

structure and function of the ecosystem in which fishing activities occur, so that managers can be aware of the effects their decisions have on the ecosystem, and the effects other components of the ecosystem may have on fisheries. Development of FEPs for each major ecosystem was recommended by the NMFS-appointed Ecosystem Principles Advisory Panel which was formed under a mandate by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996. (See the Panel's Report to Congress at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/EPAPrpt.pdf>.) The initial FEP will reflect the existing state of knowledge about the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Effective FEP implementation and ultimate success of the Bay's FEP initiative will require new research to characterize critical components of the ecosystem. The total value of the proposals selected for funding under this priority cannot exceed \$100,000 of the base amount. Priorities are not listed in any particular order.

(1) Design and implementation of surveys to identify habitats, spawning areas, and feeding grounds for significant Chesapeake Bay species.

(2) Promote a higher level of understanding of the relationships between fisheries, the ecosystem, society and the environment. Proposals may include:

a. Improving the understanding of the 'multiple pathways' that can affect managed species and members of their significant food webs. Pathways might include (but are not limited to): the effects of habitat degradation and restoration, influences of the spatial arrangement of habitats, effects of environmental fluctuations or climate change, and the impact of changes in predator-prey relationships.

b. Characterizing uncertainty in key parameters used to support fisheries management decisions. This should include the ability to show the risks associated with the estimated uncertainty.

c. Describing the social and economic drivers of both commercial and recreational sectors of the Chesapeake Bay fishing industry.

d. Determining the relevance of existing, or proposed, indicators of ecosystem health (especially to meet the objective of linking fisheries and human health to the supporting Chesapeake Bay ecosystem).

e. Development of a data management system for linking fisheries and habitat management in Chesapeake Bay. This integrated data management system should link information on habitat requirements, significant food webs, and management activities.

III. Funding

A. *Funding Availability.* This document describes how interested persons can apply for funding under the Chesapeake Bay Fisheries Research Program, and how funding decisions will be made.

This solicitation announces that funding of up to \$1,500,000 may be available through the Chesapeake Bay Fisheries Research Program. It is the intent of the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office to continue with several existing relationships and to make awards through this program for projects pending successful progress reports and review. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program. This announcement does not guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all selected applications submitted under this program. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and the NOAA representatives.

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification of Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the **Federal Register** notice of October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the **Federal Register** notice published October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109), is applicable to this solicitation.

B. *Duration and Terms of Funding.* Under this solicitation, NCBO will fund Chesapeake Bay Fisheries Research Projects as 12 month cooperative agreements. The cooperative agreement has been determined to be the appropriate funding instrument because of the substantial involvement of NCBO in:

1. Developing program research priorities;
2. Evaluating the performance of the program for effectiveness in meeting regional goals for Chesapeake Bay stock assessments;
3. Monitoring the progress of each funded project;
4. Holding periodic workshops with investigators; and
5. Working with recipients to prepare annual reports summarizing current accomplishments of the Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee.

Proposals may be considered for continuation beyond the first project and budget period. Proposals may be submitted for up to 3 years. However, funds will be made available for only a 12-month award period and any continuation of the award period will be subject to an approved scope of work, satisfactory progress, a panel review,

and available funding to continue the award. No assurances for a funding continuation exists; funding will be at the complete discretion of NOAA.

First-year proposals must include a full description of the activities and budget for the first year as described in this announcement, and should include a summary description of the proposed work for each subsequent year and an estimated budget by line item (without supporting budget detail pages) for review and analysis. If selected for funding, the applicant will be required to submit a full proposal for the second year by the deadline announced in the following year's competitive cycle. Proposals will be evaluated through a review panel process, but will not be subject to competition with new proposals.

C. *Cost-sharing Requirements.*

Applications must reflect the total budget necessary to accomplish the project, including contributions and/or donations. Cost-sharing is not required by the Chesapeake Bay Fisheries Research Program but is strongly encouraged. Federal funds may not be considered matching funds. The nature of the contribution (cash versus in-kind) and the amount of matching funds will be taken into consideration in the final selection process.

IV. How to Apply

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.

The Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities in its educational and research programs. The DOC/NOAA vision, mission, and goals are to achieve full participation by Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) in order to advance the development of human potential, to strengthen the nation's capacity to provide high-quality education, and to increase opportunities for MSIs to participate in and benefit from Federal Financial Assistance programs. DOC/NOAA encourages all applicants to include meaningful participation of MSIs.