

(h) budget narrative (including justification for non-standard items).

All pages should be single-sided, single- or double-spaced, typewritten margin in a minimum 12-point font on an 8½" x 11" page. The bottom right-hand corner of every page, excluding cover sheet, must be numbered and labeled with the applicant's last name. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations are to be included in the 15-page limit. The cover sheet, executive summary, current support, resumes, references/literature cited, *SF-424* Application for Federal Assistance, budgets, and budget narrative sections need not be counted against the 15-page limit. All information needed for review of the proposal should be included in the main text, not submitted as appendices.

The proposal must clearly explain each participant's efforts and their respective requests for OE funds, as well as any cost-sharing. Separate budgets within the single proposal must be provided if more than one funding action is anticipated (e.g., if funds are to be allocated to more than one institution or agency). Three hardcopies of the proposal are required. For the proposal only, in addition to the hard copies it is highly recommended that applicants submit a digital version (cdrom, floppy disk, or zip disk) of a complete proposal, preferably in Adobe .pdf format in order to facilitate proposal review. All proposals, hard copies and digital versions, must be postmarked or received by October 28, 2003. If applicants wish reviewers to receive included color graphics, glossy photographs, or other unusual materials, applicants are encouraged to submit a total of 10 complete hard copies. For further information, see *Announcement of Opportunity: Application Kit* at <http://www.explore.noaa.gov/> or see **ADDRESSES and/or FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.**

#### *Intergovernmental Review.*

Applications under this program are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Applicants must contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the State's process under EO 12372. The names and addresses of the SPOCs are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's Web site: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

#### *C. Forms*

The following government forms shall be required only from those applicants subsequently recommended for award.

Forms must be submitted in triplicate, each with original signatures. These forms include:

*SF-424A* Budget Information—Nonconstruction Programs (Rev July 1997)

*SF-424B* Assurances—Nonconstruction Programs

*SF-LLL* Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

*Form CD-346* Application for Funding Assistance,

*Form CD-511* Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility matters: Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying,

*Form CD-512* Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions and Lobbying and shall be used in applying for financial assistance, and, if applicable, please submit your most current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.

All necessary forms may be obtained via the OE Web site (see: OE Application Kit at <http://explore.noaa.gov/>, for hard copies, see **ADDRESSES and/or FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Proposals received after the deadline, or proposals that deviate from the format described in this Notice will not be accepted.

### **VII. Pre-Proposal and Proposal Review and Selection Process**

#### *A. Pre-Proposal Evaluation*

The OE Director will make the decision to request or not request full proposal submissions based on the following factors: (1) Proposal consistency with the format of this announcement (2) Consistency with the OE program and mission (3) Applicability of the project objectives to OE themes and project funding considerations (4) Extent to which the proposal focuses on a geographical area that is unknown or poorly known (5) Reasonableness of project costs relative to available program funds (6) Logistical feasibility (e.g., ship availability), given OE resource availability. The final decision to submit a full proposal is up to the applicant.

#### *B. Proposal Evaluation*

Proposals will be evaluated and rated individually by (a) independent peer panel review or by (b) correspondence review. The evaluators will be composed of scientists, engineers, social scientists, economists, outreach specialists, and resource managers as appropriate to the scope of proposals received in response to this announcement. Some proposals,

including those focused on activities such as technology development, organizing and implementing workshops, and outreach activities, will be reviewed by correspondence (i.e., at least three mail peer-reviews) rather than by independent peer panel review. The following criteria will be used to review proposals using the corresponding weight value:

#### *Scientific and Technical merit:*

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 OE review process this includes: (a) The scientific and/or technical value of the work proposed, its probability of success, and the applicant's scientific and/or technical capabilities to undertake the proposed work; (b) the anticipated scientific and/or technical impact of the results of the project on the advancement of knowledge within the field(s) of the endeavor. (40%)

#### *Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal to the Program Goals:*

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, international, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the OE review process this includes the degree to which the proposal addresses and supports OE's mission and this notice's objectives. (20%)

#### *Project Costs:*

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For the OE review process this includes the reasonableness of project costs relative to the scope of work proposed. (20%)

#### *Overall qualifications of applicants:*

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the OE review process this includes the qualifications of the applicant to accomplish the work proposed. (20%)

All proposals will be rated by the independent peer reviewers or correspondence review panel according to an adjectival scale (that will later be converted into a score) ranging in order of decreasing merit, as follows:

*Excellent:* Comprehensive, thorough and of exceptional merit, one or more major strengths, no major weaknesses, and any minor weaknesses easily correctable.

*Very Good:* Competent, one or more major strengths, strengths outweigh