

NOAA Climate Program Office's Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA)
Program

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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 Climate Program Office's Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-CPO-2017-2005017

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

Dates: Letters of intent (LOIs) for all competitions should be received electronically by 5:00 p.m. ET on November 29, 2016. A response to the LOI from the Competition Manager (e-mail or letter) will be sent to the investigator within four weeks after the LOI's due date encouraging or discouraging a full application based on its relevance to the Competition.

2. Full Applications

Full applications for all competitions must be received by 5:00 p.m. ET on February 6, 2017. Applications received after this time will not be considered for funding. Applications must be submitted via <http://www.grants.gov>. For applications submitted through [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), the basis for determining timeliness is the receipt notice issued by <http://www.grants.gov>, which includes the date and time received. Emailed or faxed copies of applications will not be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: The NOAA Climate Program Office's (CPO) Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) program supports research teams that conduct innovative, interdisciplinary, user-inspired, and regionally relevant research that informs resource management and public policy. CPO funds a network of RISA teams across the United States (US) and Pacific Islands, which are a model for interdisciplinary science and assessment.

NOAA's RISA program is overseen by CPO's Climate and Societal Interactions (CSI) division. CSI's mission is to inform improvements in resilience and preparedness in diverse socio-economic regions and sectors throughout the US and abroad through the use of climate knowledge and information. Our research advances the nation's understanding of climate-related risks and vulnerabilities across sectors and regions, and the development of tools to foster more informed decision making. These efforts support NOAA's vision to create and sustain enhanced

resilience in ecosystems, communities, and economies. In addition to RISA, CSI's programs include the International Research and Applications Project (IRAP), the Sectoral Applications Research Program (SARP), and the Coastal and Ocean Climate Applications program (COCA).

CSI is also an active partner with NOAA efforts to provide integrated regional climate services. This partnership brings together NOAA Regional Climate Services Directors (RCSDs), other NOAA offices, and close external partners such as RISA teams, Regional Climate Centers, State Climatologists, and Sea Grant to help make climate information relevant and accessible to people across the US. NOAA seeks to marshal climate assets and partners towards the common goal of assessing regional needs and vulnerabilities and then supporting the development and delivery of timely climate services that aid adaptation and mitigation choices.

RISA and CSI activities address the societal challenges identified in NOAA's Next-Generation Strategic Plan (NGSP): i) climate impacts on water resources; ii) coasts and climate resilience; iii) sustainability of marine ecosystems; and iv) changes in the extremes of weather and climate. These efforts support NOAA's vision to create and sustain enhanced resilience in ecosystems, communities, and economies, as outlined in the NGSP.

In FY 2017, RISA is holding two competitions for research funding focused on three geographies. We are soliciting proposals for: 1) Competition 1: a RISA team focused on the Arizona/New Mexico region of the US; and 2) Competition 2: a RISA team focused on either the California/Nevada region of the US or on the Midwestern region of the US. We estimate that \$3-\$3.5 million over five years will be available for each competition, pending available funding and budget appropriations. Awards will be at a funding level of \$600,000-\$700,000 per year for up to 5 years.

Please download the RISA Information Sheet for more detailed information (<http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/risa/>).

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA Climate Program Office's (CPO) Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) program supports research teams that conduct innovative, interdisciplinary, user-inspired, and regionally relevant research that informs resource management and public policy. CPO funds a network of RISA teams across the United States (US) and Pacific Islands, many of which are a model for interdisciplinary science, engagement and assessment. RISAs have been nationally and internationally recognized for their innovations in providing support to decision makers on the ground who are managing risks associated with climate variability and change.

NOAA's RISA program is overseen by CPO's Climate and Societal Interactions (CSI) division. CSI provides leadership and support for decision support research, assessments, and climate services development activities in support of adaptation. In addition to RISA, CSI's programs include the International Research and Applications Project (IRAP), the Sectoral Applications Research Program (SARP), and the Coastal and Ocean Climate Applications program (COCA). CPO also manages integrated information systems, such as the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS; drought.gov) and the National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS; <http://climate.gov/nihhis>). NIDIS has a mandate to coordinate and integrate drought research, building upon existing federal, tribal, state, and local partnerships in support of creating a national drought early warning information system.

CSI activities address the societal challenges identified in NOAA's Next-Generation Strategic Plan (NGSP): i) climate impacts on water resources; ii) coasts and climate resilience; iii) sustainability of marine ecosystems; and iv) changes in the extremes of weather and climate. These efforts support NOAA's vision to create and sustain enhanced resilience in ecosystems, communities, and economies, as outlined in the NGSP. CSI supports both US- and internationally-focused activities to facilitate community-building and learning about the challenges and solutions associated with understanding and meeting the climate-related needs of decision makers.

The National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-430) was introduced in the U.S. Congress and subsequently signed by the President in 2006. The goal of NIDIS is to improve the nation's capacity to proactively manage drought-related risks, by providing those affected with the best available information and tools to assess the potential

impacts of drought, and to better prepare for and mitigate the effects of drought. NIDIS is intended to provide pathways and support mechanisms to:

- Develop the leadership and partnerships to ensure successful coordinated and integration of a national drought information system that is implemented at federal, tribal, state, and local levels;
- Foster, and support, a research environment that focuses on risk assessment, impact collection and analysis, forecasting and monitoring and proactive mitigation which can include planning and management;
- Create a drought “early warning system” capable of providing accurate, timely, and integrated information on drought conditions, high precipitation events in relation to drought and their associated risks at relevant time and spatial scales to inform and facilitate proactive decisions;
- Provide interactive delivery systems including a web portal (drought.gov), as part of the early warning information system, for easily comprehensible and standardized products (databases, forecasts, geographic information system (GIS)-based products, maps, etc.); and
- Provide a framework for increasing public awareness and educating those affected by drought on how and why droughts occur, and how they impact human and natural systems.

NIDIS currently manages nine regional drought early warning systems (DEWS) around the country including the following DEWS that are relevant to these RISA competitions: California-Nevada DEWS, Midwest DEWS, and the Intermountain West DEWS (which is made up of what was the Upper Colorado River Basin DEWS (which consisted of the states of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming) and has been expanded to include the state of Arizona and western New Mexico). Each DEWS aims to utilize new and existing partner networks to optimize the expertise of a wide range of federal, tribal, state, local and academic partners in order to make drought and climate science readily available, easily understandable and usable for decision makers; and to improve the capacity of stakeholders to better monitor, forecast, plan for and cope with the impacts of drought.

NIDIS is an important partner for RISA. RISA’s role in NIDIS is research, engagement, decision support, and strengthening information networks. RISA research supported by NIDIS Coping with Drought (CWD) funding assesses impacts of drought on agriculture, ecosystems, and water resources and, where relevant, develops decision support tools for regional, state, and local use. CWD funded research contributes to the understanding of how communities and economic sectors utilize and integrate drought information in resource management decisions, to improve drought preparation, planning, mitigation, and management. Through RISAs, a variety of researchers and stakeholders, supported by NIDIS, work together to provide regional briefings, outreach, and in-depth workshops on

understanding and communicating drought conditions, impacts and forecasts. RISA investigators assess existing information gaps, work with communities to understand vulnerabilities and impacts, and inform responses and drought mitigation strategies. Projects feed directly into the NIDIS DEWS through engagement and preparedness, impacts reporting and assessment, and inputs to planning and preparedness.

B. Program Priorities

In FY 2017, RISA is holding two competitions for research funding. We are accepting applications for 5-year RISA awards for: 1) Competition 1: a RISA team focused on the Arizona/New Mexico region of the US ; and 2) Competition 2: a RISA team focused on either the California/Nevada region of the US or on the Midwestern region of the US. Investigators are highly encouraged to learn more about CPO, RISA and NIDIS prior to submitting applications. The RISA information sheet (<http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/risa/>) provides further information and should be downloaded and read in detail in conjunction with this FFO. To learn more about NIDIS visit drought.gov.

Through this announcement, we are soliciting proposals to fund one RISA team in up to three regions of the US: Arizona and New Mexico; California and Nevada; and the Midwestern US (could cover all or portions of a region that includes the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin). Midwest region applicants should distinguish their issue focus and, if appropriate, geographic coverage from the existing Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessments (GLISA) program. When determining the geographic scope of your RISA, applicants should consider what is manageable to balance effectively working with stakeholders across an appropriate regional geography and being an effective RISA. Current RISA regions generally cover two or more states, large watershed boundaries, or issue-focused areas (e.g., the urbanized, heavily populated corridor between Boston, New York, and Philadelphia).

All three regions being competed overlap with a NIDIS regional Drought Early Warning System (DEWS), and if awarded, will be funded by a combination of RISA & NIDIS funds. Because of the substantial NIDIS DEWS activities in the regions of California and Nevada and the Midwest, proposals for these two regions should ensure that half of total funding per year is aligned with NIDIS objectives (see www.drought.gov, especially the NIDIS Implementation Plan for further information). In the Arizona and New Mexico region proposals should ensure that one third of the total funding per year is aligned with NIDIS objectives. See the RISA Information Sheet for more detail on program priorities.

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

Proposals are being solicited for 5-year RISA awards in three regional geographies: Arizona and New Mexico; California and Nevada; and the Midwestern US. The availability of funds to award a RISA in all three regions is contingent on an increase in the RISA program budget. We estimate that \$3-\$3.5 million over five years will be available for each region awarded a RISA, pending budget appropriations. It is anticipated that each award will be at a funding level of \$600,000-\$700,000 per year.

B. Project/Award Period

RISA awards are intended to last 5 years from the start date

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards will be a cooperative agreement due to the substantial interactions needed between the RISA team and NOAA CPO throughout the award period. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, participation in RISA network monthly conference calls, annual meetings, periodic topical conference calls and meetings, annual reporting on award progress and accomplishments, and communication with other parts of NOAA. Annual to bi-annual work plans will be required to describe in more detail planned activities and projects in support of NIDIS. Funding for contractual arrangements for services and products for delivery to NOAA is not available under this announcement.

If the applicant is at an institution that has a NOAA Cooperative Institute (CI), the applicant is encouraged to submit a proposal that references the CI by attaching a cover letter to the proposal stating the desire to have the grant 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 Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rate associated with the 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 CPO funding program and be submitted directly to the CPO 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 lead investigators who wish to apply to this Announcement of Opportunity must prepare a proposal according to the FFO guidelines and submit the proposal to the program manager directly, instead of to Grants.gov. Federal co-investigators must submit a proposal identical to the proposal lead's but with personalized budget information.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. 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 12237, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 to obtain an Application Package. Please allow two weeks after receipt for a response.

B. Content and Form of Application

1. 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 Competition in advance of preparing a full application. Full applications will be encouraged only for LOIs deemed relevant. Applicants who have not been encouraged may still submit a full application. While LOIs are strongly encouraged, applicants are not required to submit them and may submit a full application

even if they have not submitted an LOI.

LOIs should be submitted by email to the RISA Program Management team (oar.cpo.risa@noaa.gov) by the deadline specified in section IV.C below. The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and a statement regarding its relevance to the targeted Competition. The LOI should be no more than two pages in length and should include the items listed below. If these items are not included or the LOI is submitted late, the LOI may not be considered:

- a. Identification of the Competition that is being targeted in the LOI.
- b. A tentative project title.
- c. Name(s), institution(s), and disciplinary expertise of the Lead Principal Investigator(s) and other Principal Investigator(s).
- d. Brief statement of the rationale for the proposed RISA.
- e. Describe the general approach for the proposed RISA.
- f. Brief summary of work to be completed, research and engagement methodology to be used, team structure, and plans for integration/program management.
- g. Approximate cost of the project.

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

2. Full Application

Failure to comply with these provisions will result in applications being returned without review. Full applications for the RISA competitions are limited to 60 pages, single spaced, using 12-point font type with one-inch margins on standard 8.5 by 11 inch paper. The page limit includes:

- a. Title page
- b. Abstract
- c. Results from prior research
- d. Statement of work - Overall RISA program (not to exceed 25 pages, excluding references, figures, and tables, and other visual materials; see below)
- e. Statement of work - NIDIS related activities (not to exceed 10 pages, excluding references, figures, and tables, and other visual materials; see below)

The following items are not included in the official page count:

- a. Budget justification
- b. Budget table
- c. Subcontract information
- d. Federal Forms
- e. Vitae
- f. Current and pending support
- g. Appendices (e.g Letters of Support, Data management and sharing plans)

The full proposal and Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (IDCRA) should be put into one electronic file. The budget table/justification should be submitted in a file labeled budget narrative. The Federal Forms (SF424, SF424A, SF424B, CD511) and other mandated forms should be inserted in separate files 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(s) (PI) and institutional representative and clearly indicate which Competition is being addressed by name and Competition number. The title page should also include co-PIs from Federal Institutions. If more than one investigator is listed on the title page, please identify the lead investigator. The lead PI and institutional representative should be identified by: full name, title, organization, telephone number, email, and address. For paper submissions, the lead 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 applications associated with the same project, the names of all component institutions along with their lead PI name, e-mail, and amount requested per year must 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 the project title, an introduction to the problem, rationale, and a brief summary of the work to be completed. Abstracts must identify the name of the Competition that is being targeted and must also include a paragraph describing the work's relevance to the Competition that is being targeted as well as NOAA's long-term climate goals stated in section I.A. For multiple applications associated with the same project, the abstract must be identical in all applications. Failure to include this paragraph can result in the application being denied without additional review.

(3) Statement of work: The proposed program must be completely described, including identification of the problem, scientific objectives, proposed methodology, and relevance to

the Competition to which you are submitting the proposal and to NOAA's long-term climate goal. Benefits of the proposed program to the general public and the scientific community should be discussed. The overall RISA statement of work should also describe the integration of research and engagement components across the proposed RISA program, including those components focused on drought. The overall RISA statement of work, excluding references, figures and tables, and other visual materials, must not exceed 25 pages of text. The NIDIS statement of work must not exceed an additional 10 pages. For RISA competitions, only one application per team will be accepted.

(5) Data/Information Sharing Plan:

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.

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 contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review as part of the NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria, Item 1 -- Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Program Goals. 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.

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; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing data access, sharing, and security; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving should be included in the proposal budget. Information on acceptable methods to enable access to grant-produced data is available in the RISA Information Sheet.

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.

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 (will be available at lib.noaa.gov) after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

(6) Budget Table and Justification:

Budget Table: An itemized budget for all years and a total itemized budget must be included as a separate spreadsheet that breaks down the budget per object class category. The budget table should clearly delineate RISA and NIDIS funding sources. Both sources can be used to fund program management, integration, travel and communication costs, as applicable. Travel must be itemized to include destination, airfare, per diem, lodging, and ground travel. The following link will provide information on guidance to the recipient on how to prepare the budget narrative.

http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/docs/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_12.09.2015_final.pdf for the budget guidance to the recipient on how to prepare the budget narrative.

Budget Justification: A brief description of the expenses listed on the budget table and how they address the proposed work. Item justifications must include salaries, equipment, publications, supplies, tuition, travel, etc. Investigators who will not be requesting funds for salaries must also be listed, indicating their estimated time of commitment. Purchases of equipment greater than \$5000 must include a purchase versus lease justification.

(7) Federal Budget Forms: Budget numbers corresponding with the descriptions contained in the statement of work and budget table 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 through 5 in separate columns in Section B 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). For the RISA competitions, submit two SF424A forms, one for years 1-4 and the second for year 5 and the budget total. Note that these forms are not part of the required page limit.

(8) 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 required page limit. To obtain an indirect cost rate if your institution does not already have one, a grantee must submit an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency and negotiate an

indirect cost agreement.

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

(10) 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.

(11) Letters of Support: Letters can include those from entities who will benefit from the RISA projects or who will contribute as a partner on a project. See RISA Information Sheet for more details. All letters of support must be submitted as part of the proposal and are not included in the page limit for proposals.

(12) Results from prior research: The results of each prior research project led by the Principal Investigator(s) during the last three years relevant to the proposed effort should be summarized in brief paragraphs. Because NOAA believes it is 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 useable by the community in the past. This section should not exceed two pages. For multiple applications associated with the same project, this section must be identical in all applications.

(13) 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.

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

In order to submit an application through Grants.gov, an applicant must register for a Grants.gov user ID and password. Note that this process can take between three to five business days or as long as four weeks if all steps are not completed correctly. To avoid delays, applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not wait until the approaching application deadline before registering, logging in, reviewing the application instructions, and applying. Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at http://grants.gov/applicants/organization_registration.jsp.

Please note that organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their Grants.gov password and SAM database (which now incorporates CCR) registration up-to-date or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov. Note that your CCR username will not work in SAM. You must create a new SAM user account to renew or update your registration. Registration on SAM is a requirement. To obtain additional information and to verify that all required registrations are current, please visit www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM.

If you experience a Grants.gov systems issue (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before the application deadline, please do all of the following:

- o Print any error message received
- o Call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance
- o Contact NOAA using the contact information in section VIII. of this FFO prior to the close of the competition
- o Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov

In the event of a confirmed systems issue, NOAA reserves the right to accept an application in an alternate format prior to the application deadline. Problems with an applicant organization's computer system or equipment are not considered systems issues. Similarly, an applicant's failure to do the following are not considered systems issues:

- o Complete the required registration
- o Ensure that a registered AOR submits the application
- o Read an email message with guidance from Grants.gov

D. Submission Dates and Times

Letters of Intent for the Competitions should be received by the Competition Manager electronically via the Internet and by email by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time November 29, 2016. Applicants who have not received a response to their Letter of Intent within four weeks following the due date should contact the Competition Manager.

Full applications for all Competitions must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time February 6, 2017. Applications received after this time will not be considered for funding. Applications must be submitted via grants.gov. 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 profits are disallowed.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applications are submitted through grants.gov "Apply for grants".
Application packages are available at Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) at the link "Apply for Grants."

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Application to the Program Goals

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and relevance to NOAA (particularly RISA and NIDIS), our partners and decision makers across any of the following levels: federal, tribal, regional, state, or local. For the RISA Competition, this includes importance and relevance to the scientific priorities of the Competition. The PI's record of making his/her data accessible and useable by the scientific community in the past, and the procedures described in Section IV.B(5) Data/Information Sharing Plan will also be considered when evaluating the importance and relevance of the application. For the RISA competitions, the above stated relevance score will also include the applicant's approach for engaging decision makers and building networks of relationships to help support decision makers with scientific information, as well as supporting the region's respective DEWS.

2. Technical/Scientific Merit

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 RISA competitions, the above stated merit score will also include the applicant's approach to capacity-building and proposed methods for engagement with stakeholders and decision-makers.

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants

This criterion assesses whether the applicant team possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and/or administrative resources to accomplish the project. For RISA competitions, the above stated qualifications score will also include the PIs' record of collaborating with decision-making communities.

4. Project Costs

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

5. Outreach and Education

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 RISA Competitions, 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. Proposals will be reviewed by a panel that includes Technical and Relevance panelists who will score the proposals based on the above evaluation criteria. The Technical independent peer mail reviewers and/or independent peer panel reviewers consisting of both Federal and/or non-Federal experts will evaluate applications using the following three criteria described above: technical/scientific merit, overall qualifications of applicants, and project costs. The Relevance criterion will be scored separately by a set of Relevance panelists. The panel will not give consensus advice. We protect the identities of reviewers to the extent permitted by law.

Each Technical 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 Technical reviewers for each application will be combined using the weighting averages to produce a single numerical score. 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 the Technical Review will proceed to the Relevance Review.

If only a mail peer review is conducted for the Technical Review, proposals that score a 3.0 or higher (out of a possible high score of 5) in the Technical Review will proceed to the Relevance Review.

If a mail review and a panel review are both conducted for the Technical Review, the mail reviews will be provided to the the Technical Review 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 the Technical Review will proceed to the Relevance Review.

In the Relevance Review, 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 the Technical Review. The Relevance Review panel will not give consensus advice. The applications and their associated scores from the Technical Review will be provided to the Relevance Review panel.

The Technical Review and Relevance Review weighting of scores for the individual criteria is shown in the following table:

Criterion	Technical Weight	Relevance Weight	Final Weight
Importance and Relevance/Applicability	0%	100%	40%
Technical/Scientific Merit	70%	0%	42%
Overall Qualifications of Applications	20%	0%	12%
Project Costs	10%	0%	6%
Outreach and Education	0%	0%	0%
Stage Total	100%	100%	100%
Final weighting for each stage score	60%	40%	100%

To determine the final score, the scores from the Technical Review and the Relevance Review will be combined, with a weighting of 60% for the Technical Review score and 40% for the Relevance Review 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. Proposals with a final score below 3.0 will not be considered for funding.

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. Should applications receive a tie score, and funding is not available for every tied application, the Competition Manager may preferentially recommend applications for funding also according to 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.

C. Selection Factors

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall select awards in rank order unless a selection out of rank order is justified based upon any of the selection factors. Should applications receive a tie score, and funding is not available for every tie application, the Selecting Official may preferentially recommend applications for funding also in accordance with any of the selection factors.

The selection factors are as follows:

- Availability of funding
- Balance/distribution of funds:
 - o Geographically
 - o By type of institutions
 - o By type of partners
 - o By research area
 - o By project types
- Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies
- Program priorities and policy factors
- Applicant's prior award performance
- Partnerships with/participation of targeted group
- 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. Successful proposals that are not able to be recommended for federal funding under these competitions due to insufficient funds may be shared with other Federal and non-Federal partners who have the interest and potential to fund applications, or aspects of applications. Any applicant that does not wish for its application to be considered by other programs within or outside the Federal government should indicate on its application that it would like consideration of the project to be limited to the program in this announcement.

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 2017. Such decisions are contingent upon the final FY 2017 appropriation for NOAA by Congress and the final allocation of funds to CPO by NOAA. Funding for successful applicants is expected to begin during Spring-Summer 2017 for most approved projects. Applications should use September 1, 2017 as the start date.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The Grants Officer will provide notice to the applicant that they have received the award. 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. The 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

STATUTORY AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS - 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

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>.

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.

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.

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. If a form is provided, an award may not be issued until it is returned and accepted by NOAA.

REVIEW OF RISK - After applications are proposed for funding by the selecting official, the Grants Office will perform administration reviews. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

REPORTING - 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 <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000.

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.

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, MD 20910
lamar.revis@noaa.gov

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) - In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 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.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT – This notification involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0043, 0348-0044, 0348-0040, and 0348-0046 and 0605-0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

C. Reporting

Award recipients are required to submit financial and technical progress reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically via <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>. The first technical progress report covering the first nine 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. Technical progress reports should report on adherence to the Data/Information Sharing Plan (see §2e) and all listed publications resulting from the grant should adhere to the requirements established in said section.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006: this Act 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.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the RISA website for further information at or contact the RISA Program Managers, by mail (see address above) or at oar.cpo.risa@noaa.gov. Please allow up to two weeks after receipt for a response.

VIII. Other Information

None.