

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: Oceans and Human Health Initiative

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s): 11.460 – Special Oceanic and Atmospheric Projects

Dates: Letters of Intent must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Time February 27, 2004. Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Time April 23, 2004.

Application Submission:

-LOIs must be submitted electronically to: ogpgrants@noaa.gov, unless provisions for paper submission have been made with the Program Manager.

-Full Proposal must be submitted in paper form to: NOAA Office of Global Programs, 1100Wayne 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 full proposal, excluding Federal forms to: ogpgrants@noaa.gov as well as eight additional paper copies of the proposal

Funding Opportunity Description: This funding opportunity is offered as part of NOAA's new Oceans and Human Health Initiative (OHH). The OHH is a competitive suite of programs designed to address the increasingly important role of the oceans on human health. From increased harmful algal blooms to beach closures, from infectious diseases to marine toxins and pathogens, from seafood safety and testing to sentinel species, and from drug discovery to pharmaceuticals, this new initiative is designed to build on the existing work throughout NOAA to enhance NOAA's expertise in the oceans and human health arena through partnerships across NOAA, with other Federal and State agencies, and with academia and the private sector. This funding opportunity is intended to engage the non-federal research community in interdisciplinary research combining the physical science, biological science, medical and public health communities in 1) taking an ecosystems approach to understanding and predicting the pathways through which ocean processes affect human health, or 2) promoting the ecologically sound discovery and use of marine organisms and bioactive agents for human health benefit. A non-federal partner should lead the proposal but participation of a federal scientist on the team is allowed. In order to build a well-integrated OHH program, applicants are encouraged to collaborate with NOAA scientists and other federal and non-federal researchers funded under the OHH or working on OHH-related issues. Building on NOAA's strengths in assessment, prediction, and exploration, research should be structured to provide useful

information for public health and natural resource policy and decision-making on issues at the interface of ocean processes and human health outcomes related to NOAA's mission. Proposals funded under this announcement should also include a plan for providing the data collected to an appropriate NOAA entity. Proposals should also include a plan to synthesize, assess, and evaluate, on a regular basis research findings, data collected, and related activities for the OHH as a whole.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Oceans and Human Health Initiative (OHH) is a new competitive research effort at NOAA designed to address the increasingly important role of the oceans on human health. The OHH is shaped in large part by the National Research Council 1999 report “From Monsoons to Microbes: Understanding the Ocean’s Role in Human Health, which provides much of the foundation for a national program to address two broad categories at the intersection of marine processes and human health: 1) hazards to human health from the oceans including climate and weather events, infectious diseases, and harmful algal blooms, and 2) the value of marine biodiversity to biomedicine, including marine-derived pharmaceuticals and related bioactive agents, and marine organisms for biomedical research.

The OHH is also shaped by FY03 Congressional appropriation language directing the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to create an Oceans and Health Initiative to “...coordinate and focus agency activities on critical areas of concern and identify critical gaps in coverage,” and which provided funds to address “critical research and projects aimed at closing identified gaps.” The approved program plan for OHH calls for the establishment of an integrated suite of activities including: 1) NOAA Center(s) of Excellence in Oceans and Human Health, and an internal NOAA competition, 2) an External Peer-Reviewed Grants Program, 3) a Distinguished Scholars and Traineeship Program, 4) Workshop and Community Building Activities, and 5) Small Business Innovative Research grants.

This funding opportunity is offered as part of the OHH External Peer-Reviewed Grants Program. From increased harmful algal blooms to beach closures, from infectious diseases to marine toxins and pathogens, from seafood safety and testing to sentinel species, and from drug discovery to pharmaceuticals, this new initiative is designed to build on the existing work throughout NOAA and enhance NOAA’s expertise in the oceans and human health arena through partnerships across NOAA, with other Federal and State agencies, and with academia and the private sector. This funding opportunity is intended to engage the non-federal research community in interdisciplinary research combining the physical science, biological science, medical and public health communities in: 1) taking an ecosystems approach to understanding and predicting the pathways through which ocean processes affect human health; or 2) promoting the ecologically sound discovery of marine organisms and bioactive agents for human health benefit. Research should be structured to provide useful information for public health and natural resource policy and decision-making on issues at the interface of ocean processes and human health outcomes related to NOAA’s mission.

B. Program Priorities

Proposals should address at least one of the two following areas of interest: 1) an ecosystems approach to understanding and predicting the pathways through which ocean processes affect human health; or 2) the ecologically sound discovery and use of marine organisms and bioactive agents for human health benefit. Research should be structured to provide useful information for public health and natural resource policy and decision-making on issues at the interface of ocean processes and human health outcomes related to NOAA's mission. Consistent with NOAA's definition of coasts, the Great Lakes are considered coastal areas under the OHH.

1. Ecosystems Approach

Proposals should provide an interdisciplinary approach, combining at least the physical science, biological science, medical and public health communities as appropriate for the topic. An ecosystems approach allows for consideration of multiple interacting environmental and social stresses that affect the ocean's impact on human health. The suite of human health outcomes of interest includes harmful algal blooms, marine-related infectious diseases, marine toxins and pathogens, seafood safety and testing, sentinel species as indicators of and models for human health.

2. Marine Organisms and Bioactive Agents

Proposals may address a range of mechanism for identifying and developing marine-derived pharmaceuticals and curative agents from marine organisms and bioactive agents. Proposals should be explicit about the disciplines and mechanisms involved in the proposed research, (i.e., genomics, exploration, historical analysis of existing samples), and the potential for human health and commercial benefit.

A. Related Responsibilities

1. Data

Proposals funded under this announcement should also include a plan for providing the data collected to an appropriate NOAA entity. This may be either at the NOAA Data Centers [National Ocean Data Center (NODC), National Climate Data Center (NGDC), National Geophysical Data Center (NGDC)], a NOAA OHH Center of Excellence (once award decisions have been made), another NOAA laboratory or facility, or other appropriate data management entity.

2. Reporting and Evaluation

To ensure the OHH provides useful policy information and feedback to the program, Investigators funded under this announcement should also be prepared to participate with the Program Manager, NOAA Center(s) of Excellence in Oceans and Human Health (which are being established), and other OHH funded researchers to synthesize and assess

on a regular basis research findings, data collected, and related activities for the OHH as a whole.

Investigators funded under this announcement should include criteria for evaluating the success of the proposed work, and should also be prepared to participate in further refining the evaluation process with the Program Manager.

Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Based on the approved OHH spending plan, this solicitation announces approximately \$3.0 Million available from FY03 appropriation for research projects funded under this OHH external, peer-reviewed, grants program. Pending FY04 appropriation and internal policy decisions, an additional \$3.0-\$4.0 Million may be available to supplement funds for awards made under this FFO. We anticipate that the cost of most funded projects will fall between \$50,000 and \$250,000 per year. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. 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. Eligible Applicants

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

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

This program does not require matching share.

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 proposals to NOAA OGP (see address below) in paper format to be received by the deadline. In order to facilitate the review process Applicants are also requested to provide 8 additional paper copies of the proposal excluding Federal forms (eight more than required), particularly if they wish all reviewers to receive color, unusually sized (not 8.5 x 11"), or otherwise unusual materials submitted as part of the proposal. Alternatively or in addition, although on-line submission is not yet fully operational, applicants may provide their proposal as a PDF File to ogpgrants@noaa.gov. Only 3 copies of the Federally required forms are needed and they should be included as part of the official submission described in the section on Full Proposals below. All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the requirements listed below. Failure to heed the requirements may result in proposals being returned without review.

1. Letters 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 Oceans and Human Health Initiative in advance of preparing a full proposal. While it is in the best interest of the applicants and their institutions to submit an LOI, it is not a requirement; applicants who do not submit an LOI may still submit a full proposal. Full proposals will only be encouraged for LOIs deemed relevant.

The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the OHH announcement. The LOI should include the components listed below. If these components are not included, the LOI risks a delayed response and may not be considered by the program reviewers. LOIs should be no longer than two pages in length with at least 11-point font and one-inch margins. LOIs should contain (a) Identification of the program priority targeted by the LOI. (b) Tentative project title. (c) Name(s) and Institution(s) of all principal investigators (PI), and specification of which individual is the Lead PI. (d) Statement of the Problem. (e) Brief summary of work to be completed, including methodology, data sets needed or to be collected, and approximate cost. (f) Description of intended use of results for public health and natural resource policy and decision-making. (g) LOIs should be submitted electronically to ogpgrants@noaa.gov unless provisions for paper submission have been made with the Program Manager

The program manager will review each LOI to determine whether the LOI is responsive to the program goals as advertised in this notice. An LOI response (e-mail or letter) will be sent back to the investigator encouraging or discouraging a full proposal submission. The final decision to submit a full proposal will be made by the investigator.

2. Full Proposals

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.

(e) Data Management Plan. The proposal should include a plan for providing data collected through the proposed project to an appropriate NOAA entity. This may be either at the NOAA Data Centers [National Ocean Data Center (NODC), National Climate Data Center (NGDC), National Geophysical Data Center (NGDC)], a NOAA OHH Center of Excellence (once award decisions have been made), another NOAA laboratory or facility, or other appropriate data management entity.

(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. One of the evaluation criteria should be connection with other NOAA OHH and NSF/NIEHS funded projects and activities.

(g) Federal, state and local government activities: The proposal should include a list of other related Federal, state and local government activities, including other efforts funded through the OHH, that the proposed work would affect and describe the relationship between the proposed project and those plans or activities.

(h) 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: Applicants shall provide a separate 1-2 page NEPA Statement detailing the following: (1) activities to be conducted, (2) locations, (3) sites, (4) species and habitat to be affected, (5) possible construction activities, and (6) 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. NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals that 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_TOC.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm.

C. Electronic Submission

LOIs should be submitted electronically to ogpgrants@noaa.gov, unless provisions for paper submission have been made with the Program Manager.

Full Proposals must be submitted in paper format mailed to the Office of Global Programs(see address below) to be received by the deadline. In order to facilitate the review process Applicants are also requested to provide 8 additional paper copies of the proposal excluding Federal forms (eight more than required), particularly if they wish all reviewers to receive color, unusually sized (not 8.5 x 11"), or otherwise unusual materials submitted as part of the proposal. Alternatively or in addition, although on-line submission is not yet fully operational, applicants may provide their proposal as a PDF File to ogpgrants@noaa.gov. Only 3 copies of the Federally required forms are needed and they should be included as part of the official submission described in the section on Full Proposals below.

D. Submission Dates and Times

1. Letters of Intent must be received by OGP (See address below) no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time February 27, 2004.
2. Full proposals must be received by OGP (See address below) no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time April 23, 2004. Proposals received after that time will not be considered for funding. OGP determines whether a paper application has been submitted before the deadline by date/time stamping the applications as they are physically received in the OGP office.

E. Address for Submitting Proposals

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

F. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

V. **Application Review Information**

A. Criteria

1. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal (20%)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the Oceans and Human Health Initiative Grant Program competition, this includes links to NOAA's mission, a data management plan, proposed project evaluation criteria, and responsiveness to the FFO.

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (50%)

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. For the Oceans and Human Health Initiative Grant Program competition this includes methodology and proof of data quality and availability.

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (10%)

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

4. Project Costs (10%)

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

5. Outreach and Education (10%)

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 Oceans and Human Health Initiative Grant Program competition this includes engaging appropriate public health, natural resource management, or other partners to ensure provision of useful information for policy and decision-making, or relevance of research findings for public or private sector use.

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 is justified to 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
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

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.

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.