ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Names:** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Department Of Commerce); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Department Of The Interior); U.S. Maritime Administration (Department Of Transportation)

- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Ballast Water Technology Demonstration Program

- **Announcement Type:** Initial announcement

- **Funding Opportunity Number:**

- **Statutory Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 4701 et seq.; 33 U.S.C. 1121-1131; 46 U.S.C. App 1211 (2000); 50 U.S.C. App 1744 (2000).

- **Catalog of Federal Assistance Number:** 11.417, Sea Grant Support; 15.FFA, Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance.

- **Dates:** Applications must be received at the National Sea Grant Office by 4 p.m. EDT on August 27, 2004 for pre-proposals and by 4 p.m. EST November 16, 2004 for full proposals.

- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), and the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) expect to entertain proposals to conduct ballast water treatment technology testing and demonstration projects. Depending on Congressional appropriations, NOAA and the Service expect to make available in FY 2005 up to about $2 million to support these projects. In addition, MARAD expects to make available several vessels for use as test platforms. The maximum amount of award will vary with the scale of the proposed project. Anticipated maximum awards for laboratory-scale experiments will be $200,000, for full-scale demonstration projects, $400,000. Technology demonstration proposals must include a long-term development plan that outlines how the technology will be developed from its current state into an effective, commercially viable ballast water treatment system, and how the proposed project is an essential part of this development.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objectives

The Ballast Water Technology Demonstration Program supports projects to develop, test, and demonstrate technologies that treat

ships' ballast water in order to reduce the threat of introduction of aquatic invasive species to U.S. waters through the discharge of ballast water. The technologies being proposed for investigation should have promise of being effective at removing, inactivating, or preventing the transfer of aquatic organisms in the ballast water, should be practicable from the standpoint of ship operations, safety, environmental protection, and the ability to meet all regulatory requirements, and should have the potential to be developed into a commercially viable product.

It is expected that treatment development will normally be conducted using a phased approach, starting with small-scale experiments proving the proposed treatment technology concept, followed by larger-scale experiments demonstrating the feasibility of the technology, then full-scale demonstrations under conditions close to real world (for example, ship-board technologies would be demonstrated on board a ship). Ultimately, prototype treatment units would be field-tested under actual conditions experienced in the maritime industry.

Projects supported by the Ballast Water Technology Demonstration Program typically cover just one phase of technology development. Consideration for a project at a particular phase of development would depend on the success of projects in earlier phases. We ask that applicants identify the program area, as described below, into which their proposal best fits.

1. Basic or applied research that provides information necessary for the development of a ballast water treatment technology. Research may be in any relevant area of science, including biology, chemistry, engineering, ecology, economics, mathematics, or physics. The maximum allowable request for a single proposal in this area is $200,000.

2. Laboratory-scale to pilot-scale controlled experiments that demonstrate the feasibility and development potential of ballast water treatment technologies. Pilot-scale experiments may be land- or ship-(e.g. test barge-) based, and must involve technologies that have proven their potential in prior laboratory-scale experiments. Prior experiments need not have been supported by the Ballast Water Technology Demonstration Program. The maximum allowable request for a single proposal in this area is $200,000.

3. Full-scale controlled experiments that demonstrate the practicability and effectiveness of ballast water treatment technologies in a close to real-world setting. Experiments may be land- or ship-based, and must involve technologies that have demonstrated their feasibility and potential for development in prior pilot-scale experiments. Prior experiments need not have been supported by the Ballast Water Technology Demonstration Program. Proposals in this category may request the use of a MARAD test barge or other vessel. If a vessel-based test is proposed, the proposal must demonstrate the importance of that vessel use to the outcome of the experiment. Use of a MARAD vessel is not required. The maximum allowable request for a single proposal in this area is $400,000.

4. Prototype or commercial ballast water treatment technology field tests that demonstrate their effectiveness and viability under real shipping conditions. Technologies must have previously demonstrated their effectiveness and practicability, for example by pilot- or full-scale controlled experiments or by prior field tests with well-documented results. Prior experiments need not have been supported by the Ballast Water Technology Demonstration Program. The maximum allowable request for a single proposal in this area is $400,000.

B. Program Priorities

The overall goal of the Ballast Water Technology Demonstration Program is to develop and demonstrate ballast water treatment technologies that may ultimately be effectively used in a real world commercial maritime setting. The Program's priorities include supporting projects in the above program areas that score well in all the evaluation factors described below, to develop and demonstrate technologies that show the most promise of meeting the scientific, commercial, and regulatory requirements of successful ballast water treatment systems.

1. Geographical distribution. Because the problems associated with invasive species from ballast water occur wherever there is maritime commerce, the program seeks to develop and demonstrate technologies appropriate to all areas of the country engaged in maritime trade. This goal may be met by a suite of technologies adapted to particular regions or water conditions, or by one or more technologies that may be applied universally.

2. Commercialization potential. Because even powerful ballast water treatment technologies will only stop invasions if they are actually employed by the maritime industry, the Program seeks to emphasize support of technologies with clear potential to be commercially viable. Proposals demonstrating this potential may include these features: participation of commercial interests in developing and executing proposed projects, commercial investments of manpower, funding, or other resources, in the technology, and well-thought out long-term development plans.

3. Regulatory approval. Because discharge of ballast water is regulated, the ability to meet regulatory requirements is an important factor in the demonstration of ballast water technologies. For this reason, proposals requesting experimental approval from the Coast Guard will be given the following priority: subject to the quality and number of proposals received and availability of funds, an attempt will be made to fund at least one prototype or commercial ballast water treatment technology field test (program area (d), above) that also requests experimental approval from the Coast Guard under 16 U.S.C. 4711(b)(1).

C. Program authorities for the Ballast Water Technology Demonstration Program are 16 U.S.C. 4701 et seq.; 33 U.S.C. 1121-1131; 46 U.S.C. App 1211 (2000); 50 U.S.C. App 1744 (2000).

II. Award Information

A. Resource Availability

1. Funding

Depending on Congressional appropriation, it is anticipated that up to about $2,000,000 will be available for project support in FY 2005.

2. Use of Ships as Test Platforms for Ballast Water Technology Demonstration Projects

The U.S. Maritime Administration is making available a limited number of vessels to be used as test platforms for ballast water technology demonstration projects. Proposed projects that have demonstrated their merit through success in previous phases and have high impact and high scientific or professional merit will be given higher priority for use of a MARAD vessel, provided that a vessel appropriate to that project is available and all other requirements of MARAD for vessel use are met.

Applicants may apply for both funding and the use of a MARAD vessel to support a single ballast water project, but it is not necessary to request use of a MARAD vessel in order to receive consideration for funding, nor is it necessary to request funding in order to receive consideration for use of a MARAD vessel. Any proposal requesting both funding and the use of a MARAD vessel, however, will only be awarded funding if it (a) is selected for funding; (b) is approved by MARAD for use on a vessel; and (c) meets all requirements posed by MARAD as conditions of use of the vessel, throughout the duration of the project. Funding may be denied to an otherwise worthy proposal requesting both funding and the use of a MARAD vessel, if discussions between the applicant and MARAD are incomplete at the time funding decisions are made.

Note: Availability of MARAD vessels is not automatic; MARAD reserves the right to agree to, or decline any request. Due to security restrictions in the aftermath of 9/11/01, the number and frequency of visits to a participating vessel, and the number of visitors at any given time, may be limited. All visits must be scheduled and approved in advance by a vessel's Point of Contact (POC) (to be designated). Also, approval for use of a MARAD vessel for testing will take into consideration the degree to which existing systems may be disturbed. In no case may operational or mission capability be compromised. Decisions in this regard will be made solely by MARAD.

B. Project/Award Period

Projects can be for a maximum of two years' duration. Start date for selected grants should be no earlier than June 1, 2005.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Proposals selected for funding from non-Federal applicants will be funded through project grants or cooperative agreements. We will use cooperative agreements if the proposed project includes substantial involvement by the federal agency funding the project that will be described in the award. Examples of substantial involvement may include collaboration in research, participation in selection of key personnel, or approval of key stages in the project before subsequent steps are undertaken.

Proposals selected for funding from Federal applicants will be funded through inter-agency transfers. Contact Dorn Carlson, listed under Agency Contacts, with questions about grants, cooperative agreements, or inter-agency transfers.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are individuals, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations, Federal, State, local and Indian tribal governments, foreign governments, organizations under the jurisdiction of foreign governments, and international organizations. Applications from non-Federal and eligible Federal applicants (including NOAA employees) will be evaluated in the same selection process. Note: A Federal applicant will be considered eligible to receive funds from another Federal agency only if it can demonstrate that it has legal authority to receive those funds in excess of its appropriation.

Only those who submit preliminary proposals by the preliminary proposal deadline are eligible to submit full proposals.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None.

C. Other

Proposals must meet the statutory requirements of Ballast Water Management Demonstration Program projects as codified in Title 16, United States Code, section 4714, including the requirement that installation and construction of the technologies and practices used in the demonstration program must be performed in the United States.

Certain actions, such as discharge of water containing materials defined as pollutants by authorized regulatory agencies, or discharge of unexchanged ballast water from beyond the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone into the Great Lakes, may require regulatory approval. A proposal that requires such approval in order to carry out its work plan may be considered ineligible for funding if (a) the applicant does not request approval from the appropriate regulatory body, (b) the regulatory body denies the request, or (c) the regulatory body has not decided whether to grant the request at the time funding decisions under this program are made.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Content and Form of the Application Submission

1. General Requirements. Proposals are expected to have: a rigorous, hypothesis-based scientific work plan, or a well-defined, logical approach to address an engineering problem; a strong rationale for the proposed work; appropriate advance interaction with regulatory agencies; and a clear relationship with the ultimate users of the information. Projects undertaken jointly with industry, business, multiple investigators, or other agencies with interest in the problem are encouraged. Their contribution to the project may be in the form of collaboration, in-kind services, or dollar support.

Applicants are encouraged to consult the “Lessons Learned” document and other materials available at www.nsgo.seagrant.org/research/nonindigenous/ballast.html, or from the individuals listed in Agency Contacts, for information that may be useful in preparation of a proposal.

2. Format Requirements. All pages must be single- or double-spaced, printed or typed in at least a 10-point font, and printed on metric A4 (210 mmx297 mm) or 8.5"x11" paper.

Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals. Therefore, the Project Description may not exceed 2 pages in the preliminary proposal, and 15 pages in the full proposal. Tables and visual materials, including figures, charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations, are included in the page limitation for the Project Description. As noted below, literature cited, budget information, current and pending support, resumes of investigators, and appendices, if any, are not considered part of the Project Description and are not included in the page limitation. Conformance to the page limitation will be strictly enforced.

All information needed for review of the proposal should be included in the main text, except as follows: correspondence from permitting agencies indicating satisfactory progress in receiving required permits or approvals should be included as an appendix. Letters of support from other sources may also be included as an appendix. No other appendices are permitted. Failure to adhere to the above limitations will result in the proposal being rejected without review.

An original and twelve (12) copies of the proposal are required. Facsimile and electronic mail transmissions of proposals will not be accepted.

3. Content Requirements—preliminary proposals. The following information must be included:

a. Signed Title Page: The title page must be signed by the Principal Investigator and should clearly identify the program to which the proposal is submitted by including in the project title the

words “basic research,” “applied research,” “laboratory study,” “pilot study,” “full scale study,” or “field test”. Principal investigators and collaborators should be identified by affiliation and contact information, including, if available, email addresses. The total estimated project costs (Federal funds being requested and matching funds, if any) should be listed as well as the source of the matching funds.

b. A concise (2-page limit) description of the project, its experimental design, its expected output or products, the anticipated users of the products, and its anticipated impact. Proposers should consult the Evaluation Criteria for additional guidance in preparing the preliminary proposals.

c. Resumes (1-page limit per investigator) of the Principal Investigators.

No institutional signatures or Federal government forms are needed while submitting preliminary proposals.

4. Content Requirements—full proposals. The following information must be included:

a. Signed Title Page: Identify the program area of the proposal by using one of the following terms in the title: “basic research,” “applied research,” “laboratory-scale,” “pilot-scale,” “full-scale land-based,” “full-scale ship-based,” “prototype field test,” or “commercial unit field test.” The title page should be signed by the Principal Investigator and the institutional representative. Identify the Principal Investigators and collaborators and the institutional representative by affiliation and contact information. List the total amount of Federal funds being requested for each budget period; for projects involving multiple institutions, the total should include all subrecipient budgets.

b. Project Summary: It is critical that the project summary accurately describes the research being proposed and conveys all essential elements of the research. Applicants are encouraged to use the Sea Grant Project Summary Form 90-2, but may use their own form as long as it provides the following information:

(1) Title: Use the exact title as it appears in the rest of the application.

(2) Investigators: List the names and affiliations of each investigator who will significantly contribute to the project. Start with the Principal Investigator.

(3) Funding: Report the funding request for each year of the project, including matching funds if appropriate.

(4) Project Period: Give the start and completion dates. Propose a start date of September 1, 2003, or later. Project activities can extend for up to two years.

(5) Project objectives, methodology, and rationale: Provide a brief statement of the rationale for the project, the scientific or technical objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, a summary of work to be completed, and a description of how results will be documented and disseminated.

c. Project Description (15-page limit):

(1) Introduction/Background/Justification: The applicant may wish to include in this section: (i) current state of knowledge; (ii) contributions that the study will make to the particular discipline or subject area; (iii) contributions and impacts the study will make toward ballast water technology development; and (iv) as appropriate, contributions of investigator's previously funded research results to current proposal.

This section should also include a discussion of the prior technical research that indicates the likelihood of success of the proposed project. If the proposal is for a pilot-scale project, this discussion should include a description of laboratory experiments on the proposed technology, and the results of those experiments; if the proposal is for a full-scale project, the discussion should include prior laboratory- and pilot-scale experiments and results. Wherever possible, cite the peer-reviewed literature where these results were published.

(2) Research or Technical Plan: include the following:

(i) objectives to be achieved, hypotheses to be tested;

(ii) plan of work - discuss how stated project objectives will be achieved;

(iii) role of project personnel;

(iv) the steps to be taken to make the results of the project available to appropriate users of the information (for example, publication of results in peer reviewed literature);

(v) if appropriate, Research Protocol. Research activities funded under this program must not cause or accelerate the spread of aquatic nuisance species to non-infested watersheds. Therefore, if the proposed project involves the use of ballast water or simulated ballast water to which living organisms are added that are not already established at the site of the project, or if the project involves increasing the population or viability of living ballast water organisms that are not already established at the site of project, the proposal must describe the research protocol that will be used to assure that these organisms are not released to the environment in a viable state. Proposals meeting the above conditions that lack a suitable protocol will not be considered.

Proposals that do not involve addition, concentration, enrichment, or increasing the viability of living organisms do not need to include this research protocol. Guidelines for developing suitable protocols are available from the internet website

http://www.ANSTaskForce.gov/resprot.htm, or from Dorn Carlson, listed under Agency Contacts.

(3) Output: Describe the project outputs and impacts that will directly enhance the Nation's ability to reduce the impacts of aquatic nuisance species in ballast water. Describe the contribution of the project to the ultimate successful widespread availability and field use of a mature ballast water technology.

(4) Coordination with other Program Elements: Describe any other proposals that are essential to the success of this proposal. Describe and document any coordination with other agency programs or ongoing research efforts. Include the following where appropriate:

(i) If the proposal involves the discharge of any chemical, such as a biocide or water modifying agent, or chemical decomposition products or residuals, into waters of the United States, describe and document the coordination with the appropriate State environmental or natural resource agency responsible to determine if a discharge permit is needed and will be issued.

(ii) If the proposal involves the discharge of unexchanged ballast water originating beyond U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone into waters of the Great Lakes or the Hudson River, describe and document the coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard to determine if approval is needed and will be issued.

(iii) If the proposal involves the installation of prototype equipment on an operating ship, describe and document the coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard and the American Bureau of Shipping concerning whether approval is needed.

(iv) If the proposal involves the discharge of ballast water in any jurisdiction that places other limitations or conditions on that discharge, describe and document the coordination with the agency responsible for determining if that discharge meets those limitations or conditions.

(5) Vessel Selection (if appropriate): Applications proposing shipboard demonstrations of ballast water management should address the requirements and priorities listed in the National Invasive Species Act of 1996 (16 U.S.C. 4711-4714) for selecting vessels for demonstration projects. These requirements are available through the National Sea Grant Office web site (www.nsgo.seagrant.org/research/nonindigenous) or from Dorn Carlson at the National Sea Grant Office or Debra Aheron U.S. Maritime Administration (listed under Agency Contacts, above). Additionally, applicants must indicate whether they are coordinating with MARAD with respect to using a MARAD ship.

(6) Long term development plan. Describe the activities that will be necessary to further develop the ballast water technology to the point where it is commercially viable. Include in this discussion not only optimization of the technology’s treatment capabilities, but also the operational, safety, regulatory and business factors that must be

considered to transition this technology to ultimate commercial field use, and how these factors are being addressed in the proposed project and planned future work. If the proposal is for a full-scale controlled experiment or a prototype or commercial ballast water treatment technology field test, this description must include a detailed discussion of the steps needed to transition this technology from the research and development arena to the commercial sector, including an anticipated timeline for this transition, a discussion of the financial and other resources needed at each step to make the transition, and anticipated sources of these resources.

d. Literature Cited

e. Budget and Budget Justification: Although proposals are funded from a single year appropriation (fiscal year 2005), project activities may extend for up to 2 years. There should be a separate budget for each year of the project, as well as a cumulative annual budget for the entire project. Applicants are encouraged to use the Sea Grant Budget Form 90-4, but may use their own form as long as it provides the same information as the Sea Grant form. Subcontracts should have a separate budget page. Indicate matching funds if provided. Provide justification for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested.

For those applications to be supported by NOAA, regardless of any approved indirect cost rate applicable to the award, the maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which the Department of Commerce will reimburse the Recipient shall be the lesser of: (a) the Federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on the negotiated rate with the cognizant Federal agency as established by audit or negotiation; or (b) the line item amount for the Federal share of indirect costs contained in the approved budget of the award.

f. Current and Pending Support: Provide information on all current and pending Federal support for ongoing projects and proposals, including subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. Include the proposed project and all other projects or activities using Federal assistance and requiring a portion of time of the principal investigator or other senior personnel. Describe the relationship between the proposed project and these other projects, and the number of person-months per year to be devoted to the projects must be stated. Similar information must be provided for all proposals already submitted or submitted concurrently to other possible sponsors, including those within the Departments of Commerce, the Interior, and Transportation.

g. Resumes (2 pages maximum per investigator).

h. Standard Application Forms: The following forms must be included:

(1) Standard Forms 424, Application for Federal Assistance, 424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs; and 424B, Assurances -

Non-Construction Programs, (Rev 4-88). Please note that both the Principal Investigator and an administrative contact should be identified in Section 5 of the SF424. For Section 10, applicants should enter 11.417 for the CFDA Number and NOAA Sea Grant Support for the title. The form must contain the original signature of an authorized representative of the applying institution.

(2) Primary Applicant Certifications. All primary applicants must submit a completed Form CD-511, "Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying," and the following explanations are hereby provided:

Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension. Prospective participants (as defined at 15 CFR Part 26, Section 105) are subject to 15 CFR Part 26, "Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension" and the related section of the certification form prescribed above applies;

Drug-Free Workplace. Grantees (as defined at 15 CFR Part 26, Section 605) are subject to 15 CFR Part 26, Subpart F, "Government wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)" and the related section of the certification form prescribed above applies;

Anti-Lobbying. Persons (as defined at 15 CFR Part 28, Section 105) are subject to the lobbying provisions of 31 U.S.C. 1352, "Limitation on use of appropriated funds to influence certain Federal contracting and financial transactions," and the lobbying section of the certification form prescribed above applies to applications/bids for grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts for more than $100,000, and loans and loan guarantees for more than $150,000, or the single family maximum mortgage limit for affected programs, whichever is greater; and

Anti-Lobbying Disclosures. Any applicant that has paid or will pay for lobbying using any funds must submit an SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," as required under 15 CFR Part 28, Appendix B.

(iii) Lower Tier Certifications. Recipients shall require applicants/bidders for subgrants, contracts, subcontracts, or other lower tier covered transactions at any tier under the award to submit, if applicable, a completed Form CD-512, "Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions and Lobbying" and disclosure form, SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities." Form CD-512 is intended for the use of recipients and should not be transmitted to the Department of Commerce (DOC). SF-LLL submitted by any tier recipient or subrecipient should be submitted to DOC in accordance with the instructions contained in the award document.

B. Submission Dates and Times

Preliminary proposals must be received by 4:00 pm EDT August 27, 2004. Full proposals must be received by 4 p.m. EST November 16, 2004.

C. Address for Submitting Proposals

Proposals must be submitted to: National Sea Grant College Program, R/SG, Attn: Ballast Water Competition, Room 11841, NOAA, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone number for express mail applications is 301-713-2435).

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

E. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

F. Other Submission Requirements

The following additional requirements apply to applications requesting use of a MARAD vessel:

Applications for shipboard testing must satisfy all MARAD requirements for the use of their vessels as test platforms. For purposes of this test phase, vessels cannot be moved from their existing locations. However, testing may be conducted under certain conditions during temporary vessel movements such as sea trials. Applicants for use of a MARAD vessel (for Ballast Water technology projects) must submit with their preliminary proposal a Standard Form 424 containing the name, affiliation, address and phone number of the principal investigator requesting the use of a MARAD vessel. The applicant must also provide:

The type and location of the vessel required, from a list of available vessels (obtainable from Debra Aheron, listed under Agency Contacts), and the projected time and duration of tests.

To assure timely vessel assignments, applicants are strongly urged to contact Ms. Aheron, listed under Agency Contacts as soon as possible to discuss vessel availability and vessel use requirements.

A description of the project proposed to be conducted on the ship. If the applicant is also applying for funding under this Request for Proposals to support this project, a copy of the complete application for funding submitted may be provided as the description of the project.

In response to this application, MARAD will open a dialog with the applicant, during which additional information relating to the logistical and other requirements of the project will be required of the applicant.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The technical evaluation criteria for full proposals submitted under this announcement are as follows:

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (40 percent): The effect the proposed activity will have on the development and ultimate use of ballast water treatment technologies, or the need for this activity as a necessary step toward such technology development; and the potential for the proposed technology to be the basis of an effective, a commercially successful treatment system that is effective against a significant fraction of organisms, and is usable on a significant fraction of ships and voyage conditions. (A “significant fraction” does not mean that the technology must act against most or all organisms on most or all ships or conditions. A smaller fraction may be significant, especially if the technology acts on organisms, ships or conditions, that are not easily otherwise addressed.)

2. Technical/scientific merit (40 percent): Scientific quality of the experimental design, including appropriateness of the experimental design to the current level of development of the technology; degree to which the principles of the technology have been proven in appropriate prior experiments; and the degree to which scientific, technical, logistical, and business considerations have been integrated in the proposal and long term development plan; whether the work is the logical continuation of a previously-developed long term development plan.

3. Overall qualification of applicants (5 percent): degree to which the investigators are qualified to execute the proposed activity; the degree to which potential users of the proposed technology were involved in planning the activity and will be involved in the execution of the activity as appropriate; and the investigators’ record of achievement with previous funding, including publication of results.

4. Project costs (5 percent): the degree to which the proposed budget is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

5. Outreach and education (10 percent): the effectiveness and timeliness of proposed actions to make the results of this work available to appropriate users of the information.

B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted at both the preliminary and full proposal stages to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

Preliminary proposals will be not be subjected to a selection process. Preliminary proposals will be used to assess the nature of full proposals to be expected, to select appropriate technical reviewers for full proposals, and to tailor technical, formatting and content guidance that will be supplied to applicants who submitted preliminary proposals, to assist them in deciding whether to submit a full proposal and in writing a full proposal. All those (and only those) who submitted preliminary proposals meeting the deadline and

other requirement of this notice are eligible to submit full proposals.

Full proposals will be sent to peer reviewers for written reviews. Reviewers will be asked to evaluate the proposals using the evaluation criteria listed in this announcement. A peer review panel consisting of government, academic, and industry representatives will evaluate each full proposal and accompanying written reviews in accordance with the above criteria and their assigned weights. Panel members will provide individual evaluations of each proposal, and their ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals. The review panel will provide no consensus advice to the Program Officer.

The Program Officer will consider these evaluations when recommending to the Selecting Official which applications should be selected for award.

C. Selection Factors

The selecting official will award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon 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 as set out in Section I.B.

5. Applicant’s prior award performance

6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted group

Applicants may be asked to respond to questions or modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award. Subsequent grant administration procedures will be in accordance with current agency grants procedures. A summary statement of the technical evaluation by the peer panel will be provided to each applicant.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards for successful applications are expected to be made by June 1, 2005. The start date

that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (Form 424) should be no earlier than this date.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The notice of award made by NOAA is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is provided by postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the Federal Register notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109). You may obtain a copy of these notices by contacting the agency contact(s) under Section VII, or by going to the website at: www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces140.html.

C. Reporting

All financial and progress reports shall be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies). Financial reports are to be submitted to the Federal Grants Officer and Performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the Federal Program Officer. Program and financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually.

D. Successful applicants for use of a MARAD vessel will be required to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or contract with MARAD, which will address in detail MARAD requirements for the use of their vessels as test platforms. Shipboard installations for the testing purposes shall be temporary in nature; successful applicants shall be required to dismantle all temporary installations during vessel activation, if any, at the end of testing and reinstall any equipment removed during the temporary installation. Temporary installations must not impact the vessel's safety at any time during the installation, removal, and testing. Applicants will be required to submit proof of insurance as requested under the MOA.

E. All Department of the Interior assistance awards are subject to the requirements of 43 CFR Part 12, Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs.

F. In addition to producing an annual progress report and a final report, successful applicants will be expected to attend an annual ballast water investigators meeting in the continental United States during each year that the project is ongoing. Applicants should consider travel costs to these meetings when preparing their budgets.

VII. Agency Contacts

Dorn Carlson, Program Director for Aquatic Invasive Species, the National Sea Grant Office, NOAA, 301-713-2435, email Dorn.Carlson@noaa.gov; or Pamela Thibodeaux, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 703-358-2493 email Pamela_Thibodeaux@fws.gov; or Debra Aheron, U.S. Maritime Administration, 202-366-8887, email Deborah.Aheron@marad.dot.gov.