

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 (DOC).
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** NOAA Climate Transition Program
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):** 11.431, Climate and Atmospheric Research
- **Dates:** Proposals must be received at the Office of Global Programs no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time, August 30, 2004.
- **Application Submission:**
 - An original and two copies of proposals must be submitted in paper form to: NOAA Office of Global Programs, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1210, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Although on-line submission is not yet fully operational, in order to facilitate the review process, applicants are also requested to provide a PDF version of the proposal, excluding Federal forms to: ogpgrants@noaa.gov.
- 1. **Funding Opportunity Description:** This funding opportunity is offered as part of NOAA's new NOAA Climate Transition Program (NCTP). The NCTP is a competitive program. The NCTP supports the transition of research that is at a well-developed prototype stage and is recognized as being useful and worthy of adoption by decision-makers, operational information disseminators, and operational climate organizations. A research prototype can include products, processes, or policy tools. The program supports structured partnerships between the prototype developers and the adopting operational institutions' staff to refine and transition the prototype permanently into an operational environment.

An operational entity is not primarily a research entity as its primary objective is provision of a product or service of consistent quality to the U.S. public on an on going basis. The program will not fund projects that contain research that is not formally recognized by operational entities or decision-makers as being sufficiently robust to be worthy of adoption by their organizations. This program builds on existing work throughout NOAA and partnerships across NOAA, with other Federal and State agencies, academia and the private sector. This funding is a partnership opportunity, which is open to the federal and the non-federal research community.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA Climate Transitions Program (NCTP) is a new competitive research effort at NOAA designed to address the increasingly important challenge of providing a structured process for transitioning decision-maker relevant climate research into operational settings while setting the foundation for the next generation of applied climate research. The NCTP is shaped, in part, by the NOAA 2003-2008 Strategic plan, which set as NOAA's mission the goal to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our Nation's economic, social, and environmental needs **by maximizing the benefits of its products and services to the Nation**. The justification for this comes from a number of sources:

The National Research Council's Board on Atmospheric Sciences and Climate's (BASC) 2001 study, *A Climate Services Vision: First Steps Toward the Future*, made recommendations for building robust U.S. climate services. One recommendation by BASC was to "ensure a strong and healthy *transition* of U.S. research accomplishments into predictive capabilities that serve the nation."

This need has also been articulated within the federal government's Climate Change Science Program Strategic Plan (CCSP) under the second goal of the CCSP Decision Support Resources Development component. The CCSP Goal 2 is to develop resources to support adaptive management and planning to respond to climate variability and climate change, and *transition these resources from research to operational application*.

Also, a major element of the President's Climate Change Research Initiative (CCRI) is the commitment to transition scientific results into decision support resources that meet national and regional requirements.

B. Program Priorities

The NOAA Climate Transition Program (NCTP) is a proposal-driven program intended to build a deliberate bridge from research to applications for expanding regional and local climate services. It provides a mechanism for:

- Supporting research that addresses user needs and requirements
- Transitioning the research to operations
- Providing education and outreach capacity for new products

The NCTP is a competitive program that supports transition of climate information tools and management insights into user-relevant products. It

facilitates the transition of new or enhanced regional products and information delivery technology. The program goals are to provide NOAA funds to facilitate transition of climate information tools such that the program will:

- a) respond to user/decision-maker requirements,
- b) develop a deliberate bridge for research to applications,
- c) advance focused scientific research that can be conducted in the transition process,
- d) increase scientific capacity,
- e) support interactive learning,
- f) develop infrastructure, and
- g) adapt as the demand for climate services increases

The priorities of the project are to achieve effective transition of the research prototype, but to do so in a way that also advances scientific knowledge that will continue to build research, operational, and decision-maker capacity. Projects that have a high probability of success over a three-year period, or less, will receive the highest priority.

The criteria for proposals are:

- Clearly defined roles in the transition process for the partner institutions with the following roles:
 - Research (research must relate to the transition process in a manner that advances research and operational knowledge)
 - Operations
 - Extension
 - Decision-maker
- Explicitly defined participant contributions (i.e. financial, staff time, infrastructure, or other)
- Formal agreement between participants as to their roles and commitment to transitioning the research to operations
- Statement of transition methodology, duration and timeline
- The appropriate benefit analysis (socio-economic and other quantitative analyses, ecosystem benefits, etc.) of the outcome
- Post audit issues must be addressed. These include product validation, verification, refinement, and maintenance in an operational capacity post transition.
- A project management description
- The expected outcomes must be clearly defined

C. Related Responsibilities

It is expected that the problem identification and prototype development elements will have been completed prior to application for participation in the NCTP. The transfer to operations and the education and outreach elements of the process are to be addressed under the NCTP proposal.

The roles of each participant will be identified and defined explicitly within the

proposal. A participant in the proposal may be able to make a convincing case for taking on the operational information and extension roles for certain types of transition projects. It is highly unlikely, however, that a convincing case can be made in the proposal for the same participating institution to play both the roles of research and operations.

The proposal must include a project management description. Each participant's contributions must be clearly defined. This may be in the form of matching funds, personnel support, or other tangible contributions to the achievement of the outcome. The proposal must describe a methodology for permanently incorporating the climate based decision support tool in an operational mode. Cooperative agreements among the participants must also be a part of each proposal, and these may be represented as signatures on the proposal and/or more formal documents addressing contributions, such as a Memoranda of Understanding. It is expected that part of the funds will be utilized to advance scientific knowledge and research capacity. The research must be related to some aspect of the proposed transition project.

As part of the criteria, a project time line must be submitted articulating project milestones. Also, pre-project expectations of the benefits from the transitions should be included that addresses either the economic and quantitative benefits, benefit to socio-economic systems, benefits to ecosystems, or other measurable benefit. A methodology for conducting a post audit study of the benefits, product validation, verification, and refinement requirements for the future should also be addressed, and the expected outcome must be clearly defined.

D. Program Authority

15 U.S.C. 2904.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Based on the approved NCTP spending plan, this solicitation announces approximately \$300,000 available from FY05 appropriation for research projects funded under this external, peer-reviewed, grants program. It is anticipated that the cost of most funded projects will fall between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year and that 3-6 awards will be issued. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Neither NOAA nor the Department of Commerce is responsible for proposal preparation costs if this program is not funded for whatever reason. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

B. Project/Award Period

Proposals may be for up to a three-year period. For proposals covering a multi-year period, the project plan must include an annual budget as well as a budget for the full project period. Proposals may be funded fully up front or on an annual basis. Annual funding awards are based on the availability of funds and demonstrable and adequate progress the previous year. Each grantee will be required to submit a progress report nine months after the project start date and annually thereafter.

C. Type Of Funding Instrument

It is anticipated that the funding instrument for most of the extramural awards will be a grant, however, in some cases, if NOAA will be substantially involved in the implementation of the project, the funding instrument may be a cooperative agreement. Examples of substantial involvement may include but are not limited to proposals for collaboration between a funding entity or funding entity scientist, and a recipient scientist or technician and/or contemplation by NOAA of detailing Federal personnel to work on proposed projects. NOAA will make decisions regarding the use of a cooperative agreement on a case-by-case basis.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Funding Availability

Three hundred thousand dollars is budgeted in the President's budget for Fiscal year 2005 for NCTP activities.

B. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education; other nonprofits, commercial organizations, state, local and Indian tribal governments, and Federal agencies. Applications from non-Federal and Federal applicants will be competed against each other. PLEASE NOTE: Before non-NOAA Federal applicants may be funded, they must demonstrate that they have legal authority to receive funds from another Federal agency in excess of their appropriation. Because this announcement is not proposing to procure goods or services from applicants, the Economy Act (31 USC 1535) is not an appropriate legal basis.

C. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

An award will not be made unless a recipient cost shares at least 5% of the cost of the project but no more than 50% of the cost of the project.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard NOAA application kit is available on the OGP Website at: <http://www.opg.noaa.gov/grants/appkit.htm> or from Diane S. Brown at the NOAA Office of Global Programs, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1210, Silver Spring, MD 20910-5603; or by phone at 301-427-2089, ext. 107, or fax to 301-427-2222, or via internet at ogpgrants@noaa.gov.

The text of the full funding opportunity announcement can also be accessed at OGP's web site: <http://www.opg.noaa.gov> or the central NOAA site: www.ofa.noaa.gov/~amd/SOLINDEX.HTML. This announcement will also be available through Grants.gov at <http://www.Grants.gov>.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applicants must submit an original and two copies of a proposal to NOAA OGP (see address below) in paper format to be received by the deadline. If applicants wish reviewers to receive color graphics, glossy photographs, or other unusual materials, they are encouraged to submit a total of 8 additional copies of those materials. Although on-line submission is not yet fully operational, in order to facilitate the review process, applicants are also requested to provide a PDF version of the proposal, excluding Federal forms to: ogpgrants@noaa.gov.

Required Format

The following forms and elements are required in each application, with original signatures on each federal form. Failure to comply with these provisions will result in proposals being returned without review.

- (a) Proposals submitted must include the original and two unbound copies of the proposal.
- (b) Proposals, excluding appendix, must be limited to 30 pages (numbered), 11 point font or larger and 1 inch margins, including abstract, team organization chart, results of prior research, statement of work, budget justification, and budget. Appended information may not be used to circumvent the page length limit. Federally mandated forms are not included within the page count.
- (c) Proposals should be submitted to: NOAA Office of Global Programs, Attn: Diane S. Brown, Grants Manager, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1210, Silver Spring, MD 20910.
- (d) Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of full proposals will not be accepted.

Required Elements: All proposals must include the following elements:

- (a) Signed title page: The title page must be signed by the Principal Investigator (PI) and the institutional representative. If more than one investigator is listed on the title page, please identify the lead investigator. The PI and institutional representative should be identified by full name, title, organization, telephone number and address. The amount of Federal funds being requested should be listed for each budget period and for the total project.
- (b) Abstract: An abstract must be included and should contain an introduction of the problem, rationale and a brief summary of work to be completed. The abstract should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, lead institution(s), principal investigator(s), total proposed cost and budget period.
- (c) Research team organization chart: All researchers should be listed with roles on the project and contact information.
- (d) Statement of work: The proposed project must be completely described, including identification of the problem, scientific objectives and performance measures, proposed methodology, a project management plan, any outreach and education activities, and relevance to the announcement. Benefits of the proposed project to the general public and the scientific community should also be discussed. A summary of proposed work must be included clearly indicating that the proposed work is achievable. The statement of work, including references but excluding figures and other visual materials must not exceed 15 pages of text.
- (f) Evaluation of Project: The applicant is required to provide a plan for evaluation of project accomplishments with specific criteria and performance measures. If the project is selected for funding the evaluation plan may be further refined with the Program Manager.
- (g) Results from prior research: The results of related research activities should be described, including their relation to the currently proposed work. Reference to each prior research award should include the title, agency or institution, award number, PIs, period of award and total award. The section should be a brief summary and should not exceed two pages total.
- (i) Budget Justification: A brief description of the expenses listed in the budget and how they address the proposed work. Itemized justification must include salaries, equipment, publications, supplies, tuition, travel, etc.
- (j) Budget: the proposal must include total and annual budget corresponding with the descriptions provided in the statement of work. A sample budget sheet can be found in the standard NOAA application kit-Federal Applicants must submit a Standard Form 424 (9-2003) "Application for Federal Assistance", including a detailed budget using the Standard Form 424a (9-97) "Budget Information--Non-Construction Program". The form is included in the standard NOAA application Kit. Additional text to justify expenses should be included as necessary.
- (k) Vitae: Abbreviated curriculum vitae are sought with each proposal, not to exceed three pages per person. Reference lists should be limited to 10-15 of the most recent and relevant publications with up to five other relevant papers.

- (l) Current and pending support: For each investigator, submit a list that includes project title, supporting agency with grant number, investigator months, dollar value and duration. Requested values should be listed for pending support.
- (m) List of suggested reviewers: The cover letter may include a list of individuals qualified and suggested to review the proposal. It also may include a list of individuals that applicants would prefer to not review the proposals. Such lists may be considered at the discretion of the Program Manager.
- (n) DUNS Number: All applications must have a DUNS (Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System when applying for Federal grants on or after October 1, 2003. No application is deemed complete without the DUNS number and only OMB may grant exceptions.
- (o) NEPA Statement: 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 assistance 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_TOC.pdf and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/reg/ceq/toc_ceq.htm

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, applicants shall provide a separate 1-2 page NEPA Statement detailing the following: 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). This document is not included in the page count limitation. 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 of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

C. Submission Dates and Times

1. Proposals must be received by OGP (See address below) no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time, August 30, 2004. Proposals received after that time will not be considered for funding. OGP determines whether an application has been submitted before the deadline by date/time stamping the applications as they are physically received in the OGP office.

D. Address for Submitting Proposals

NOAA Office of Global Programs; Attn: Diane S. Brown, Grants Manager; 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1210; Silver Spring, MD 20910.

E. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria & Selection Procedures

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

This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (40%)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (15%)

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

4. Project Costs (10%)

The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. A higher weighting will be accorded to proposals that have a higher percentage of cost sharing.

5. Outreach and education (10%)

NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Evaluation of the Applications

Once a full application has been received by OGP, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

2. Review Panel

Full proposals will undergo independent peer panel review and may receive independent peer mail review. The independent peer mail reviewers rate each proposal according to the above Criteria for Evaluation. Each independent peer panel review member will rate the proposals using the above-mentioned criteria and taking the mail reviews into consideration. No consensus advice will be given. Both agency and non-agency experts in the field may be used in this process. The technical reviewers will give no consensus advice. The proposals will be ranked according to their average score assigned by the independent peer panel.

C. Selection Factors

The Program Manager shall award in the rank order unless a proposal can justifiably be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research 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 (see <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/csi/risa/index.htm>)
5. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Partnerships with/participation of targeted groups

Factor 1 includes whether a proposal maximizes use of available funds and whether a proposals' cost falls within remaining funds available; Factor 3 includes duplication of proposals submitted in response to this announcement; Factor 4 includes whether a project duplicates funding already provided by non-federal sources.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the two months following the date given in this announcement that the full proposals are due to the OGP. Funding should begin during fall 2004 for most approved projects. Projects should not be expected to begin prior to September 1, 2004, unless otherwise directed by the Program Manager.

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 a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notifications will be issued to the Authorizing Official and the Principle Investigator of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation. Unsuccessful applications will be kept on file in the Program Office for a period of at least 12 months, and then destroyed.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Limitation of Liability: In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if this program is canceled due to other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project.

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the Federal Register notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109). You may obtain a copy of these by notices by contacting the agency contact(s) under Section VII, or by going to the website at: www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces140.html.

Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact should furnish sufficient information to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project (See Section IV, Par. B., **Required Elements**, Subparagraph (o), above).

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. All financial reports shall be submitted in triplicate (one original and two

copies) to the NOAA Grants Officer. Performance reports should be submitted to the NOAA/OGP OHH Program Manager. Electronic submission of performance reports is preferred. All reports will be submitted on an annual schedule. The first technical progress report of a multi-year award is due 9 months after the start date of the award. The comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

Please visit the Office of Global Programs website for further information <http://www.ogp.noaa.gov> or contact Diane S. Brown, Grants Manager, at the Office of Global Programs (OGP), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1220, Silver Spring, MD 20910-5603; or by phone at 301-427-2089, ext. 107, or fax to 301-427-2222, or email at ogpgrants@noaa.gov.