

reduction programs for shrimp fisheries under limited access. The authority for the assistance described above does not impose residency requirements.

III. Funding Availability

Approximately \$35.0 million will be available in fiscal year (FY) 2003 for projects. Consistent with the funding formula discussed in Section II above, of the \$17,500,000 provided for economic assistance to the Gulf shrimp fishery, we anticipate that approximately \$1,021,080 shall be available for the shrimp industry in Alabama, \$1,072,006 shall be available for the shrimp industry in Florida, \$8,688,866 shall be available for the shrimp industry in Louisiana, \$1,003,307 shall be available for the shrimp industry in Mississippi, and \$5,534,740 shall be made available for the shrimp industry in Texas. Of the \$17,500,000 provided for economic assistance to the South Atlantic shrimp fishery, we anticipate that approximately \$4,877,680 shall be available for the shrimp industry in North Carolina, \$3,658,916 shall be available for the shrimp industry in South Carolina, \$3,336,624 shall be available for the shrimp industry in Georgia, and \$5,626,780 shall be available for the shrimp industry in Florida.

IV. Funding Period and Restrictions

Grants will be awarded for a maximum period of 36 months. Not more than 5 percent of grant funds may be used for administrative expenses, and no funds may be used for lobbying activities or representational expenses. Construction is not an allowable activity under this program. Therefore, applications will not be accepted for construction projects.

V. Cost Sharing

Cost-sharing is not required for this fisheries disasters program.

VI. Eligibility Information

Institutions of higher education, and state, local and Indian tribal governments are eligible to apply.

VII. Application Information

Content, Form and Submission of Applications

Project applications must include a narrative project description which provides a clear presentation of the proposed work, the methods for carrying out the project, and an explanation of how the proposed activities will fulfill the purposes of the disaster assistance, as described in Section II above. Project applications must identify the principal participants,

and include copies of any agreements describing the specific tasks to be performed by participants. A budget, which includes a detailed breakdown by category of expenditures, with appropriate cost estimates and justifications as they relate to specific aspects of the project, must be provided.

Applications must be one-sided and unbound. You must submit one signed original and two signed copies of the completed application (including supporting information). We will accept neither facsimile applications, nor electronically forwarded applications.

Three copies (one original and two copies) of each application are required and should be submitted to the NMFS Southeast Regional Office, State/Federal Liaison Office (see **ADDRESSES**). We must receive your application by close of business (5 p.m. eastern daylight time on June 27, 2003). Applications received after that time will not be considered for funding. All incomplete applications are returned to the applicant.

VIII. Application Review and Selection Process

When we receive applications we will screen them to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see **DATES**); include SF 424 signed and dated by an authorized representative; were submitted by an eligible applicant; address the program purpose; and include a budget, statement of work, milestones, and identify the principal organizations carrying out work under the grant.

Merit Review - Applications responsive to this solicitation will be evaluated by a review panel of three individuals with disaster assistance expertise, in order to determine their merit. Reviewers will assess the applications on the criteria listed below, which are weighted equally. Each reviewer will provide individual evaluations of the proposals. Based on these individual evaluations, reviewers will rank the applications received on behalf of the fishing industries of the states listed in section II above.

The following Evaluation Criteria will be applied by the reviewers: (1) Importance/relevance and applicability of application - how the application relates to the accomplishments of the program's purpose; (2) Technical/scientific merit - whether the application has sufficient technical and scientific merit that will adequately address project goals and objectives; (3) Overall qualifications of the applicant - experience with the fisheries industry; (4) Project costs - whether the proposed costs are reasonable and consistent with Section III, Funding Availability; and (5)

Outreach and education - whether the scope of the application's proposed activities are sufficient to disseminate disaster relief information.

Following the merit review, the applications will be provided to the Regional Administrator, Southeast Region, who is the selecting official. In determining the projects to be recommended for funding, the Regional Administrator will consider the evaluation and rankings of the review panel members, along with the following selection factors: Availability of funding; balance/distribution of funds by geography/institutions/project types; duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Other Federal Agencies; program priorities and policy factors; applicants' prior award performance; and partnerships with/participation of targeted groups.

IX. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices - Successful applications generally will be notified approximately within 45 days from the date of publication of this notice. Projects must not be initiated until a signed award is received from the NOAA grants Office. Unsuccessful applications will be returned to the applicant.

2. Administrative Requirements - If you are selected to receive a grant award for a project, you must:

- Manage the day-to-day operations of the project, be responsible for the performance of all activities for which funds are granted, and be responsible for the satisfaction of all administrative and managerial conditions imposed by the award.

- Keep records sufficient to document any costs incurred under the award, and allow access to these records for audit and examination by the Secretary of Commerce, the Comptroller General of the United States, or their authorized representatives; and, submit financial status reports (SF 269) to NOAA Grants in accordance with the award conditions.

3. Reporting - Successful applicants will be required to:

- Submit semiannual project status reports on the use of funds and progress of the project to us within 30 days after the end of each 6-month period. You will submit these reports to the individual identified as the NMFS Program Officer in the funding agreement.

- Submit a final report within 90 days after completion of each project to the NMFS Program Officer. The final report must describe the project and include an evaluation of the work you