

animal husbandry, diagnostic medicine, veterinary medicine, medical science, conservation biology, and education and outreach; Category B proposals will be reviewed by experts in fields such as toxicology, epidemiology, veterinary medicine, veterinary pathology, virology, marine mammal biology, infectious diseases, physiology, acoustics, education, outreach, genetics, conservation biology, and other biological and physical sciences; and Category C proposals will be reviewed by experts in fields such as construction, water systems, life support systems, curation, animal care, architecture, structural engineering, facility managers, and marine mammal biology. Each on-line reviewer will be required to certify that they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the proposal(s) they are reviewing prior to their review.

To determine the technical soundness and feasibility of each proposal, the on-line reviewers will provide an independent review using the weighted criteria outlined in Section IV. D. below. Depending on the type of activities proposed, on-line reviewers may focus their review on issues such as the likelihood of meeting milestones and achieving anticipated results in the time-line specified in the statement of work, the sufficiency of information to evaluate the project technically, the strengths and weaknesses of the technical design relative to securing productive results, and the inclusion of quality assurance considerations. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least one on-line reviewer. On a scale of 0–100, the reviewers will score the proposal in each criteria. An average, weighted score will be generated from each review using the numeric score per criteria and the weights assigned to each criteria (see Section IV. D. for numeric scores and assigned weights per criteria). Along with the peer review scores, these on-line review scores will be used in determining whether proposals will advance to merit review (i.e., each proposal scoring greater than 60 points in either the on-line or peer review will go on to merit review).

C. Peer Review

After the initial screening, each accepted proposal will undergo a peer review by participants in the U. S. marine mammal stranding network. Peer reviewers will be asked to evaluate individual proposals based on the proposal category and funding priorities identified by the applicant, review criteria, and the specific technical evaluation from on-line reviews. The proposal categories (i.e., Category A, B,

or C) and the geographic location of proposed activities will be used in selecting appropriate peer reviewers. Scoring and commenting on each proposal will be completed during these meetings. In addition, a summary of panel comments and discussion will be generated for each proposal. The peer review results will be used to numerically rank the proposals (based on the average weighted score of each proposal) and provide programmatic and regional stakeholder comments on each proposal. Each peer reviewer will be required to certify that they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the proposal(s) they are reviewing prior to their review.

To determine the appropriateness of each proposal to the Prescott Grant Program's proposal categories and funding priorities, the peer reviewers will provide independent reviews using the weighted criteria outlined below (Section IV. D.). Depending on the type of activities proposed, peer reviewers will be asked to focus their review on issues such as the likelihood of meeting milestones and achieving anticipated results in the time-line specified in the statement of work, the contribution of potential outcomes, results, or products to the marine mammal stranding and rehabilitation communities, and the amount of collaboration with other stranding network participants. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least 3 peer reviewers. On a scale of 0–100, the reviewers will score the proposal in each criteria outlined in Section IV. D. below. An average, weighted score will be generated for each proposal using the numeric score per criteria and the weights assigned to each criteria (see Section IV. D. for numeric scores and assigned weights per criteria). All proposals will be numerically ranked based on this average, weighted score.

D. Review Criteria

1. Soundness of Project Goals, Objectives, and Activities

Proposals will be evaluated on clear identification of project goals and objectives and the ability to link those goals and objectives to project activities, including protocols and methods proposed, and the applicability of the project's goals and objectives to the Prescott Grant Program's proposal categories and funding priorities. All reviewers will consider the potential environmental impacts (e.g., water quality, air quality, waste disposal, etc.) of the proposed activities. On-line reviewers will consider: the likelihood of meeting milestones and achieving anticipated results in the time-line

specified in the statement of work; the sufficiency of information to evaluate the project technically; if such information is sufficient, the strengths and weaknesses of the technical design relative to securing productive results; and if data collection is proposed, the inclusion of quality assurance considerations. In addition to technical aspects of the proposal, peer reviewers will focus on: the contribution of potential outcomes, results, or products to the marine mammal stranding and rehabilitation communities; and, the amount of collaboration with other stranding network participants. (Numeric scores from 1–100; Assigned weight of 50 percent)

2. Adequacy of Project Management

The management of the project will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the proposed project management plan in overseeing the technical aspects and implementation of the work plan as delineated in the proposal's Statement of Work. Reviewers will also review previous, related experiences of the applicant and qualifications of the project's Principal Investigator, Co-investigator(s) and other personnel (i.e., designated contractors, consultants, and Cooperators). Review of the proposal's description of financial accounting systems and grants administration oversight will also be emphasized. Consideration will also be given to previous awards received by the Principal Investigator and outcomes, results, or products resulting from such awards. (Numeric scores of 1–100; Assigned weight of 25 percent)

3. Identification and Suitability of Project Performance Evaluation Methods

Proposals will be scored based on their clear identification of performance evaluation methods and the suitability of those methods for evaluating the success or failure of the project in terms of meeting its original goals and objectives. For Category A and B proposals these methods should include quantitative or qualitative criteria to evaluate relative success or failure of project activities. For Category C proposals these methods should also include criteria for measuring success or failure in meeting project time lines within budget and success of failure in complying with environmental and safety standards for construction activities. (Numerical scores of 1–100; Assigned weight of 10 percent)