

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY2006 Coastal Services Center Application of Spatial Technology for Coastal Management

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement for the NOAA Coastal Services Center (CSC) (will now be referred to as the Center throughout this document)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.473, Coastal Services Center

Dates: For applications submitted through Grants.gov APPLY, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy proposals will be date and time stamped when they are received in the program office. Proposals must be time stamped by Grants.gov or received by the Center no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, October 3, 2005.

Funding Opportunity Description: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Integration and Development (I&D) program, seeks proposals for a one to two-year cooperative agreements under which cooperators and the Center will jointly develop technical projects related to the goal of the GIS I&D program, which is to provide relevant, easily accessible spatial data, tools, and support services to the coastal resource management community. The GIS I&D program is especially interested in nationally networked organizations proposing geospatial solutions to issues related to coastal hazards.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Title for the GIS I&D Program

The Center's GIS I&D program seeks proposals for one to two-year cooperative agreements under which cooperators and the Center will jointly develop technical projects related to the goal of the GIS I&D program, which is to provide relevant, easily accessible spatial data, tools, and support services to the coastal resource management community. The GIS I&D program and its partners will work towards this goal by addressing issues as defined in the project proposal, working with the partner to design and develop pilot projects and products that address local needs and skill sets, and considers the outcome's broader applicability to other states or localities. The GIS I&D program is especially interested in nationally networked organizations proposing geospatial solutions to issues related to coastal hazards. It is expected that the primary partner will be in a position to understand the coastal hazards issue of interest from a

national perspective, coordinate pilot projects, and disseminate the final products and outcomes to its state and/or local constituents and assist in the implementation of products or processes.

NOAA is committed to continual improvement of the grants process and accelerating the award of financial assistance to qualified recipients. In order to fulfill these responsibilities, this solicitation announces that approximately \$250,000 may be available in FY2006, in award amounts to be determined by the proposals and available funds. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program. The GIS I&D program intends to fund one to two projects with awards ranging from about \$100,000 to \$125,000 each. The award level is contingent on methodology, level of detail, and both the technical and geographic scope of the project.

Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If one incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, one would do so solely at one's own risk of these costs not being included under the award.

Statutory authority for the Center's GIS I&D program is 33 U.S.C. 883a (surveys and other activities), 33 U.S.C. 883c (geomagnetic data; collection, correlation, and dissemination) and 16 U.S.C. 1456c (Technical Assistance).

II. Award Information

Total anticipated funding for a cooperative agreement is \$250,000 (one to two awards ranging from \$100,000 to \$125,000) and is subject to the availability of FY 2006 appropriations.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, hospitals, other non-profits, commercial organizations, foreign governments, organizations under the jurisdiction of foreign governments, international organizations, and state, local and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this announcement, but may be project partners. Note: Federal agencies or institutions who are project partners must demonstrate that they have legal authority to receive funds from outside sources in excess of their appropriations.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no requirement for cost sharing in response to GIS I&D program announcement.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

All applicants are strongly encouraged to submit application packages through

www.Grants.gov. All application materials can be found on this Web site in the FIND and APPLY sections.

All applicants are required to submit a NOAA grants application package, budget narrative, curriculum vitae for each principal investigator, and project proposal. The standard NOAA application package includes the SF-424 (Rev. 7-03), Application for Federal Assistance, SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs, SF-424B, Assurances, Non-Construction Programs, and CD-511, Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters; Drug Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying. SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, should only be submitted to the government if applicant is actually reporting lobbying activities. The CD-512, Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Transactions, is a form that remains in the applicant's file. Applicants should not submit CD-512 to the government. The CD-346, Applicant for Funding Assistance should only be submitted to the government if the applicant is a non-profit entity.

If you are not submitting a proposal through www.Grants.gov, all of these forms can be obtained from < <http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/%7Egrants/appkit.html> > or from The Center's website < <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/funding/CSCgrant.html> >. If for some reason the applicant has difficulty downloading the required forms, he or she should contact Violet Legette at 2234 South Hobson Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina 29405-2413 or phone her at 843-740-1222 or email her at < Violet.Legette@noaa.gov >.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

This announcement is a call for proposals for work under the Center's GIS I&D Program. The Center's GIS I&D program's principal products seek to link the technical benefits of GIS with the needs of the coastal resource management community to enhance visualization and decision making capabilities focusing on the issues of coastal resource management. Final products typically are in a digital format and distributed via a training module, CD-ROM, or the Internet. Products often include a spatial database and distribution mechanism, a customized GIS interface, and a narrative that provides a detailed overview of the focal management issues, how the accompanying information was used to examine potential solutions, how the product can be applied to other coastal areas, and how the overall product can be used in future decision-making. An overview of the GIS I&D program, and past and current projects, is available through the Internet at < <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/id/> >.

Roles and Responsibilities

By establishing a cooperative partnership, the unique skills, capabilities, and experiences of the Center and the cooperator will be combined to offer an opportunity for each organization to further its goals. In order to clearly define the nature of this relationship, the proposal shall explicitly state the respective roles and responsibilities of the Center and the cooperator. Also, the work plan that is outlined within the proposal should demonstrate that the cooperator and partners have sufficient local knowledge of the management problem to devise an effective and systematic approach toward the development of appropriate solutions. Once the award has been made, a primary task for the Center and the cooperator will be to collectively review and develop the final implementation plan to describe how the resources of all parties will be leveraged to

produce the final products, the time line for the project, and the process for accomplishing project tasks.

The Center's technical role in past projects has included, but is not limited to, the development of spatial data tools, analyses, and data to address a variety of management issues; the design of GIS and Web-based architectures. More information regarding the degree of involvement or potential role of the Center in a given project may be found at < <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/id/> >. Any questions about appropriate roles for the Center can be directed to < Hamilton.Smillie@noaa.gov >.

General areas of responsibility that cooperators have had in the past have included the following: identifying the management issues that guide development of the information resource; identifying the information needed to address the issues; developing partnerships with other members of the coastal management community; developing, collecting, and synthesizing the information (e.g., spatial data, text, tables, graphics, charts, and maps) and tools needed to address the management issues; developing metadata; providing access to the data via clearinghouse nodes or other distribution networks, and determining how the products should be organized to maximize usefulness within the coastal management community. It is anticipated the cooperator will fully participate in the development of the final product design and implementation. All projects proposals must include sections on the following topics:

a. Project Background/Introduction. Briefly discuss the critical coastal management issue addressed within the proposal, as well as the data and/or analyses required to address this issue. Identify the basic project goals and any objectives. Discuss in the applicability of the issue and anticipated final product to a broader range of customers or areas.

b. Project Description/Methodology. Address the general work plan and deliverables. Methodology should specifically define methods to address the stated problem or issue, including a description of the types of technology or software that will be applied. Database format must be adequately described (if appropriate) and include FGDC-compliant metadata records for any data that are created or used within the project.

c. Project Partners and Subcontractors. Identify any project partners and describe their respective roles. When formal partnerships already exist, include letters from partners that demonstrate that they understand their role in the project and the authority of the lead agency in product development, and that they are willing to participate in that manner. When formal partnerships do not already exist, describe plans for developing them. Describe the resources available to cooperators and partners to conduct the project, including personnel qualifications (i.e., education, experience, and time available to work on the project), facilities, equipment, and, to the extent practicable, the information and tools already available. Describe how widely the project is supported within the resource management community and offer evidence of that support.

d. Milestone Schedule. List target milestones and their respective time lines.

e. Project Budget. Proposals should provide a detailed budget breakdown that follows the categories and formats in the NOAA grants package and a brief narrative that justifies each item.

3. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on October 3, 2005. For applications submitted through Grants.gov APPLY, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy proposals will be date and time stamped when they are received in the program office. Applications received after that time will not be reviewed.

4. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under the Center's GIS I&D program are subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. It is the state agency's responsibility to contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the State's process under EO 12372. To assist the applicant, the names and addresses of the SPOCs is listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: < <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html> >.

5. Funding Restrictions

There are no funding restrictions under the Center's GIS I&D program. The Center's GIS I&D program is seeking applications for non-construction projects.

6. Other Submission Requirements

In addition to the proposal(s), the applicant must submit a complete NOAA grant application package. All applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications through www.Grants.gov.

If the Grants.gov Web site is not used, the applicant must submit one set of originals (signed) and two copies of the proposal(s) and related forms to the Coastal Services Center. No e-mail or fax copies will be accepted. All project proposals must total no more than 10 pages (double spaced, 10 or 12-point fonts, and exclusive of appendices). Appendices should be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (e.g., support letters, resumes, lists of data sources, maps). Letters of support may be mailed separately, but must be received by the October 3, 2005 deadline. All appendix material must be unbound.

Any US Postal Service correspondence should be sent to the attention of Hamilton Smillie, room 237C, NOAA Coastal Services Center, 2234 South Hobson Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina, 29405-2413.

V. Application Review Information

1. Evaluation Criteria (With Weights)

a. Importance/relevance and Applicability of proposal to the program goals (35 points). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state or local activities. For the GIS I&D program this includes: How well the proposal demonstrates the local significance and regional importance of the issues(s) or management objective(s) that will guide development of the project. At a minimum, the proposal must identify coastal management goals that currently are not being achieved, describe how products from this project will significantly address that deficiency, and state the benefits that will result to the public and coastal management community. How well the applicant demonstrates that the project outcomes will significantly address the coastal management issue(s) targeted by the project and that the collective resources of the applicant and partners will ensure

projected outcomes are met. If the project is scientifically based, how well the project integrates and applies the results to solve coastal management issues.

b. Technical/scientific merit (30 points). 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 GIS I&D program this includes: How well the proposed work takes an innovative approach to the application and integration of technology, spatial data, and policy to address issues and accomplish project goals and objectives. This criterion includes such factors as the technical merit of the process that the cooperator has outlined for developing the information resource and the perceived role for the Center in its development.

c. Overall qualifications of applicants (15 points). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the GIS I&D program this includes: How well the applicant demonstrates their qualifications and expertise in the topic areas related to the proposed project. How well the proposal divides the project into discrete tasks that make effective use of the capabilities of the cooperator, partner(s), and the Center. How partnerships developed for the project will enhance capacity to address coastal management issues through data and information sharing and collaborations.

d. Project costs (10 points). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For the GIS I&D program this includes: How well the applicant demonstrates that the budget is commensurate with project needs and that the partnerships employed will improve the overall cost effectiveness of the project. Additionally, how well the proposal demonstrates: that the project is broadly supported by the coastal management community; that a broad group of coastal managers and constituents will benefit from contributing to design and assembly of product(s); and that a broad group of coastal managers will use the product(s) making them cost effective.

e. Outreach and education (10 Points). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For the GIS I&D program this includes: How well the nationally networked organization can ensure implementation of the project products and outcomes to a broad group of state and local coastal resource managers. How well the proposed project addresses the goals of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure by making spatial data and tools accessible through documentation and distribution mechanisms such as clearinghouses. More information on the NSDI can be found at < <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/themes/nsdi/> >.

2. Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. A review panel will be established to evaluate proposals on the basis of the evaluation criteria listed above. The panelists will provide individual evaluations on proposals, thus there will be no consensus recommendation. All proposals reviewed will be ranked according to the average score and the selecting official (the Center's Deputy Director) will award in rank order, unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order as described below. Thus proposals with the highest scores may not necessarily be selected for an award. The Selecting Official makes the final recommendations for award to the Grants Officer who

is authorized to obligate the funds.

3. Selection Factors

The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

- (1) Availability of funding
- (2) Balance/distribution of funds
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research areas
 - e. By project types
- (3) Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies
- (4) Program priorities and policy factors
- (5) Applicant's prior award performance
- (6) Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups

Information about the GIS I&D program, priorities, partnerships, and targeted groups are described on the GIS I&D Web site at < <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/id/> > and in section I of this announcement.

4. Start Dates

April 1, 2006 or later should be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the GIS I&D Program Manager.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notice

Applications recommended for funding by the selecting official will be forwarded to the GMD by the Program Office. The applicant will be notified by the program office, either by email or letter that their application was forwarded to GMD. The applicant must be aware that the notification by the program office is NOT the official award notice. Official notification happens only when the applicant receives an award notice through the postal mail, signed by a Grants Officer.

Unsuccessful applications for all Center programs will be destroyed and not returned to the applicant.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements Department of Commerce Requirements. 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 on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109) is applicable to this solicitation.

Geospatial data. The recipients must comply with EO 12906 regarding any and all geospatial data collected or produced under grants or cooperative agreements.

This includes documenting all geospatial data in accordance with the Federal Geographic Data Committee Content Standard for digital geospatial data.

Limitation of Liability. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to provide special fishing privileges.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal assistance opportunities including special fishing privileges. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/> including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

3. Reporting

Upon official notification of an award, the applicant will be required to submit the following reports:

Financial Status Reports (SF-269 and SF-272) are required semi-annually. These reports should be mailed directly to Grants Management Division, 1325 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20190.

Performance or progress reports are required semi-annually. These reports are submitted directly to the program office, no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of an award. The final report is due 90 days after the award expiration. These reports can be emailed to the program officer or they can be mailed to the attention of the program officer at 2234 South Hobson Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina, 29405-2413.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

For administrative issues contact Violet Legette at 843-740-1222 (phone) or

843-740-1232 (fax) or email her at < Violet.Legette@noaa.gov >.

For technical questions for the GIS I&D program, contact Hamilton Smillie at 843-740-1192 (phone) or 843-740-1315 (fax) or email him at < Hamilton.Smillie@noaa.gov >.

VIII. Other Information

Applicants can refer to the Center's website for specific information about the history of the Coastal Services Center. Also, available on this website are specific instructions on filling out the NOAA standard forms for grants/cooperative agreement applications. The Center's website is < <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/funding/CSCgrant.html> >.

Applicants also need to remember that official notification of an award notice is provided by the Grants Management Division, not the program office. If one incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA grant official, one would do so solely at one's own risk of these costs not being included under the award.