

## **Guidance on Competitive Awards Associated with a NOAA Cooperative Institute**

### Introduction

Scientists at NOAA-supported CIs have collaborated with NOAA scientists for over 40 years in all areas of environmental research. This relationship has resulted in many new discoveries and led to the development of new technologies and tools to help NOAA meet its mission. These activities have been funded primarily through a cooperative agreement between NOAA and a university. The use of this cooperative agreement, described in NOAA's Interim Cooperative Institute Handbook, is the legal instrument used to transfer NOAA funding to the parent institution to support research activities at the CI. Prior to NOAA's adoption of a CI policy in 2005, these cooperative agreements were used to fund both *directed* projects and occasionally projects selected in open NOAA competitions. The new CI policy, challenges for managing projects selected by many different NOAA program officers, and the creation of NOAA's Grants Online system, has made it difficult, if not impossible, to fund all CI projects under one cooperative agreement. The alternative described in this document will create separate awards *and* associate them with the main CI cooperative agreement so that the separate competitive award is recognized at the University as being a part of the NOAA CI research activities.

### Approval Background

On November 15, 2010 the Chair of the Cooperative Institutes Committee (CIC) presented the Research Council with options and a recommendation for a proposal to fund competitive projects through Cooperative Institutes. On April 11, 2011 the NOAA Research Council approved the CIC recommendations and on May 17, 2011 the NOAA Research Council issued a NOAA wide informational memorandum informing NOAA program managers that these new procedures must be followed for all competitive awards awarded to CI PI's, effectively immediately.

### Competitive Program Awards

- Each project will be administered according to all federal, DOC, and NOAA requirements.
- Each NOAA program will manage project reports based on the competitive award requirements.
- Competitive project dates will not need to match any main CI cooperative agreement award period.
- The NOAA program manager will have complete control of the award and in conjunction with the NOAA Grants Officer be able to make all decisions and maintain their oversight role for this funding without any involvement from the LO CI program manager.
- Performance reports for competitive awards will follow guidelines set forth in the FFO and any program-specific timetables and guidelines set by the NOAA funding program and included in the terms and condition of the award.

- Each University PI will be able to work directly with their NOAA program manager without any involvement from the LO CI program manager.
- The proposal and any resulting award will use the Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rate or indirect cost rate associated with institutional CI agreement.
  - Competitive programs will get the advantage of a lower indirect cost rate if one is offered by the CI's university and a centralized structure at the University that serves as a liaison with NOAA, facilitating pre- and post-award financial and administrative management of the award(s).
- If the proposal is selected as a result of the competitive process, a separate award will be issued directly by the NOAA funding program to the University
- The CI will receive University credit for and manage all the projects submitted through the CI since the terms of these awards will specify that this is a CI project via the CI MOA.
- Using the supplementary data field in NOAA's Grants Online, the LO CI program manager can track all funding that a particular CI received, through the main cooperative agreement as well as separate competitive awards, without having an official role in any competitively selected project.

#### Procedure for Recording and Tracking Competitive Proposals

- **At the time of submission**, each competitive proposal application package submitted by a CI PI that has been approved by the University must include a cover letter describing the intent to incorporate the terms of the CI Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The cover letter will specify the name of the Cooperative Institute, the current CI cooperative agreement number, and the NOAA-approved research theme and task that applies to the proposal.
- Should the proposal be competitively selected, the FPO will indicate in Grants Online two special award conditions that will identify the competitive proposal application to the CI referenced in the proposal application cover letter. The special award conditions are: (1) the University/NOAA MOA would be incorporated by reference into the terms of the competitive award, and (2) any performance report(s) for the competitive project must follow the timetable of the funding program and be submitted directly to the funding program. .
- Through a supplementary data field in NOAA's Grants Online, the competitive program office FPO will identify which CI has been awarded the competitive award.
- Each CI will attach a list of competitive awards issued under the MOA in their institutional award annual report in the appendix section. Performance reports for these projects must also be included in the appendix, although the official report will be submitted to the funding office.

Cooperative Institute Program Office Point of Contact – For additional guidance regarding this policy please contact Chelsea Berg ([Chelsea.Berg@noaa.gov](mailto:Chelsea.Berg@noaa.gov)) 301.734.1197