

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 Aquaculture Extension and Technology Transfer 2015

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2015-2004399

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

Dates: Applications are due to Grants.gov by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time April 27, 2015. Applications received after the closing dates and times will not be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: Depending on availability of funds, NOAA Sea Grant expects to have available about \$1,600,000 for each of FY 2015 and FY 2016 for a national competition to fund marine aquaculture extension and technology transfer efforts, as part of the overall plan to support the development of environmentally and economically sustainable ocean, coastal and Great Lakes aquaculture. Aquaculture that occurs in the Great Lakes or its coastal zone is considered marine aquaculture for this competition.

This Federal Funding Opportunity includes information on application and criteria for aquaculture extension proposals requesting a maximum of \$300,000 in total federal funding for up to a two-year period. Matching funds are required. Proposals are required to include a partnership (e.g., with local community governments, state and Federal agencies, regional management efforts, industry, non-governmental organizations). Awards are anticipated to start no later than September 1, 2015. Additional proposals from this competition may be selected for funding in subsequent fiscal years, subject to the availability of funds.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA National Sea Grant College Program was established by Congress to promote responsible use and conservation of the nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. Sea Grant carries out NOAA's mission of stewardship of our country's oceanic and atmospheric resources through a broadly based network of universities. Sea Grant aquaculture-related activities are integrated with the rest of NOAA via the NOAA Aquaculture Office, 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 (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 Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture.

Proposed projects must support one or both of the goals stated in the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program 2014-2017 Strategic Plan's Focus Area of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture:

1. a safe, secure and sustainable supply of seafood to meet public demand; and/or
2. informed consumers who understand the health benefits of seafood consumption and how to evaluate the safety and sustainability of the seafood they buy.

The National Sea Grant College Program Strategic Plan is available at <http://seagrant.noaa.gov/WhoWeAre/StrategicPlan.aspx>

Proposed projects also must be consistent with the Aquaculture Policies of NOAA and Department of Commerce, which are available at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/aquaculture/policy/2011_policies_homepage.html.

Projects supported under this funding opportunity should contribute to a target increase of the following national performance measure, which has been set by NOAA or component NOAA programs, including Sea Grant:

Number of fishermen, seafood processors and aquaculture industry personnel who modify their practices using knowledge gained in fisheries sustainability and seafood safety as a result of Sea Grant activities.

B. Program Priorities

This aquaculture extension and technology transfer competition is designed to support the development of environmentally and economically sustainable ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes region aquaculture.

The following are program priorities for this competition. The most successful proposals will address all of the following priorities:

1. High probability of significantly advancing sustainable domestic marine aquaculture development in the short-term (1-2 years) or medium-term (3-5 years). This could include extension efforts such as: enhanced aquaculture education and training; expanded transfer of technology (from research and development to implementation by end- users); and/or communication that disseminates the best available, science-based knowledge, tools, and technologies to stakeholders (e.g., consumers, industry, state and local governments).

2. Directly or indirectly increase the national performance measure target listed in section I.A., above. "Direct increase" means the proposal includes the above performance measure, with targets, in its work plan. "Indirect increase" means the proposal includes well-formed performance measures that the applicant credibly shows will lead to increased targets for the above national performance measure.

3. Support aquaculture of ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes species (including state- and federally-managed species). It is not a programmatic priority to fund projects that risk introducing nonnative species where they are not already established.

4. Support aquaculture occurring in the coastal zone (as defined by the Coastal Zone Management Act), including state waters and the terrestrial coastal zone, and federal waters. This includes the coastal zone of the Great Lakes Region.

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 about \$1,600,000 for each of FY 2015 and FY 2016 (two-year total of \$3,200,000) for this competition. Each individual proposal can request a maximum of \$300,000 in total federal funds per Sea Grant Program. Proposals may be submitted jointly by multiple Sea Grant Programs; in this case, the total federal request can be up to \$300,000 multiplied by the number

of programs involved.

B. Project/Award Period

Projects can be for a maximum duration of two years, but shorter-term project proposals are welcome. Proposals must provide a project description and budget that can easily be divided into annual increments of significant work that result in solid accomplishments.

Awards are anticipated to start no later than September 1, 2015. Additional proposals from this competition may be selected for funding in the next fiscal year FY 2016, subject to the availability of funds.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through grants or cooperative agreements. Sea Grant will use cooperative agreements if the proposed project includes substantial NOAA involvement as described in the award. Examples of substantial NOAA involvement may include non-compensated collaboration in research or approval of key stages in the project before subsequent steps are undertaken.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply to this funding opportunity: Sea Grant College Programs, Sea Grant Institutional Programs, Sea Grant Coherent Area Programs, and the National Sea Grant Law Center.

A given proposal can involve two or more of these Sea Grant Programs working in collaboration. In the case of proposals submitted jointly by multiple Sea Grant Programs, the project must be submitted as a single proposal with one Sea Grant Program designated as responsible for the proposal (awardee of record) and other Sea Grant Programs listed as sub-awards.

Other interested parties are encouraged to work with the Sea Grant Programs in their region to explore opportunities for partnering. 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.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

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

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Proposals must involve partnership(s) with relevant groups (e.g., industry, academia, community collaboration, relevant state and federal agencies, regional management councils, and interstate aquaculture or fisheries commissions) and demonstrate resource leveraging.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Proposals must be submitted electronically, via Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>), addressing opportunity number NOAA-OAR-SG-2015-2004399.

The application package is available on Grants.gov. A Title Page template, Sea Grant 90-2 form, Sea Grant 90-4 form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362) and NEPA questionnaire (OMB Control No. 0648-0538) are available at <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/fundingfellowships/seagrantformsandtemplates.aspx> or may be requested from the Agency Contact listed in section VII.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications must adhere to the provisions under Format Requirements and Content Requirements below. Applications that exceed page limitations will be truncated at the page limit before evaluation. Any appendices or other additional items that are not explicitly allowed will not be evaluated. Any section of the application that does not meet format or content requirements 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 out 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.

Content Requirements: Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals. Therefore, the Project Description may not exceed 12 pages. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the 12-page limit. The signed title page, project summary, references, budgets and justification, previous, current and pending support, letter(s) of support, vitae, NEPA questionnaire, and data sharing plan do not count towards the 12-page limit. All information needed for review of the proposal should be included in the main text; no appendices are permitted.

For each proposal the following information must be included:

a. Signed title page (one-page maximum): The title page must clearly identify the project via the following format: the letters "PI" and the last name of the Principle Investigator, followed by a hyphen, "Sea Grant Aquaculture Extension 2015", and a brief descriptive title of the proposal. For example, "PI Smith - Sea Grant Aquaculture Extension 2015: Transfer of a new site planning tool". The title page must include: (a) the name, affiliation, and address of the investigators with e-mail and telephone numbers; (b) the budgets requested and match offered for each year, and (c) the total project amount. An optional Title Page template is available at <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/fundingfellowships/seagrantformsandtemplates.aspx>

b. Project Summary on a 90-2 Project Summary Short Form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362): The project summary must include: (a) Title: the exact title as it appears in the rest of the application; (b) Investigators: the names and affiliations of each investigator who will significantly contribute to the project, starting with the Principal Investigator; (c) Partner(s): the names and affiliation of each project partner; (d) Funding request: total and annual federal request and matching funds summary for the project; (e) Project Period: the start and completion dates; and (f) Project Abstract (300-word maximum). This information will be used for public dissemination, if the proposal is funded. This abstract must be written for a non-technical audience and include the project rationale, the scientific or technical objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, a brief summary of work, and expected accomplishments.

If your proposed activities generate any environmental data, the form must also include a summary of the project's data sharing plan (the requirements of which are described more fully below). If your proposed activities do not generate any environmental data, include a statement that "this project will not generate any environmental data" on the form. The 90-2 Project Summary Short Form is available at <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/fundingfellowships/seagrantformsandtemplates.aspx>.

c. Project description (12-page maximum):

(1) Introduction/background/justification: This section must succinctly state the project's goals, objectives, and activities. It must include a clear statement of the aquaculture extension work to be undertaken for each proposed project. A description of the project's aquaculture constituency and the state program's existing capacity to meet that constituency's extension needs should be included. Applicants are encouraged to explicitly demonstrate how the state's existing aquaculture extension resources are insufficient to meet their constituency's demand for extension and how their proposal will address this shortage of aquaculture extension services. Subjects that the investigator(s) must include in this section are: (i) current state of knowledge of problem or issue and justification for proposed work;

(ii) contributions the study will make to the particular discipline, industry, or issue; (iii)

contributions the study will make toward addressing the problems identified in the appropriate Sea Grant Strategic Plan, Regional Research and Information Plan, or NOAA or Department of Commerce Aquaculture Policy; and (iv) how this proposal addresses each of the Program Priorities listed in Section I.B above.

(2) Extension Work Plan: Provide a specific, measurable, time-bound work plan for activities. This should include objectives to be achieved, questions to be addressed, statistical analyses, and role of all project personnel. Describe specific outreach goals, activities, and deliverables including publications, presentations, and public education. This section must also include at least one milestone (a significant activity to be performed or objective to be achieved) per year. If the project calls for the use of outside consultants who have not yet been selected, the selection criteria must be included here.

This section must discuss how project progress will be measured and reported. Please provide a detailed explanation of how achievement of this project's objectives will lead to a direct or indirect increase in targets for the performance measure in section I.A. If the project directly increases the performance measure target, please state the target and explanation of how this project brings about that increase. If the project indirectly supports an increase to the performance measure target, please include well-formed intermediate performance measures that logically lead to an increased target for the national performance measure in section I.A. If intermediate performance measures lead to the performance measure listed in section I.A., they should be outcome-based, rather than activity based. If a project is selected, the relevant Sea Grant program will be expected to incorporate this performance measure increase into its strategic plan.

(3) Description of partnership(s): Describe the required partnership and coordination with other programs or ongoing research or extension. Describe any other proposals or outside activities that are essential to the success of this proposal. This includes description of the coordination with various elements within and between participating Sea Grant programs and with other partners outside Sea Grant (e.g., industry, state and Federal agencies including NOAA, regional management groups).

(4) Outcome: Describe how the results of the project will benefit stakeholders (e.g., coastal communities, industry, public and private sectors). This section must describe how the part of the extension project will be integrated to effectively lead to the desired outcome for stakeholders. One suggestion is a logic model or some depiction of the logical relationships between resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed work. 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 contribute to improving and enhancing sustainable domestic marine aquaculture. Describe the scale of the outcome and how it will affect an identified regional,

state, or national aquaculture priority. Describe how the outcomes of the project will be measured and reported.

d. References and literature citations: Must be included as appropriate. This section does not count towards the 12-page maximum.

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 (OMB Control No. 0648-0362, available at <http://www.seagrants.gov/fundingfellowships/seagrantsformsandtemplates.aspx>). Subcontracts must have a separate budget page. The appropriateness of all matching funds (including in-kind contributions) will be determined on the basis of guidance provided in applicable federal cost principles, and applicants will be bound by the percentage of matching funds in the grant award. Applicants must provide justification for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested.

For proposals that seek to support new aquaculture extension personnel capacity, a clear transition plan for these personnel is required for after this funding terminates.

Pay special attention to any travel or supply budgets and provide detailed justification. Budgets should include funds for attending a national aquaculture symposium to present project results. This section does not count towards the 12-page maximum.

f. Previous, current and pending support: Applicants must provide project titles, agencies, and total award periods on all previous (last four years), current, and pending federal and state (including state Sea Grant) supported aquaculture projects and proposals that require a portion of time of the principal investigator and other senior personnel. For current and pending projects and proposals, the relationship between the proposed project and these other projects or proposals must be described, and the assignment of person- months per year to be devoted to each of the projects or proposals must be stated. This section does not count towards the 12-page maximum.

g. Letter(s) of support: Applicants may provide letters of support from stakeholders and partners. This section does not count towards the 12-page maximum.

h. Vitae (2 pages maximum per investigator): This section does not count towards the 12-page maximum.

i. Standard application forms: Standard application forms are available through grants.gov. They are mandatory for a proposal application. This section does not count towards the 12-page maximum.

j. NOAA NEPA Questionnaire: As part of this application process, questions from "The Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance Applicants" (OMB Control No. 0648-0538) must be answered. This NEPA Questionnaire form is available at <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/fundingfellowships/seagrantformsandtemplates.aspx>. All applicants need to fill in sections A, D, E and F. If you are proposing activities Related to Fisheries Sampling and Research, fill out section H. Failure to complete all of the indicated questions will result in the application being considered incomplete. This section does not count towards the 12- page maximum.

k. Data Sharing Plan: Environmental data and information collected and/or created under NOAA grants/ cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security requirements.

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

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

(3) Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

(4) If your proposed activities do not generate any environmental data, your application is still required to address the data sharing plan requirement by including a statement that "this project will not generate any environmental data" on the 90-2 project summary short form.

(5) The data sharing plan does not count towards the 12-page maximum.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due to Grants.gov by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time April 27, 2015. The timeliness of applications received through Grants.gov will be determined by the date and time indicator included when applications are submitted. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed.

D. Intergovernmental Review

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

E. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

F. Other Submission Requirements

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 goals (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 ascertains:

(a) the degree of impact of the proposed work to increase domestic ocean, coastal or Great Lakes aquaculture production, contribute to environmental sustainability, and advance the state of the industry, science, or state-of-the-art methods for marine aquaculture;

(b) the degree to which the proposal addresses the program priorities for this competition (listed in Section I.B.);

(c) the degree to which the proposal includes a concrete, unambiguous, specific desired outcome that is relevant to Sea Grant Strategic Goals, as well as the Department of Commerce and NOAA Aquaculture Policies, and has a good chance of achieving that outcome (including meeting stated performance measure targets); and

(d) the appropriateness of the Data Sharing Plan (if the project involves generating

environmental data).

2. Technical/scientific merit (maximum 20 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, including (if appropriate) plans for identifying and conducting future research, extension, technology transfer, or other actions;

(b) if the proposal includes all components necessary to achieve the desired outcome. Is there an effective plan for integrating all components and an objective way to determine success; and

(c) if the proposal includes a clear and logical target increase for the performance measure identified in section I.A. If it does not include this, does it include well-formed, outcome-based performance measures with targets, and credibly demonstrate how achieving these performance measure targets will lead to an increased target for the performance measure in section I.A.

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. For this competition, this includes (if appropriate) how aquaculture extension personnel capacity will be maintained when funding from this competition terminates.

5. Outreach and education (maximum 20 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 outreach strategy and specific activities to maximize dissemination of results to stakeholders; b) the level of active participation by partners on the project; c) the ability of the project to serve as a model for other states or regions projects; and d) if the proposal includes an effective plan to measure the effectiveness of its outreach and education efforts.

B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements, completeness of the application, and whether it addresses the programmatic priorities.

All complete and timely proposals will be subjected to technical peer review by the National Sea Grant Office based on the evaluation criteria. Evaluation will be conducted by a review panel of government, academic, NGO and/or private sector scientists and managers. Reviewers will not make a consensus decision, but will provide individual scores based on the evaluation criteria. The Competition Manager will review the ranking of the proposals and the review panel comments and make recommendations to the Selecting Official. Awards will be made in rank order unless a proposal is justified to be selected out of rank based upon one or more of the selection factors.

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 and policy factors 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 proposals.

Investigators 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 by the peer panel 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, 2015. Some awards may be funded solely from FY2016 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.

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 Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010), http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl

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

5. **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.

6. OMNI-CIRCULAR - Please note that on December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance titled Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements (OMB Uniform Guidance) (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards>), which streamlines the language from eight existing OMB circulars, including Cost Principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A 122) and administrative requirements (OMB Circulars A-102 and A 110), into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. The OMB Uniform Guidance has been adopted and supersedes DOC's uniform administrative requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24 as of December 26, 2014. This means the OMB Uniform Guidance applies to all new awards and to additional funding to existing awards made after December 26, 2014. In addition, the audit requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance will apply to audits of non-Federal entities beginning on or after December 26, 2014. Therefore, applicants should familiarize themselves with the OMB Uniform Guidance. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the OMB Uniform Guidance may be found at <https://cfo.gov/cofar/>.

7. 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

8. 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.

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 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 can 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

Agency contact for information regarding the NOAA Sea Grant Aquaculture Extension and Technology Transfer 2015 should be directed to Dorn Carlson, 301-734-1080 or Devin Brakob, 301-734-1085; or via e-mail at 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. Questions of general interest will be responded to, time permitting, on a question-and-answer website about this competition: [http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments\(NSIs\)/AquacultureCompetition](http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NationalStrategicInvestments(NSIs)/AquacultureCompetition)

VIII. Other Information

None