

**NOAA Sea Grant 2017 Aquaculture Initiative:
Integrated Projects to Increase Aquaculture Production**

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: NOAA Sea Grant 2017 Aquaculture Initiative: Integrated Projects to Increase Aquaculture Production

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2017-2005176

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.417, Sea Grant Support

Dates: Letters of Intent are due from Sea Grant Programs via email (to oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov) by 5:00pm Eastern, March 28, 2017. Applications are due from Sea Grant Programs to Grants.gov no later than 5:00 pm. Eastern Time, May 9, 2017. Letters of intent submitted after the closing dates and times will not be accepted, and the applicant will be ineligible to submit an application. Applications submitted after the closing dates and times will not be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: Depending on appropriations, NOAA Sea Grant expects to have available a total of \$10,000,000-\$12,000,000 across fiscal years 2017, 2018, and 2019 for a national initiative to increase aquaculture production in the short-term (2-4 years). This competition is designed to foster the expansion of sustainable U.S. marine, coastal, and Great Lakes aquaculture. Successful applications must outline integrated projects that clearly address major constraints, barriers, or hurdles limiting United States aquaculture production. See full FFO for examples.

This Federal Funding Opportunity includes information needed to apply and the criteria for applications requesting between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000 in total federal funding for a two to three year period. Non-federal matching funds of at least 50% are required (for example, a project receiving \$1,000,000 in federal funding must include at least \$500,000 in matching funds, for a total project budget of \$1,500,000).

Applications are requested that meet all of the following program objectives:

(1) supports aquaculture of ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes species (including state- and federally-managed species) and related production of such efforts occurring in the coastal zone (as defined by the Coastal Zone Management Act – to include the Great Lakes Region), including state waters and the terrestrial coastal zone, and federal waters;

- (2) directly addresses major constraints, barriers, or hurdles of domestic aquaculture development that currently limit increased production (this can include research, extension, technology transfer, and/or legal activities to support production, market access, distribution, etc.);
- (3) utilizes a team approach that fully integrates at least one Sea Grant program, and at least one end-user or public-private partnership in the effort;
- (4) addresses how project impacts will be applicable to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships;
- (5) that, upon completion, will have a high likelihood of successful implementation within 2-4 years.

Applications requesting any amount between the minimum and maximum federal request are welcome. Awards are anticipated to start no later than September 1, 2017. Additional applications from this competition may be selected for funding in subsequent fiscal years.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

This opportunity's program objective is to fund projects that integrate, as needed, research, outreach, and education to foster the expansion of a sustainable U.S. marine, coastal, and Great Lakes aquaculture sector in the short-term (2-4 years). This will be done through integrated projects that clearly address major constraints, barriers, or hurdles limiting United States aquaculture production.

Examples that may address the program objective include: increased domestic production of currently farmed and promising new species or products through research and extension efforts that support improvements in nutrition, reproduction, larval rearing, genomics, and other areas to develop or enhance aquaculture products. Research could lead to improved growth, improved health, and adaptation to changing conditions; improved hatchery production to produce reliable shellfish seed, macroalgae seedlings, and finfish juveniles to accelerate industry growth; production systems that specifically link industry needs to basic and applied research efforts, including establishing demonstration centers to develop and refine aquaculture systems and disseminate applied information to end users. Examples could also include public-private research partnerships that address specific, current problems that limit a steady supply of marine, coastal, or Great Lakes fingerlings or that develop sustainable feeds that maintain the human health benefits of seafood. Projects could conduct research and provide technical assistance and outreach to aquaculture producers, resource managers, scientists and/or consumers to ensure the safety and quality of sustainably cultured seafood products to meet public demand and consumer acceptance. Projects could conduct research to evaluate appropriate siting and/or the mitigation of any potential negative environmental impact of oceanic and coastal aquaculture operations, linking the research to an end-user(s).

To meet this program objective, we are seeking applications that meet all of the following project objectives:

1. Supports aquaculture of ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes species (including state- and federally-managed species) and related production of such efforts occurring in the coastal zone (as defined by the Coastal Zone Management Act – to include the Great Lakes Region), including state waters and the terrestrial coastal zone, and federal waters;
2. Directly addresses major constraints, barriers, or hurdles of domestic aquaculture

development that currently limit increased production (this can include research, extension, technology transfer, and/or legal activities to support production, market access, distribution, etc.);

3. Utilizes a team approach that fully integrates at least one Sea Grant program, and at least one end-user or public-private partnership in the effort;
4. Addresses how project impacts will be applicable to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships; and
5. That, upon completion, will have a high likelihood of successful implementation within 2-4 years.

As background: The NOAA National Sea Grant College Program was established by Congress to increase the understanding, assessment, development, management, utilization, and conservation of the Nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources by providing assistance to promote a strong educational base, responsive research and training activities, broad and prompt dissemination of knowledge and techniques, and multidisciplinary approaches to environmental problems. Sea Grant carries out NOAA's mission through a broadly based network of universities.

In recent years, the Sea Grant Aquaculture initiative has supported projects that were focused either on research or on extension/technology transfer.

As part of a Sea Grant national initiative focused on increasing the aquaculture production in the short-term (2-4 years), this competition is designed to foster the expansion of a sustainable U.S. marine, coastal, and Great Lakes aquaculture sector. Successful applications must outline integrated projects that clearly address major constraints, barriers, or hurdles limiting United States aquaculture production.

Sea Grant aquaculture-related activities are integrated with the rest of NOAA via the NOAA Aquaculture Program, which includes activities across multiple NOAA Line Offices: Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (Sea Grant), the National Marine Fisheries Service (Office of Aquaculture, Fisheries Science Centers, and Regional Offices), and the National Ocean Service (NCCOS, Beaufort Laboratory and Hollings Marine Laboratory). NOAA recognizes the role of other Departments, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Interior, and state and regional management partners in aquaculture, and coordinates with other Department representatives at the regional level and at the national level through the Interagency Working Group on Aquaculture.

B. Program Priorities

It is a program priority to only fund projects that meet all of the project objectives described in section I.A (depending on the number and quality of applications received).

It is a program priority to fund projects that score highly in both importance/relevance (evaluation criterion 1) and technical merit (evaluation criterion 2) (depending on the number and quality of applications received).

It is a program priority to fund projects at a range of different federal requests (depending on the number and quality of applications received).

It is NOT a program priority to fund projects focused on catfish.

It is NOT a program priority to fund any project that involves placing a non-native species in any area where it is not already established.

C. Program Authority

33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Depending on availability of funds, NOAA Sea Grant expects to have available a total of \$10,000,000 to 12,000,000 across fiscal years 2017, 2018, and 2019. Each application can request a minimum of \$100,000 and a maximum of \$1,000,000 in total federal funds. In fiscal year 2017, depending on funding available and the number, quality, and requested funding amounts of applications, it is expected that 8-12 projects will be awarded, with additional selections in fiscal years 2018 and 2019 (pending availability of funds).

Applications requesting any amount between the minimum and maximum federal request are welcome.

B. Project/Award Period

A project can span two to three years. Projects selected for award in fiscal year 2017 are anticipated to start no later than September 1, 2017.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through grants or cooperative agreements to the appropriate Sea Grant program. Cooperative agreements will be used if the proposed project includes substantial NOAA involvement as described in the award.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

All applications must be submitted through a Sea Grant program (a Sea Grant College, Institution, Coherent Area Program, or the Sea Grant Law Center).

The following entities are eligible to participate in this funding opportunity, by working with a Sea Grant program: any individual; any public or private corporation, partnership, or other association or entity (including any Sea Grant College, Sea Grant Institute or other institution); or any State, political subdivision of a State, Tribal government or agency or officer thereof.

Interested applicants need to identify a host Sea Grant Program to partner with, and who will submit the Letter of Intent and the Application on the partnership's behalf. It is anticipated that the host Sea Grant program will be selected based on location in the same state or region as the applicant(s), but may be based on a common interest in the topic of the application, particularly if the local state Sea Grant program does not have the expertise and/or capacity to support a particular project.

Contact information for all eligible state Sea Grant programs can be found at <http://seagrant.noaa.gov/WhoWeAre/Leadership/SeaGrantDirectors.aspx> or may also be obtained by contacting the Agency Contact listed in Section VII.

Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive federal funding under this competition; however, federal scientists and other employees can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on applications. Federal labs and offices can also make available specialized expertise, facilities or equipment to applicants but cannot be compensated under this competition for their use, nor can the value of such assets be used as match.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Non-federal matching funds equal to at least 50 percent of the federal funding requested each year must be provided.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Because Sea Grant Program Directors will serve as the administrative leads in the submission of applications, Sea Grant Directors are not eligible to compete for funds under this opportunity. Sea Grant Directors will be considered to be the Principal Investigator for all awards made. Sea Grant staff are eligible to compete for funds under this opportunity.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

An application package can be obtained from Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>), addressing opportunity number NOAA-OAR-SG-2017-2005176.

An optional Title Page template, the required Sea Grant Aquaculture 90-2 project summary form (OMB Control No.s 0648-0538 and 0648-0362) and Sea Grant 90-4 budget summary form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362) are available at [http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments\(NSIs\)/AquacultureCompetition/2017Aquaculture.aspx](http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments(NSIs)/AquacultureCompetition/2017Aquaculture.aspx) or may be requested from the Agency Contact listed in section VII.

B. Content and Form of Application

1) Letter of Intent content requirements:

The Letter of Intent is intended to provide an indication to the agency of the number of applications and breadth of topical areas to be addressed. Late or incomplete letters of intent, as well as those that deviate from content or format requirements, will not be reviewed by NOAA, and any associated applications cannot be submitted.

Each Letter of Intent should not exceed two pages using the format described and should provide:

- a) Title of the proposed project;
- b) a statement identifying the PI (Sea Grant Director submitting the Letter of Intent and application), Co-PI, and partners involved in the proposed project. For assistance on identifying a Sea Grant Program, please contact the Agency Contact listed in section VII; and
- c) a brief rationale of why the work should be conducted (addressing the program objective, project objectives, and program priorities);

In addition, and not counted towards the two-page limit, the applicant must provide a signed

title page by the PI (Sea Grant Director) and the Co-PI. The project title should begin with the last name of the Co-PI, followed by a hyphen and a brief descriptive title of the proposal. For example, "Garber – Hatcheries to Harvest". The title page must include: the name, affiliation, and address of the investigators with email and telephone numbers; the anticipated federal funding requested and match offered for each year; a total budget figure; and the date of signature. An optional Title Page template is available at [http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments\(NSIs\)/AquacultureCompetition/2017Aquaculture.aspx](http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments(NSIs)/AquacultureCompetition/2017Aquaculture.aspx)

2) Application Proposal Format and Content Requirements:

All those who submit complete and timely letters of intent and meet all requirements are eligible to submit an application. Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with applications; thus, the Project Description may not exceed 20 pages. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the 20 page limit. The following do not count towards the 20 page limit: signed title page; project summary; references; budgets and justification; previous, current and pending support sections; letters of support; vitae; standard application forms; list of permits; and data sharing plan. The application may not include materials other than the items described below.

For each application the following information must be included:

- a. Title page (2 page maximum): Signed title page by the PI (Sea Grant Director) and the Co-PI. The project title should begin with the last name of the Co-PI, followed by a hyphen and a brief descriptive title of the proposal. For example, "Garber – Hatcheries to Harvest". The title page must include: the name, affiliation, and address of the investigators with email and telephone numbers; the federal funding requested and match offered for each year; a total budget figure; and the date of signature. An optional Title Page template is available at [http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments\(NSIs\)/AquacultureCompetition/2017Aquaculture.aspx](http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments(NSIs)/AquacultureCompetition/2017Aquaculture.aspx)
- b. Aquaculture Competition Project Summary Form 90-2 (OMB Control Numbers 0648-0538 and 0648-0362): It is critical that the project summary accurately describe the project being proposed and convey all essential elements of the project. Applicants must use the Sea Grant Aquaculture Competition Form 90-2 for this purpose, found at [http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments\(NSIs\)/AquacultureCompetition/2017Aquaculture.aspx](http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments(NSIs)/AquacultureCompetition/2017Aquaculture.aspx). The project summary must include:

(1) Title: exactly as it appears in the rest of the application;

- (2) Investigators: List the names and affiliations of each investigator who will significantly contribute to the project, starting with the Principal Investigator (Sea Grant Director), followed by the Co-PI;
- (3) Federal funding request and proposed matching funds;
- (4) Project Period: start date should be no later than September 1, 2017;
- (5) 300-word maximum Project Abstract, written into the Objectives section of the 90-2 form. This abstract should briefly summarize the rationale for the project, how the priority is being addressed, the scientific or technical objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work and expected accomplishments; and
- (6) a brief summary (one or two sentences) of the Data Sharing Plan required below, written into the Methodology section of the 90-2 form. If the project does not generate any environmental data, it is sufficient to include a sentence saying that. If the proposal's Data Sharing Plan is short enough, you may repeat it in its entirety here. If not, you may just write that a full data sharing plan is attached to the proposal, and provide a point of contact for questions about the data.

The Aquaculture Competition Project Summary Form 90-2 also contains a series of questions drawn from "The Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance Applicants" (OMB Control No. 0648-0538). All of these questions must be answered.

c. Project description (20 page maximum):

(1) Introduction/background/justification: the applicant must include in this section the current state of knowledge of major constraints, barriers, or hurdles limiting United States aquaculture production that the proposed project will address.

(2) Work Plans: Include objectives to be achieved, questions to be addressed / hypotheses to be tested; how the objectives relate to the program objective, project objectives, and program priorities; methods; experimental design and statistical analyses (if needed); and role of all project personnel.

If the project calls for the use of outside consultants who have not yet been selected, the selection criteria must be included here.

(3) Outcome and Milestone Chart: This section must describe how the technology transfer, research, outreach, or other parts of the overall project will be integrated to effectively lead to the specific outcomes or benefits that foster the expansion of a sustainable U.S. marine, coastal, and Great Lakes aquaculture sector in the short-term (2-4 years).

This section must also include at least one milestone (a significant activity to be performed or objective to be achieved) per year. Provide timeline(s) of major tasks covering the

duration of the project. Describe how these will be measured and reported.

(4) Outcome: Describe how the results of the project will benefit end-users (e.g., industry; state, tribal, and federal governments; regional management councils; coastal communities; and interstate aquaculture or fisheries commissions).

This section should describe the desired end state (e.g., specific changes adopted by the aquaculture industry), not just a description of the activities to be performed (e.g., providing aquaculture training). Specifically, describe the planned project outcomes in objective, quantifiable terms and how the outcomes will foster the expansion of a sustainable U.S. marine, coastal, and Great Lakes aquaculture sector in the short-term (2-4 years). Describe the scale of the outcome and how it will be applicable to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships. Describe how the outcomes of the project will be measured and reported. This section should include an objective measure of U.S. aquaculture production that will be increased by the proposed work, and provide a baseline value for this measure and targets for 1, 2, 3 and 4 years after the project starts.

(5) Partnerships and related work: Describe any public-private partnerships, as well as, show how project impacts will be applicable to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships. Describe any coordination with other agency programs or ongoing efforts. Describe any other proposals or outside activities that are essential to the success of this application. This includes description of the coordination with various elements within and between participating Sea Grant programs and with other partners (e.g., industry; state, tribal, and federal governments; regional management councils; coastal communities; and interstate aquaculture or fisheries commissions).

d. References and literature citations: Must be included as appropriate.

e. Budget and matching funds justification: Applications must reflect the total budget necessary to accomplish the project. There must be a separate budget for each year of the project as well as a cumulative budget for the entire project. Applicants must use the Sea Grant Budget Form 90-4

([http://seagrants.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments\(NSIs\)/AquacultureCompetition/2017Aquaculture.aspx](http://seagrants.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments(NSIs)/AquacultureCompetition/2017Aquaculture.aspx)). Subcontracts must have a separate budget page. Applicants must provide justification for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested (see section IV.F. below for funding restrictions). Budgets should include funds for attending a national aquaculture symposium to present project results.

f. Previous, current and pending support: Applicants must provide information on all current

and pending federal and state (including state Sea Grant) support for aquaculture projects and proposals that relate to the proposed work, including subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the Co-PI and other senior personnel must be included.

g. Letter(s) of support: Applicants may provide letters of support from stakeholders and partners

h. Vitae (2 pages maximum per personnel listed on project).

i. Standard application forms: Standard application forms (i.e., SF424, SF424A, SF424B, CD511) are available through Grants.gov. They are mandatory for a proposal application.

j. List of all applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work. All applications must respond to this required element whether or not permits are required. If no permits are requested, this section must indicate "no permits are required."

Applications must adhere to the provisions under Format Requirements and Content Requirements. Applications that exceed page limitations will not be accepted. Any appendices or other additional items that are not explicitly allowed will not be evaluated.

Format Requirements: All application materials should be submitted in Portable Document Format (PDF) or a common word processing format, and when printed should meet all format requirements. All pages must be single- or double-spaced; printed or typed in at least 12-point font; and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins.

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2013), which may be accessed at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=1ccffb4c1d4de03add6a041113460f9&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1300&rgn=div8

D. Submission Dates and Times

Letters of Intent are due from Sea Grant Programs via email (to

oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov) by 5:00 pm Eastern, March 28, 2017. Applications are due from Sea Grant Programs to Grants.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, May 9, 2017.

You will receive an acknowledgement of your Letter of Intent submission via email within 5 business days. If you do not receive such an acknowledgement, please contact the person listed in Agency Contacts. Letters of intent submitted after the closing dates and times will not be accepted, and the applicant will be ineligible to submit an application. Applications submitted after the closing dates and times 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

Federal funding received under this Federal Funding Opportunity is prohibited by 33 USC 1124(d)(2) from being used for the purchase or rental of any land or the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of any building, dock, or vessel, except for: (1) the short term rental of buildings or facilities for meetings in direct support of this project; (2) purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of non-self-propelled habitats, buoys, platforms, and other similar devices or structures approved by NOAA, and (3) rental of any research vessel which is used in direct support of this project and approved by NOAA.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov by the Sea Grant Program. If a Sea Grant Program does not have internet access, contact the Agency Contact listed in section VII for submission instructions.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the National Sea Grant program objectives (maximum 30 points): This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For this competition, this includes whether and how each proposal met the project objectives:

- a. Supports aquaculture of ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes species (including state- and

federally-managed species) and related production of such efforts occurring in the coastal zone (as defined by the Coastal Zone Management Act – to include the Great Lakes Region), including state waters and the terrestrial coastal zone, and federal waters;

b. Directly addresses major constraints, barriers, or hurdles of domestic aquaculture development that currently limit increased production (this can include research, extension, technology transfer, and/or legal activities to support production, market access, distribution, etc.);

c. Utilizes a team approach that fully integrates at least one Sea Grant program, and at least one end-user or public-private partnership in the effort;

d. Addresses how project impacts will be applicable to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships; and

e. That, upon completion, will have a high likelihood of successful implementation within 2-4 years.

2. Technical/scientific merit (maximum 30 points): This assesses if the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, the methods are appropriate, and there are clear project goals and objectives. For this competition, this ascertains:

a. The quality of the work plan to foster the expansion of a sustainable U.S. marine, coastal, and Great Lakes aquaculture sector in the short-term (2-4 years). This will be done through integrated projects that clearly address major constraints, barriers, or hurdles limiting United States aquaculture production;

b. If the proposal includes all components necessary to achieve the program objective. Is there an effective plan for integrating all components and an objective way to determine success?

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (maximum 15 points): This ascertains whether the applicant and others on the team possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and resources to accomplish the project. This includes applicant's record of achievement with previous funding, as well as the qualifications of project partners. If the proposal includes the use of outside consultants not yet identified, this criterion includes how clearly the selection factors for the outside consultants are set out, and the expected qualifications of the consultants based on those selection factors.

4. Project costs (maximum 15 points): The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.
5. Outreach and education (maximum 10 points): Assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For this competition, this ascertains:
 - a. If the proposal includes a clear and objective work plan for specific activities to maximize use of the integrated team approach;
 - b. The level of active participation by the team and partners on the project; and
 - c. The ability of the project impacts to be applicable to a broader geographic area through regional or topical partnerships

B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements, and completeness of both the Letter of Intent and application. All complete and timely applications will be subjected to a relevancy and technical review based on the evaluation criteria. Reviewers can include scientists and managers with backgrounds in government, academic, NGO and/or private sector. Reviewers will not make a consensus decision, but will provide individual scores based on the evaluation criteria.

The Competition Manager will review the scores and comments to make recommendations to the Selecting Official. Awards will be made in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank based upon one or more of the selection factors described in the next section.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless a proposal is justified to be selected out of rank based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance and distribution of funds
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research areas
 - e. By project types

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies
4. Program priorities as given in section I.B
5. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

Consequently, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications.

Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to approval of the award. Subsequent administrative processing will be in accordance with current NOAA grants procedures. A summary statement of the review will be provided to each applicant of a proposal.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to be made by September 1, 2017. Additional awards may be funded from fiscal year 2018 or later appropriations, and these awards will not start until after those appropriations become available. This may result in applicants being asked to modify their start dates.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS - The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

2. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of continuing 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) - NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

4. UNPAID OR DELINQUENT TAX LIABILITY - Certifications Regarding Federal Felony and Federal Criminal Tax Convictions, Unpaid Federal Tax Assessments and Delinquent Federal Tax Returns. In accordance with Federal appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) may be required to provide certain pre-award certifications regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns.

5. REVIEW OF RISK - After applications are proposed for funding by the selecting official, the Grants office performs administration reviews. These may include financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

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

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

7. FOIA - In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, you should mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are found at 5 U.S.C 552, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA.

The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by you, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL DATA AND INFORMATION

(1) Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.

(2) Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected 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; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.

(3) NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.

(4) Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically to Grants Online, unless the recipient does not have proven Internet access, in which case hard copy submissions may be accepted; however, no facsimiles will be accepted.

Sea Grant Programs also are required to use the National Sea Grant Planning Implementation Evaluation Reporting (PIER) System to communicate with the National Sea Grant Office on certain activities relating to this award. This includes tracking progress and impacts, in addition to performance metrics. Successful applicants will be asked to provide performance progress information in a form compatible with this system. If a proposal is selected and funded, information about the project and investigators will be recorded in the PIER system, and be made public.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards 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 Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over \$25,000.

VII. Agency Contacts

For information regarding the NOAA Sea Grant 2017 Marine Aquaculture Technology Transfer Competition, please e-mail oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov;

Mailing Address: Attention: Aquaculture, NOAA Sea Grant; 1315 East-West Highway, SSMC3, R/SG; Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Questions about this funding opportunity may be sent to oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

None.