) the location and quantification of global carbon sources and sinks, 3) the role of aerosols and chemically-active greenhouse gases in the global climate system, and 4) ocean ecosystems and climate.

In FY 2012, the ESS Program solicits proposals for research in the following three areas:

1. Understanding and Improving Prediction of Tropical Convection in Support of DYNAMO
2. Global Carbon Cycle
3. Aerosols, Atmospheric Chemistry, and Climate

An information sheet containing further details and Points of Contact can be found at <http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/opportunities/>.

## 3. Modeling, Analysis, Predictions, and Projections

The mission of the Modeling, Analysis, Predictions, and Projections (MAPP) Program is

to enhance the Nation's capability to predict variability and changes of the Earth's System. The Program focuses on the coupling, integration, and application of Earth System models and analyses across NOAA, among partner agencies, and with the external research community. Primary objectives include 1) improving Earth System models, 2) supporting an Earth System Integrated Analysis capability, 3) improving methodologies for global and regional-scale analysis, predictions and projections, and 4) developing integrated assessment and prediction capabilities relevant to decision makers based on climate analyses, predictions and projections.

In FY 2012, the MAPP Program is soliciting research proposals for the following three competitions:

1. Advance intra-seasonal to decadal climate prediction - evaluate and improve climate prediction methodologies
2. Develop an experimental National Multi-Model Ensemble climate prediction system – develop and evaluate a multi-model ensemble system for intraseasonal to interannual climate prediction
3. Modeling of Intra-Americas Sea climate processes associated with extremes over North America – improving climate model simulation and prediction of extremes over North America focusing on processes in the Intra-Americas Sea region

An information sheet containing further details and Points of Contact can be found at <http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/opportunities/>.

#### 4. Climate and Societal Interactions:

The Climate and Societal Interactions (CSI) Program provides leadership, both nationally and internationally, in developing interdisciplinary science and services, including assessments, for application in climate-sensitive sectors and regions. U.S. and internationally focused activities are housed within the same framework to facilitate cross-program community building and learning about the challenges and solutions associated with understanding and meeting the climate-related needs of decision makers through focused research, assessment, and capacity building activities. The goals of the CSI program are: 1) identification and articulation of user-community requirements in multiple sectors, initially with regard to water resources and the coastal zone then branching to related sectors; 2) research and development of innovative and broadly applicable tools, methodologies and knowledge to support decision-making, especially for risk characterization, both through a broad network of regionally scoped, long-term efforts and stakeholder-specific efforts; and 3) promotion of the transfer of knowledge, tools, and products across climate service development efforts (within NOAA, across the federal government, nationally, and internationally).

In FY 2012, the following CSI competitions will be held:

1. International Research and Applications Project (IRAP) is soliciting proposals for an integrated effort that will serve as NOAA's primary international mechanism for interpreting and translating the agency's (and that of other USG and international entities, where appropriate) evolving climate information products and services with the appropriate impacts and assessment research to develop applications, partnerships, and capacity-building activities that inform practical decision making and outcomes in select regions of the world. IRAP will support elements of work done previously by the International Research Institute for Climate and Society under a long-standing cooperative agreement with NOAA that is expiring.
2. RISA is soliciting proposals to fund one RISA team either in the one existing region within the network whose cooperative agreement has ended and is being re-competed (Arizona and New Mexico), or in new regions
3. SARP is soliciting proposals for two focus areas: 1) climate-related impacts on water resource planning; and 2) projects supporting the Coping with Drought Initiative in support of the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS).
4. COCA will solicit proposals for two competitions focused on 1) influence of climate variability and change on the coastal built environment and coastal and marine ecosystems that face a complex suite of multiple stressors; and (2) a partnership with the National Estuarine Research Reserve System on coastal adaptation.

An information sheet containing further details and Points of Contact can be found at <http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/opportunities>.

### C. Program Authority

49 U.S.C. 47720(b), 15 U.S.C. 2904, 15 U.S.C. 2931-2934

## II. Award Information

### A. Funding Availability

In FY2012, approximately \$15.5 million will be available for approximately 60 new awards, pending budget appropriations. It is anticipated that most awards will be at a funding level between \$50,000 and \$200,000 per year, with some exceptions for larger awards. In particular, the CSI-RISA program anticipates a funding level of \$600,000-\$700,000 per year, and the CSI-International Research and Applications Project expects to have up to \$3,000,000 per year available. Federal funding for FY 2013 may be used to fund some awards submitted under this Competition. Current or previous grantees are eligible to apply for a new award that builds on, but does not replicate, activities covered in the current or previous award. Current grantees should not apply for supplementary funding through this announcement.

1. Climate Observations and Monitoring

It is anticipated that \$1.5 million will be available in FY12 for new projects. Projects should be primarily in the \$50,000-\$150,000/year range.

2. Earth System Science

It is anticipated that \$4 million will be available in FY12 for new projects. Projects should be primarily in the \$75,000-\$175,000/year range. See the ESS information sheet for areas of exception.

3. Modeling, Analysis, Predictions, and Projections

It is anticipated that \$3.5 million will be available in FY12 for new projects. Projects should be primarily in the \$75,000-\$200,000/year range. See the MAPP information sheet for areas of exception.

4. Climate and Societal Interactions

It is anticipated that \$6.5 million will be available in FY12 for new projects. Projects should be primarily in the \$50,000 - \$120,000/year range, with the exception of the competitions for the RISA team and the International Research and Applications Project. For more detail on funding availability, please see the information sheet available for the individual program elements.

B. Project/Award Period

1. Climate Observations and Monitoring

Projects under COM are expected to last 1-3 years.

2. Earth System Science

Projects under ESS are expected to last 1-3 years.

3. Modeling, Analysis, Predictions, and Projections

Projects under MAPP are expected to last 1-3 years.

4. Climate and Societal Interactions

- a. International Research and Applications Project: one award is expected to be funded for up to 5 years, with the possibility for re-competition.
- b. RISA: Proposed RISAs can be up to 5 years in duration. RISAs are re-competed every five years.
- c. SARP: Projects under SARP are expected to last 1-2 years
- d. COCA: Projects under COCA are expected to last 1-3 years.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards will generally be a grant. If, however, it is anticipated

that NOAA will be substantially involved in the implementation of the project, the funding instrument should be a cooperative agreement. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, applications for collaboration between NOAA scientists and a recipient scientist or contemplation by NOAA of detailing Federal personnel to work on proposed projects. NOAA will make decisions regarding the use of a cooperative agreement on a case-by-case basis. *It is anticipated that the award for the International Research and Applications Project will be a cooperative agreement.* Funding for contractual arrangements for services and products for delivery to NOAA is not available under this announcement.

If the grantee is at an institution that has a NOAA Cooperative Institute (CI), the potential grantee is encouraged to submit a proposal that references the CI by attaching a cover letter to the proposal stating his/her desire to have the proposal associated with the CI. This letter should specify the name of the cooperative institute, the CI cooperative agreement number, and the NOAA-approved research theme and task that applies to the proposal. The proposal will use the F&A rate associated with main CI agreement. If the proposal is selected for funding, NOAA will notify the university that a separate award will be issued with its own award number. However, the award will include two Special Award Conditions (SACs): (1) the existing University/NOAA Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) would be incorporated by reference into the terms of the competitive award, and (2) any performance report(s) for the competitive project must follow the timetable of the funding program and be submitted directly to the funding program. Report(s) will be copied to the CI's administrator when due, to be attached to the main cooperative agreement progress report as an appendix. This will allow the CI to coordinate all the projects submitted through the CI, since the terms of these awards will specify that this is a CI project via the MOA.

### III. Eligibility Information

#### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and state, local and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this notice.

#### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None

#### C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None

### IV. Application and Submission Information

## A. Letter of Intent (LOI)

The purpose of the LOI process is to provide information to potential applicants on the relevance of their proposed project to the Climate Program Office in advance of preparing a full application. Full applications will be encouraged only for LOIs deemed relevant. While it is in the best interest of the applicants and their institutions to submit an LOI, applicants who do not submit an LOI are allowed to submit a full application.

*LOIs should be submitted by e-mail to the identified NOAA Competition Manager by the deadline specified in section IV.D below (subject line should identify PI's name and Competition name).* The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the targeted Competition. The LOI should be no more than two pages in length and should include the components listed below. If these components are not included or the LOI is submitted late, the LOI may not be considered by the Competition Manager.

- (1) Identification of the Competition that is being targeted in the LOI.
- (2) A tentative project title in the LOI.
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of all Principal Investigator(s), and the Lead Principal Investigator.
- (4) Statement of the problem.
- (5) Brief summary of work to be completed, methodology to be used, data sets needed or to be collected, and approximate cost of the project.
- (6) Relevance to the Competition that is being targeted.

A response to the LOI from the Climate Program Office (e-mail or letter) will be sent to the investigator within two-four weeks after the LOI's due date encouraging or discouraging a full application on the basis of its relevance to the targeted Competition. The final decision to submit a full application will be made by the investigator.

## B. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available at Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) "Apply for Grants". For applicants without Internet access, please contact the CPO Grants Manager Diane Brown by mail at NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room 12112, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 to obtain an Application Package. Please allow two weeks after receipt for a response.

## C. Content and Form of Application

### 1. Full Application

Failure to comply with these provisions will result in applications being returned without review. Full applications are limited to 30 pages using 12-point font type with one-inch margins on standard 8.5 by 11 inch paper. For full applications with 3 or more Principal Investigators and for applications to the competition for the CSI-International Research and Applications Project, the page limit is increased to 35. The page limit includes the title page, abstract, results from prior research, statement of work, budget justification, budget, vitae, current and pending support, associated figures, references, and appendices. For applications to the MAPP Competitions, the form to request the use of NOAA's high-performance computing platforms is considered part of the full proposal, but it will not be included in the page count. The full proposal should be put into one electronic file. All the Federal Forms (SF424, SF424A, SF424B, CD511), the NEPA Statement, and other mandated forms should be inserted in a separate file when submitted and are not included in the page count.

The following forms and elements are required in each application:

(1) Title page: The title page shall identify the Principal Investigator (PI) and the institutional representative and should clearly indicate which Competition is being addressed. If more than one investigator is listed on the title page, please identify the lead investigator. The PI and institutional representative should be identified by full name, title, organization, telephone number, and address. For paper submissions, the PI and the institutional representative must sign the title page. The total amount of Federal funds being requested should be listed for each budget period. If there are several institutions submitting separate proposals associated with the same project, the names of the component institutions along with their lead PI name, e-mail, and amount requested per year should also appear on the title page of all applications that anticipate being funded under the same project.

(2) Abstract: A one-page abstract must be included and should contain an introduction to the problem, rationale, and a brief summary of the work to be completed. Abstracts must also include a paragraph describing the work's relevance to NOAA's long-term goal of climate adaptation and mitigation as described in NOAA's Next-Generation Strategic Plan (NGSP; see section I.A) as well as to the Competition that is being targeted. *Failure to include this paragraph can result in the application being denied without additional review.*

(3) Results from prior research: The results of each prior research project led by the Principal Investigator(s) during the last 3 years relevant to the proposed effort should be summarized in brief paragraphs. Because NOAA believes it important that data sets developed with its support should be shared with the scientific community, PIs should also indicate how and when they have made their data accessible and usable by the community in the past. This section should not exceed two pages.

(4) Statement of work: The proposed project must be completely described, including identification of the problem, scientific objectives, proposed methodology, and relevance to the goals of the Climate Program and the priorities of the Program to which you are submitting the proposal. Benefits of the proposed project to the general public and the scientific community and data sharing procedures should be discussed. The statement of work, including references, but excluding figures and other visual materials, must not exceed 15 pages of text. Applications from 3 or more investigators may include a statement of work containing up to 15 pages of overall project description plus up to 5 additional pages for individual project contributions. *Please note the CSI- International Research and Applications Project requires a Management and Integration Plan, not to exceed an additional 2 pages, as described in the CSI Information Sheet.*

(5) Budget Justification: A brief description of the expenses listed on the budget and how they address the proposed work. Item justifications must include salaries, equipment, publications, supplies, tuition, travel, etc. Purchases of equipment greater than \$5000 must include a purchase versus lease justification. Note that these justifications are considered part of the 30-page limit, while the required SF424 and SF424A are not part of the page limitation.

(6) Budget: Budget numbers corresponding with the descriptions contained in the statement of work must be included. In addition to including the total budget on the SF424, the application must include the total budget and budgets for years 1, 2, and 3 in separate columns in Section B on page 1 on the SF424A. (Note that this revised 424A Section B format is a NOAA requirement that is not reflected in the Instructions for the SF 424A).

A detailed itemized budget for all years and a total itemized budget must also be included as a separate spreadsheet that breaks down the budget per object class category. Travel must be itemized to include destination, airfare, per diem, lodging, and ground travel.

(7) Indirect Costs: A copy of the institution's current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (IDCRA) must be included. The IDCRA does not, however, count as part of the 30-page limit.

(8) Vitae: Abbreviated curriculum vitae are sought with each application. Reference lists should be limited to all publications in the last three years with up to five other relevant papers.

(9) Current and pending support: For each Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator(s), submit a list of all current and pending Federal support that includes project title, supporting agency with grant number, investigator months per year, dollar value, and duration. Requested values should be listed for pending support.

(10) DUNS Number: All applications must have a DUNS (Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System) number when applying for federal grants. No application

is deemed complete without the DUNS number, and only the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) may grant exceptions.

(11) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), of each applicant's project that is seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA's compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including the NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6\\_TOC.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc\\_ceq.htm](http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm).

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their project activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species, and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their application. 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.

No NEPA information is required with the initial application. NEPA information may be requested after review of the application if NOAA determines such information is required (as discussed above).

#### D. Submission Dates and Times

##### 1. Letters of Intent

Letters of Intent for all Competitions should be received by the Competition Manager by 5 p.m. Eastern Time, July 26, 2011. Applicants who have not received a response to their Letter of Intent within four weeks should contact the Competition Manager.

##### 2. Full Application

Full applications for all Competitions except for the CSI-International Research and Applications Project (IRAP) must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, October 3,

2011. Applications for the CSI-IRAP Competition must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, November 2, 2011. Applications received after these times will not be considered for funding. For applications submitted through grants.gov a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy submissions will be date and time stamped when they are received in the Climate Program Office. Faxed or emailed copies of applications will not be accepted.

#### E. Intergovernmental Review

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

#### F. Funding Restrictions

Fees and profit are disallowed.

#### G. Other Submission Requirements

##### 1. Full Application

Applications are submitted through grants.gov “Apply for Grants”. If an applicant does not have Internet access, CPO Grants Manager Diane Brown should be contacted by mail at NOAA Climate Program Office (R/CP1), SSMC3, Room 12112, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 for hard copy submission instructions. Please allow two weeks after receipt for a response.

Please refer to the information about submission dates and times above to help ensure your application is received on time.

#### V. Application Review Information

NOTE: Percentages reflect final weighting for proposals that make it through Stages 1 and 2, described below.

##### A. Evaluation Criteria

##### 1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Application to the Program Goals (25%)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the CPO Grant Program Competition, this includes importance and relevance to the scientific priorities of the selected Competition(s). The PI’s record of making his/her data accessible and usable by the scientific community in the past may also be considered when evaluating

the importance and relevance of the application.

## 2. Technical/Scientific Merit (52.5%)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether the goals of the Competition will be realized through clear project goals and objectives. For the Climate and Societal Interactions Competitions, this criterion also assesses whether the proposed work has potential value for decision makers as well as for capacity development. (See the CSI information sheet for more details.)

## 3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (15%)

This criterion assesses whether the applicant team possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

## 4. Project Costs (7.5%)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

## 5. Outreach and Education (0%)

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. For the CPO Grant Program Competition, this criterion is not scored.

## B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full application has been received, an administrative review will be conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

The reviews will take place in two stages. In Stage 1, independent peer mail reviewers and/or independent peer panel reviewers consisting of both Federal and non-Federal experts will evaluate applications using the following three criteria described above: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and project costs. Relevance will be assessed separately in Stage 2. The panel will not give consensus advice. The identity of mail reviewers and panel reviewers are privileged.

If a mail review is conducted during Stage 1, each reviewer will provide one score for each of three criteria: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and project costs for each application.

If a panel review is conducted during Stage 1, each reviewer will provide one score for each of three criteria: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and

project costs for each application. The scores from the reviewers for each application will be combined using the weighting averages provided below to produce a single numerical score for Stage 1. Occasionally a reviewer may, due to lack of familiarity in a particular area, choose not to score a particular application. Proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2. In the case of the CSI-International Research and Applications Project, applicants who advance to Stage 2 may be requested to provide additional information for consideration.

If only a mail peer review is conducted for stage 1, proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2.

If a mail review and a panel review are both conducted for Stage 1, the mail reviews will be provided to the Stage 1 review panel for use in its deliberations prior to providing its ratings, but the Competition Manager will use only the numerical rank order of the peer review panel to determine the average score for each proposal. Proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2. In the case of the CSI-International Research and Applications Project, applicants who advance to Stage 2 may be requested to provide additional information for consideration.

In Stage 2, scores for Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Application to the Program Goals will be determined by a second panel comprising either federal or a combination of federal and non-federal partners. Each panel reviewer will provide a relevance score for each application that moved forward from Stage 1. The Stage 2 panel will not give consensus advice. The applications and their associated scores from Stage 1 will be provided to the Stage 2 panel.

The Stage 1 and Stage 2 weighting of scores for the individual criteria is shown in the following table:

Criterion	Stage 1 Weight	Stage 2 Weight	Final weight
1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability	0%	100%	25%
2. Technical/Scientific Merit	70%	0%	52.5%
3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants	20%	0%	15%
4. Project Costs	10%	0%	7.5%
5. Outreach and Education	0%	0%	0%
Stage Total	100%	100%	100%
Final weighting for each stage score	75%	25%	

To determine the final score, the scores from Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be combined, with a weighting of 75% for the Stage 1 score and 25% for the Stage 2 score, leading to the overall weightings for each criterion reported in section V.A above. The final score for each application will be used to determine the numerical rank order of proposals within each Competition.

The Competition Manager will recommend applications to the Selecting Official in numerical rank order unless a recommendation out of rank order is justified based upon any of the factors listed in the following section. The Competition Manager will review the amounts requested for each selected application (including costs for computing and networking services) and recommend the total duration and the amount of funding, which may be less than the application and budget requested. The Selecting Official will review the recommendations.

### C. Selection Factors

The Competition Manager shall select awards in rank order unless a selection out of rank order is justified based upon any of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds
  - a. Geographically
  - b. By type of institutions
  - c. By type of partners
  - d. By research area
  - e. By project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies
4. Program priorities and policy factors
5. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Partnerships with/participation of targeted group
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for awards to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds.

#### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of applications will occur during the 6-7 months following the full applications due date. CPO anticipates that funding decisions on applications will be made during spring-summer 2012 contingent upon the final FY 2012 appropriation for NOAA by Congress and final allocation of funds to CPO by NOAA. Funding for successful applicants are expected to begin during spring-summer 2012 for most approved projects. Applications should use August 1, 2012, as the start date unless otherwise directed by the Competition Manager.

#### VI. Award Administration Information

##### A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding by an official of the NOAA Climate Program Office. 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. Notifications will be issued to the Authorizing Official and the Principal Investigator of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not selected for recommendation.

##### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

##### Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs. Publication of this announcement in no way obliges NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

##### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The National Environmental Policy Act is applicable to the Notice. See Section IV above for the necessary information.

##### C. Reporting

Award recipients are required to submit financial and technical progress reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically to <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>. The first technical progress report covering the first 9 months of a multi-year award is due 10

months after the start date of the award. Each subsequent technical progress report covering a period of 12 months is due 12 months after the previous report. The comprehensive final technical progress report is due 90 days after the expiration date of the award.

#### VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the CPO website for further information <http://www.climate.noaa.gov/> or contact the CPO Grants Manager, Diane Brown, by mail (see address above) or at <diane.brown@noaa.gov>. Please allow up to two weeks after receipt for a response.

#### VIII. Other Information

None