

Events, or reports sent to NMFS under MMPA Section 109(h)(50 CFR 216.22(b)) as a state, local, or Federal participant. Principal Investigators that are researchers and do not hold LOAs, are not LOA designees, are not NMFS-recognized Northwest Region participants, and are not MMPA Section 109(h) participants must include copies of letters from a NMFS Region or the MMHSRP authorizing them under 50 CFR 216.22, any MMPA and/or ESA scientific research and/or enhancement permits, as well as a Co-investigator's LOA or letter of designation. See section I. F., Eligibility, to determine what specific type of documentation is required.

Applicants requiring MMPA and/or ESA scientific research and/or enhancement permits and/or IACUC approvals must include in this section a copy of either: (1) an application cover letter from the Prescott applicant to NMFS and/or the IACUC, or (2) a copy of the final permit and/or approval.

If applicable, documentation of the requests or approvals of all environmental permits must be included in this section of the proposal. Such documentation should include any environmental analyses required for obtaining such permits, completed NEPA checklists (form available on the Prescott Grant Program web site [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/PR2/Health\\_and\\_Stranding\\_Response\\_Program/Prescott.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/PR2/Health_and_Stranding_Response_Program/Prescott.html)), and environmental assessments.

Curriculum vitae or resumes of the Principals and Co-Investigators and all other required Federal forms (i.e., CD-511, SF-LLL, CD-346) must be included in this section.

Applicants applying as non-profit organizations must include a letter from the Internal Revenue Service verifying non-profit classification under Internal Revenue Code and tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

Any other relevant documents and additional information (e.g., maps, additional stranding statistics for your geographic area or region, organizational history and information, schematics and architectural renderings of facility upgrades, photographs, etc.) that will help us to understand the proposed project and the problem/opportunity the project seeks to address should be included in this section.

#### IV. Screening, Review, and Selection Procedures

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 5 steps, described in detail in this section: initial screening, on-line review, peer review, merit review, and final selection by the

Selecting Official (i.e., the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries or AA). The on-line review will involve at least one reviewer per proposal and the peer review will involve at least 3 reviewers per proposal; therefore, all proposals will be subject to review by a minimum of 4 independent reviewers. The AA will make the final decision regarding which proposals will be funded based on recommendations of the merit review team as well as policy considerations such as costs, geographical distribution, financial need, duplication with other Federally funded projects, and equitable distribution of funds among the stranding regions.

##### A. Initial Screening

The initial screening will ensure that proposal packages have all required forms and proposal elements (listed below and in Section III), clearly relate to the 2003/2004 Prescott Grant Program proposal categories and funding priorities, and meet all of the eligibility criteria identified in Section I. F. of this document. Applicants that do not meet the required eligibility criteria described in section I. F. will not be eligible for funding in the 2003/2004 cycle. In addition, applicants proposing activities that may require an environmental assessment (i.e., Category C proposals) under NEPA must include sufficient environmental analyses (i.e., permit documentation and NEPA checklist) to allow program staff to determine whether or not the proposal can be categorically excluded from further analysis. If insufficient documentation is provided or if proposals cannot be categorically excluded from NEPA review, the applicant will be notified after initial screening that further information or an environmental assessment is necessary. Further documentation must be supplied immediately and the environmental assessments must be completed in time for the merit review panel in late Spring. Proposals requiring further NEPA review will still undergo on-line and peer review, unless there is some other reason for disqualification. Failure to complete an environmental assessment will delay processing of the proposal, and if selected for funding will delay receipt of funds.

Proposal packages received in the Office of Protected Resources and postmarked by the submission deadline will be screened to ensure that they were postmarked by the due date (see **DATES**); include one original and two signed copies of the entire proposal package; include the correct OMB forms (424, 424A for Categories A and B or 424D for Category C, and 424B for

Categories A and B or 424C for Category C) signed and dated (see section III. A and III. B of this document); provide for at least a 25-percent non-Federal cost share (see section I. I); identify a Principal Investigator and provide current resumes or curriculum vitae for both the Principal and all Co-Investigators (see section III. C); provide proof of eligibility (see section I. F.); address one of the 3 proposal categories for species under NOAA's jurisdiction (see section III); include proposal package elements 1 through 6 (see section III. C); include MMPA/ESA permit application cover letters or permits, IACUC letters or approvals, if applicable; include NEPA checklist and other environmental documentation, if applicable; and provide proof of non-profit status, if applicable. Proposals that pass this initial screening will be pooled based on the proposal category (i.e., Category A, B, or C) identified by the applicant and by the coast where activities are proposed resulting in 6 review pools.

The required unbound original and two copies, and the optional electronic copy must be sent to the address listed in section I. K. of this document and postmarked by the submission deadline (see **DATES**) in order to be considered in the 2003/2004 annual award cycle. If a package is not postmarked by the submission deadline, include a signed unbound original with two copies, and does not contain all of the required OMB forms and other documents described in this section it will be returned to the applicant and will not be considered further in this funding cycle. Only those proposals satisfying all of the basic requirements above will enter the full evaluation phase of the review process, described in the next sections.

##### B. On-Line Review

After initial screening, on-line reviewers will be asked to evaluate individual proposals in the reviewers' specific area of expertise for technical soundness and feasibility via an on-line process. The on-line review results will be used to provide comments on the technical aspects of each proposal to both the peer and merit review panels (described below).

The proposal category (i.e., Category A, B, or C) and specific activities described in each proposal will be used in selecting the most appropriate expertise needed for the specific review. On-line reviewers will include private and public sector experts according to the Prescott Grant Program's proposal categories: Category A proposals will be reviewed by experts from fields such as marine mammal biology, rehabilitation,