

available. For further information or copies of the minutes, contact William Dawson, (202) 482-5155.

Dated: February 25, 1998.

Troy H. Cribb,

Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements.

[FR Doc.98-5299 Filed 2-27-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-DR-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Institute of Standards and Technology

Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology

AGENCY: National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of Partially Closed Meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act., 5 U.S.C. app. 2, notice is hereby given that the Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), will meet Tuesday, March 10, 1998 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology is composed of fifteen members appointed by the Director of NIST who are eminent in such fields as business, research, new product development, engineering, labor, education, management consulting, environment, and international relations. The purpose of this meeting is to review and make recommendations regarding general policy for the Institute, its organization, its budget, and its programs within the framework of applicable national policies as set forth by the President and the Congress. The agenda will include an update on NIST programs; report on the objectives and milestones for the Advanced Technology Program (ATP), the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), and the National Quality Program; benchmarking with other national laboratories; and a laboratory tour. Discussions on staffing of management positions at NIST scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. and to end at 9:00 a.m. on March 10, 1998, and the NIST budget, including funding levels of the MEP and ATP programs scheduled to begin at 4:30 p.m. and to end at 5:00 p.m. on March 10, 1998, will be closed.

DATES: The meeting will convene March 10, 1998, at 8:30 a.m. and will adjourn at 5:00 p.m. on March 10, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the Employees Lounge (seating capacity

80, includes 38 participants), Administration Building, at NIST, Gaithersburg, Maryland.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chris E. Kuyatt, Visiting Committee Executive Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, MD 20899, telephone number (301) 975-6090.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Assistant Secretary for Administration, with the concurrence of the General Counsel, formally determined on February 13, 1998, that portions of the meeting of the Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology which involve discussion of proposed funding of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership and the Advanced Technology Program may be closed in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(B), because those portions of the meetings will divulge matters the premature disclosure of which would be likely to significantly frustrate implementation of proposed agency actions; and that portions of meetings which involve discussion of the staffing issues of management and other positions at NIST may be closed in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(6), because divulging information discussed in those portions of the meetings is likely to reveal information of a personal nature where disclosure would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

Dated: February 24, 1998.

Robert B. Hebner,

Acting Deputy Director.

[FR Doc. 98-5187 Filed 2-27-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-13-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket No. 960223046-8030-03; I.D. 012398C]

RIN 0648-ZA09

Financial Assistance for Research and Development Projects To Strengthen and Develop the U.S. Fishing Industry

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notification of solicitation for applications.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this document describing the conditions under which applications will be accepted under the Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) Grant Program and how NMFS will select applications for funding.

The S-K Grant Program assists eligible applicants in carrying out research and development projects that address various aspects of U.S. fisheries (commercial or recreational), including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing, marketing, and associated infrastructures.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business May 1, 1998, in one of the offices listed in **ADDRESSES**.

Applicants must submit one signed original and nine signed copies of the completed application (including supporting information). No facsimile applications will be accepted.

ADDRESSES: Application packages can be obtained from, and completed applications sent to any office listed below:

Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930; telephone: (978) 281-9267.

Regional Administrator, Southeast Region, NMFS, Koger Bldg., 9721 Executive Center Drive, North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702; telephone: (813) 570-5324.

Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213; telephone: (562) 980-4033.

Regional Administrator, Northwest Region, NMFS, BIN C15700, 7600 Sand Point Way, N.E., Seattle, WA 98115; telephone: (206) 526-6115.

Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802, or Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, 4th Floor, Juneau, AK 99801; telephone: (907) 586-7224.

In addition, this solicitation and the application package are available on the NMFS S-K Home Page at:

www.nmfs.gov/sfweb/skhome.html.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Alicia L. Jarboe, S-K Program Manager, (301) 713-2358.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Introduction

A. Background

The S-K Act, as amended (15 U.S.C. 713c-3), provides that a fund (known as the S-K fund) will be used by the Secretary of Commerce to provide grants or cooperative agreements for fisheries research and development projects addressed to any aspect of U.S. fisheries, including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing, marketing, and associated infrastructures. U.S. fisheries¹ include any fishery,

¹ For purposes of this document, a fishery is defined as one or more stocks of fish, including

commercial or recreational, that is or may be engaged in by citizens or nationals of the United States, or citizens of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

The funding priorities of the S-K Grant Program have evolved over the years since the program began in 1980. The original focus of the program was on development of underutilized fisheries within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), originally passed in 1976, directed NMFS to provide the domestic fishing industry priority access to the fishery resources in the EEZ. In an attempt to accelerate development of domestic fisheries, the American Fisheries Promotion Act of 1980 amended the S-K Act to stimulate commercial and recreational fishing efforts in underutilized fisheries.

In the ensuing years, the efforts to Americanize the fisheries were successful to the point that most nontraditional species were fully developed and traditional fisheries became overfished. Therefore, the S-K Program priorities evolved to include a wide range of resource conservation and management issues and aquaculture.

In 1993, NOAA developed a long-range Strategic Plan that included a focus on rebuilding fisheries for sustainable use. The NOAA Strategic Plan strengthened the basis for the continued shift in the priorities of the S-K Program toward issues such as overfishing and bycatch reduction.

The NOAA Fisheries Strategic Plan, produced by NMFS in 1997, continues to emphasize management for the sustainable use of living marine resources. The NOAA Fisheries Strategic Plan will guide NMFS marine resource management decisions over the next 5 years. It includes objectives to maintain healthy stocks; eliminate overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks; increase long-term economic and social benefits from living marine resources; promote environmentally sound aquaculture development; recover protected species; reduce conflicts involving protected species; and protect, conserve, and restore habitat/biodiversity.

Passage in 1996 of the Sustainable Fisheries Act (Public Law 104-297),

tuna, and shellfish that are identified as a unit based on geographic, scientific, technical, recreational and economic characteristics, and any and all phases of fishing for such stocks. Examples of a fishery are Alaskan groundfish, Pacific whiting, New England whiting, and eastern oysters.

which amended the Magnuson-Stevens Act, supported further adjustment to the S-K Program to address the current condition of fisheries.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act recognizes that U.S. fisheries face many problems. It also recognizes the adverse effects of fishing in terms of bycatch of nontarget species, and habitat impacts. The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that overfishing be stopped and that the problems of U.S. fisheries be corrected. Specifically, the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires NMFS to undertake efforts to prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished fisheries, insure conservation, protect essential fish habitats, and realize the full potential of U.S. fishery resources. However, the Magnuson-Stevens Act also acknowledges the potential adverse impacts on people in making such corrections. Therefore, it requires that conservation and management measures, consistent with conservation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities in order to provide for the sustained participation of such communities and, to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities. A "fishing community" is defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Act as "a community which is substantially dependent on or substantially engaged in the harvest or processing of fishery resources to meet social and economic needs, and includes fishing vessel owners, operators, and crew and United States fish processors that are based in such community." (16 U.S.C. 1802 (16).)

The 1999 S-K Grant Program announced under this notification will address the needs of fishing communities in optimizing economic benefits within the context of rebuilding and maintaining sustainable fisheries and in dealing with the impacts of conservation and management measures. The funding priorities listed under section II of this notification identify areas of research and development that relate to these needs. The scope of this program is limited to marine species and Great Lakes species.

While the S-K Program continues to be open to applicants from a variety of sectors, including industry, academia, and state and local governments, successful applicants will be those whose projects demonstrate significant direct benefits to fishing communities.

B. Funding

NMFS issues this document to solicit applications for Federal assistance, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 713c-3(c), describing the conditions under which applications will be accepted under the

S-K Grant Program and how NMFS will select the applications it will fund.

This notification is published subject to, and funding of projects is contingent upon, the appropriation of funds by Congress for this program in Fiscal Year (FY) 1999, which begins on October 1, 1998. The Administration's request for the S-K Grant Program for FY 1999 is \$4 million.

Funding under the program will be provided for research, development, and technology transfer activities that address the funding priorities listed in section II. Funding will not be provided for projects that primarily involve infrastructure construction, port and harbor development, and start-up or operational costs for private business ventures. Furthermore, projects primarily involving data collection should be directed to a specific problem or need and be of a fixed duration, not of a continuing nature, in order to be considered.

C. Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance

The S-K Grant Program is listed in the "Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance" under number 11.427, Fisheries Development and Utilization Research and Development Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program.

II. Funding Priorities

Applicants should insure that their proposals address one of the following priorities as they pertain to marine or Great Lakes species. If more than one priority is selected, the priority that most closely reflects the objectives of the proposal should be listed first in the application.

The priorities are stated here in no particular order.

A. Minimize Interactions Between Fisheries and Protected or Non-Targeted Species

Develop methods to eliminate or reduce adverse interactions between fishing operations and nontargeted, protected, or prohibited species (e.g., juvenile or sublegal-sized fish and shellfish, females of certain crabs, marine turtles, seabirds, or marine mammals), including the inadvertent take, capture, or destruction of such species.

Conduct research on behavioral responses of both target and nontarget marine organisms to fishing gear and practices, including catch and release, in order to facilitate the design of gear and practices to actively avoid nontarget organisms.

Develop methods to improve the survivability of fish discarded or

intentionally released and protected species released in fishing operations, including modifications in gear, fishing practices, and handling practices to reduce the detrimental effects of capture and/or release, and develop methods to assess both the immediate and delayed mortality associated with capture and/or release.

Develop reliable methods to assess or record the extent and composition of fisheries bycatch, especially onboard vessels, to reduce the need for labor-intensive and expensive onboard observer programs.

B. Rebuild Overfished Fisheries/ Maintain Healthy Fish Stocks

Develop scientific information, plans, procedures, and methods that contribute to the rebuilding of overfished fisheries, including information on status of overfished stocks, prototype capacity reduction programs, and projects that facilitate the development of rebuilding plans for fisheries.

Conduct biological, economic, social, and other studies to support the development of sound management practices for important recreational and commercial species.

Develop alternative or innovative approaches to decrease mortality from catch and release fishing.

Develop innovative approaches to address the transition of fishing communities affected by declines in traditional commercial or recreational fisheries toward alternate employment, activities, or new business opportunities. These may include business planning or demonstration projects. However, the S-K Program does not cover business start-up and development expenses or ongoing operational expenses for individuals or individual companies.

Develop innovative approaches to improve fisheries management, including but not limited to, assessment of alternative management systems and resolution of user conflicts.

C. Obtain Maximum Social and Economic Benefits from Harvestable Marine Resources

Contribute to the development of commercial and recreational fisheries for underutilized or non-utilized species of potential economic importance, while maintaining long-term sustainability.

Optimize the utilization of harvestable resources through innovations in how such resources are targeted, harvested, processed, marketed, or released.

Develop marketable products from economic discards, either whole fish discarded because they are an

undesirable species, size, or sex, or parts of fish discarded as not commercially useful.

Develop improved approaches to control environmental hazards which affect fishery resource health and the safety of harvested fish and their products for human consumption.

D. Promote Aquaculture Development in the Marine Environment

Develop or demonstrate cost-effective approaches for advancing environmentally sound public and private mariculture for food, enhancement, industrial, and other purposes.

Develop and evaluate culture systems that reduce the potential for negative impacts on wild stocks and protected resources.

Develop models for aquaculture regulation that address the impediments to development caused by current regulatory processes.

E. Conserve and Enhance Essential Fish Habitat

Develop and test procedures to characterize the condition of essential fish habitat (such as water quality criteria, indicators of biological integrity, and biodiversity).

Develop scientific approaches to assess and reduce human induced impacts on essential fish habitat.

If proposals received do not adequately respond to the above listed priorities, NMFS may carry out, in addition to the program announced by this document, a national program of research and development addressed to aspects of U.S. fisheries pursuant to section 713c-3(d) of the S-K Act, as amended.

III. How to Apply

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications for grants or cooperative agreements for fisheries research and development projects may be made, in accordance with the procedures set forth in this document, by:

1. Any individual who is a citizen or national of the United States;
2. Any individual who is a citizen of the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI), being an individual who qualifies as such under section 8 of the Schedule on Transitional Matters attached to the constitution of the NMI;
3. Any individual who is a citizen of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, or the Federated States of Micronesia; or
4. Any corporation, partnership, association, or other non-Federal entity, non-profit or otherwise, if such entity is

a citizen of the United States or NMI, within the meaning of section 2 of the Shipping Act, 1916, as amended (46 U.S.C. app. 802).

DOC/NOAA/NMFS are committed to cultural and gender diversity in their programs and encourage women and minority individuals and groups to submit applications. Recognizing the interest of the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior in defining appropriate fisheries policies and programs that meet the needs of the U.S. insular areas, applications from individuals, government entities, and businesses in U.S. insular areas are also encouraged. Furthermore, NMFS encourages applications from members of the fishing community, and applications that involve fishing community cooperation and participation. The extent of fishing community involvement will be considered by the Constituent Panel(s) evaluating the potential benefit of funding a proposal.

DOC/NOAA/NMFS employees, including full-time, part-time, and intermittent personnel are not eligible to submit an application under this solicitation or aid in the preparation of an application, except to provide information on program goals, funding priorities, application procedures, and completion of application forms. Since this is a competitive program, NMFS employees will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for a proposal.

Employees of Federal agencies, and Regional Fishery Management Councils and their employees, are not eligible to submit an application under this solicitation.

B. Duration and Terms of Funding

Generally, grants or cooperative agreements are awarded for a period of 1 year but no more than 18 months at a time.

If an application for an award is selected for funding, NMFS has no obligation to provide any additional prospective funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Any subsequent proposal to continue work on an existing project must be submitted to the competitive process for consideration and will not receive preferential treatment. Renewal of an award to increase funding for an additional period is at the discretion of Commerce.

Publication of this announcement does not obligate NMFS to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate any part or the entire amount of funds available.

C. Cost-Sharing

For this solicitation, NMFS is requiring cost-sharing in order to leverage limited funds and to encourage partnerships among government, industry, and academia to address the needs of fishing communities. A minimum of 10 percent up to a maximum of 50 percent cost-share is required. (NMFS must contribute at least 50 percent of total project costs, as provided by statute.) Applications that do not provide for at least the minimum cost-share will be returned to the applicant and will not receive further consideration.

The non-Federal share may include funds received from private sources or from state or local governments or the value of in-kind contributions. Federal funds may not be used to meet the non-Federal share except as provided by Federal statute. In-kind contributions are non-cash contributions provided by the applicant or non-Federal third parties. In-kind contributions may be in the form of, but are not limited to, personal services rendered in carrying out functions related to the project, and permission to use real or personal property owned by others (for which consideration is not required) in carrying out the project.

The appropriateness of all cost-sharing proposals, including the valuation of in-kind contributions, will be determined on the basis of guidance provided in the relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars. In general, the value of in-kind services or property used to fulfill the applicant's cost-share will be the fair market value of the services or property. Thus, the value is equivalent to the costs of obtaining such services or property if they had not been donated. Appropriate documentation must exist to support in-kind services or property used to fulfill the applicant's cost-share.

The degree to which cost-sharing exceeds the minimum level may be taken into account by the NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries (AA) in the final selection of projects to be funded. Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be obligated to account for the amount of cost-share reflected in the award documents.

D. Format

Project applications must be clearly and completely submitted in the following format:

1. *Cover sheet.* An applicant must use OMB Standard Form 424 and 424B (4-92) as the cover sheet for each project. (In completing item 16 of Standard

Form 424, see section V.A.5. of this document.)

2. *Project Summary.* An applicant must complete NOAA Form 88-204 (10-95), Project Summary, for each project. The specific priority contained in section II of this document to which the application responds must be listed on the Project Summary.

3. *Project Budget.* A budget must be submitted for each project, using NOAA Form 88-205 (10-95), Project Budget and associated instructions. The applicants must submit detailed cost estimates showing total project costs. Cost-sharing must be indicated as Federal and non-Federal shares, divided into cash and in-kind contributions. To support the budget, the applicant must describe briefly the basis for estimating the value of the cost-sharing derived from in-kind contributions. Estimates of the direct costs must be specified in the categories listed on the Project Budget form.

The budget may also include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government. The total dollar amount of the indirect costs proposed in an application under this program must not exceed the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by a cognizant Federal agency prior to the proposed effective date of the award, or 100 percent of the total proposed direct costs dollar amount in the application, whichever is less. The Federal share of the indirect costs may not exceed 25 percent of the total proposed direct costs. Applicants with approved indirect cost rates above 25 percent of the total proposed direct costs may use the amount above the 25-percent level up to the 100-percent level as part of the non-Federal share. A copy of the current, approved, negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal government must be included in the application.

NMFS will not consider fees or profits as allowable costs for applicants.

The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred, including the value of in-kind contributions, in accomplishing project objectives during the life of the project. A project begins on the effective date of an award agreement between the applicant and an authorized representative of the U.S. Government and ends on the date specified in the award. Accordingly, the time expended and costs incurred in either the development of a project or the financial assistance application, or in any subsequent discussions or negotiations prior to award, are neither reimbursable nor recognizable as part of the cost-share.

4. *Narrative Project Description.* The narrative project description may be up to 15 pages in length. The narrative should demonstrate knowledge of relevant research and development activity, and demonstrate how the proposal builds upon any past and current work in the subject area, as well as relevant work in related fields. Each project must be described as follows:

a. *Project goals and objectives.* Identify the problem/opportunity to be addressed by the proposed project and what the project is expected to accomplish. Identify the specific priority to which the project responds. Indicate the size and economic value of the fisheries involved and the fishing community affected. If the application is for the continuation of a project previously funded under the S-K Program, describe in detail the progress to date and explain why additional funding is necessary.

b. *Project impacts.* Describe the anticipated impacts of the project on fishing communities in terms of reduced bycatch, increased product yield, or other measurable factors. Describe how the results of the project will be made available to the public.

c. *Evaluation of project.* Specify the criteria and procedures that will be used to evaluate the relative success or failure of a project in achieving its objectives.

d. *Need for government financial assistance.* Explain why government financial assistance is needed for the proposed work. List all other sources of funding that are being or have been sought for the project.

e. *Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant.* Describe the participation by government and non-government entities, particularly members of fishing communities, in the project, and the nature of such participation.

f. *Federal, state, and local government activities and permits.* List any existing Federal, state, or local government programs or activities that this project would affect, including activities requiring certification under state Coastal Zone Management Plans, those requiring section 404 or section 10 permits issued by the Corps of Engineers, those requiring experimental fishing or other permits under fishery management plans, and those requiring scientific permits under the Endangered Species Act and/or the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Describe the relationship between the project and these plans or activities, and list names and addresses of persons providing this information.

g. *Project statement of work:* The statement of work is an action plan of activities to be conducted during the

period of the project. This section requires the applicant to prepare a detailed narrative, fully describing the work to be performed that will achieve the previously articulated goals and objectives. The narrative should respond to the following questions:

(1) What is the project design? What specific work, activities, procedures, statistical design, or analytical methods will be undertaken?

(2) Who will be responsible for carrying out the various activities? (Highlight work that will be subcontracted and provisions for competitive subcontracting.)

(3) What are the major products? A milestone chart must be included which graphically illustrates the specific activities and associated time lines to conduct the scope of work. Time lines should be described in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2), rather than by specific dates. The individual(s) responsible for the various specific activities shall be identified.

Because this information is critical to understanding and reviewing the application, NMFS encourages applicants to provide sufficient detail. Applications lacking sufficient detail may be eliminated from further consideration.

h. *Project management.* Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Identify the principal participants in the project and include copies of any agreements between the participants and the applicant describing the specific tasks to be performed. Provide a statement of the qualifications and experience (e.g., resume or curriculum vitae) of the principal investigator(s) and any consultants and/or subcontractors, and indicate their level of involvement in the project. If any portion of the project will be conducted through consultants and/or subcontracts, applicants must follow procurement guidance in 15 CFR part 24, "Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments," and OMB Circular A-110 for Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations. Commercial organizations and individuals who apply should use OMB Circular A-110. If a consultant and/or subcontractor is selected prior to application submission, indicate the process used for selection.

5. *Supporting documentation.* This section should include any required documents and any additional information necessary or useful to the description of the project. The amount of information given in this section will depend on the type of project proposed.

IV. Evaluation Criteria and Selection Procedures

A. Evaluation of Proposed Projects

1. Initial Screening of Applications

Upon receipt NMFS will screen applications for conformance with requirements set forth in this document. Applications that do not conform to the requirements may not be considered for further evaluation. In addition, proposals from ineligible applicants or those seeking funds primarily for infrastructure development and business costs will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant.

2. Consultation with Interested Parties

As appropriate, NMFS will consult with NMFS Offices, the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD), Commerce and other Federal and state agencies, the Regional Fishery Management Councils, and other interested parties who may be affected by or have knowledge of a specific proposal or its subject matter.

3. Technical Evaluation

NMFS will solicit individual technical evaluations of each project application from three or more appropriate private and public sector experts. These reviewers will assign scores ranging from a minimum of 60 (poor) to a maximum of 100 (excellent) to applications based on the following evaluation criteria, with weights shown in parentheses:

a. *Soundness of project design/conceptual approach.* Applications will be evaluated on the fishing community need(s) to be addressed by the project; the conceptual approach; whether the applicant provided sufficient information to evaluate the project technically; and, if so, the strengths and/or weaknesses of the technical design relative to securing productive results. (50 percent)

b. *Project management and experience and qualifications of personnel.* The organization and management of the project, and the project's principal investigator and other personnel in terms of related experience and qualifications will be evaluated. The principal investigator must be identified in order for the application to be accepted. (25 percent)

c. *Project evaluation.* The effectiveness of the applicant's proposed methods to monitor and evaluate the success or failure of the project in terms of meeting its original objectives will be examined. (10 percent)

d. *Project costs.* The justification and allocation of the budget in terms of the

work to be performed will be evaluated. Unreasonably high or low project costs will be taken into account. (15 percent)

In addition to the above criteria, in reviewing applications that include consultants and contracts, NMFS will make a determination regarding the following:

(1) Is the involvement of the primary applicant necessary to the conduct of the project and the accomplishment of its objectives?

(2) Is the proposed allocation of the primary applicant's time reasonable and commensurate with the applicant's involvement in the project?

(3) Are the proposed costs for the primary applicant's involvement in the project reasonable and commensurate with the benefits to be derived from the applicant's participation?

4. Constituent Panel(s)

After the technical evaluation, individual comments will be solicited from a panel or panels of three or more representatives selected by the AA, from the fishing industry, state government, and others, as appropriate, to evaluate and rank the projects. Considered in the rankings, along with the technical evaluation, will be the significance of the problem or opportunity addressed in the project and the degree of involvement by fishing community members. Each panelist will rank the projects in terms of importance or need for funding, and provide recommendations on the level of funding NMFS should award and the merits of funding each project.

B. Selection Procedures and Project Funding

After projects have been evaluated and ranked, the reviewing NMFS offices will develop recommendations for project funding. These recommendations will be submitted to the AA who will determine the projects to be funded, ensuring that there is no duplication with other projects funded by NOAA or other Federal organizations, and that the projects selected for funding are those that best meet the objectives of the S-K Grant Program.

The exact amount of funds awarded to a project will be determined in preaward negotiations between the applicant and NOAA/NMFS representatives. The funding instrument (grant or cooperative agreement) will be determined by NOAA GMD. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until a notice of award document is received.

V. Administrative Requirements

A. Obligation of the Applicant

An Applicant must:

1. Meet all application requirements and provide all information necessary for the evaluation of the proposal, including one signed original and nine signed copies of the application.

2. Be available, upon request, to respond to questions during the review and evaluation of the proposal(s).

3. Complete Form CD-511, "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying." The following explanations are provided:

a. *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;

b. *Drug-free workplace.* Grantees (as defined at 15 CFR part 26, section 605) are subject to 15 CFR part 26, subpart F, "Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)," and the related section of the certification form prescribed above applies;

c. *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; and

d. *Anti-lobbying disclosures.* Any applicant who 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.

4. If applicable, require applicants/bidders for subgrants, contracts, subcontracts, or other lower tier covered transactions at any tier under the award to submit 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 Commerce. An SF-LLL submitted by any tier recipient or subrecipient should be submitted to Commerce in accordance with the instructions contained in the

award document. This requirement applies only to applicants whose applications are recommended for funding. All required forms will be provided to successful applicants.

5. Complete item 16 on Standard Form 424 (4-92) regarding clearance by the State Point Of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of E.O. 12372. A list of SPOCs may be obtained from any of the NMFS offices listed in this document (see ADDRESSES), and is also included in the "Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance."

6. Complete Standard Form 424B (4-92), "Assurances—Non-construction Programs."

B. Obligations of Successful Applicants (Recipients)

A recipient of a grant award for a project must:

1. Manage the day-to-day operations of the project, be responsible for the performance of all activities for which funds are granted, and be responsible for the satisfaction of all administrative and managerial conditions imposed by the award.

2. Keep records sufficient to document any costs incurred under the award, and allow access to records for audit and examination by the Secretary of Commerce, the Comptroller General of the United States, or their authorized representatives; and, submit financial status reports (SF 269) to GMD in accordance with the award conditions.

3. Submit semiannual project status reports on the use of funds and progress of the project to NMFS within 30 days after the end of each 6-month period. These reports will be submitted to the individual specified as the NMFS Program Officer in the funding agreement.

4. Submit a final report within 90 days after completion of each project to the NMFS Program Officer. The final report must describe the project and include an evaluation of the work performed and the results and benefits in sufficient detail to enable NMFS to assess the success of the completed project.

NMFS is committed to using available technology to achieve the timely and wide distribution of final reports to those who would benefit from this information. Therefore, recipients are required to submit final reports in electronic format, in accordance with the award terms and conditions, for publication on the NMFS Home Page. Costs associated with preparing and transmitting final reports to NMFS in electronic format are appropriately funded from the grant award. Requests for exemption from this requirement

may be considered by NMFS on a case-by-case basis.

Formats for the semiannual and final reports, which have been approved by OMB, will be provided to successful applicants.

5. In order for NMFS to assist the grantee in disseminating information, the grantee is requested to submit all publications printed with grant funds (in addition to the final report in section V.B.4. above) to the NMFS Program Officer. Either three hard copies or an electronic version of any such publications should be submitted.

C. Other Requirements

1. *Federal policies and procedures.* Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and Federal and Commerce policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

2. *Name check review.* All recipients are subject to a name check review process. Name checks are intended to reveal if any key individuals associated with the recipient have been convicted of, or are presently facing, criminal charges such as fraud, theft, perjury, or other matters that significantly reflect on the recipient's management, honesty, or financial integrity.

3. *Financial management certification/preaward accounting survey.* Successful applicants for S-K funding, at the discretion of the NOAA Grants Officer, may be required to have their financial management systems certified by an independent public accountant as being in compliance with Federal standards specified in the applicable OMB Circulars prior to execution of the award. Any first-time applicant for Federal grant funds may be subject to a preaward accounting survey by Commerce prior to execution of the award.

4. *Past performance.* Unsatisfactory performance under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding.

5. *Delinquent Federal debts.* No award of Federal funds shall be made to an applicant or to its subrecipients who have an outstanding delinquent Federal debt or fine until either:

a. The delinquent account is paid in full,

b. A negotiated repayment schedule is established and at least one payment is received, or

c. Other arrangements satisfactory to Commerce are made.

6. *Buy American.* Applicants are hereby notified that they are encouraged to the extent feasible to purchase American-made equipment and

products with the funding provided under this program.

7. *Preaward activities.* If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so solely at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the Government. Notwithstanding any verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of Commerce to cover preaward costs.

8. *False statements.* A false statement on the application is grounds for denial or termination of funds and grounds for possible punishment by a fine or imprisonment (18 U.S.C. 1001).

Classification

Prior notice and an opportunity for public comments are not required by the Administrative Procedure Act or any other law for this notification concerning grants, benefits, and contracts.

Furthermore, a regulatory flexibility analysis is not required for purposes of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

This action has been determined to be not significant for purposes of E.O. 12866.

Applications under this program are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

This document contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The collection of this information has been approved by OMB under control numbers 0348-0040, 0348-0043, 0348-0046, and 0648-0135.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

A solicitation for applications will also appear in the "Commerce Business Daily."

Dated: February 20, 1998.

Rolland A. Schmitt,

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-5184 Filed 2-27-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D.012798B]

Highly Migratory Species and Billfish Advisory Panels; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) and Billfish Advisory Panels (APs) will hold a joint meeting to discuss issues in, and future management options for, the fisheries for Atlantic HMS.

DATES: The meeting will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on March 16, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on March 17, and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on March 18, 1998. A public comment period is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 1998, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the meeting location.

ADDRESSES: The APs will meet at the Radisson Bay Harbor Inn, 7700 Courtney Campbell Causeway, Tampa, FL. Written comments should be submitted to, and informational materials related to the AP meeting are available from, Jill Stevenson, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jill Stevenson, telephone: (301) 713-2347, fax: (301) 713-1917.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The HMS and Billfish APs have been established under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.* The APs will assist the Secretary of Commerce in collecting and evaluating information relevant to the development of a fishery management plan (FMP) for Atlantic tunas, swordfish and sharks and an amendment to the Billfish FMP. All AP meetings are open to the public and will be attended by members of the AP, including appointed members, representatives of the five Fishery Management Councils that work with HMS, and the Chair, or his representative, of the U.S. Advisory Committee to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. A public comment period is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 1998 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the meeting location. Comments are solicited on overfishing definitions and rebuilding analyses that will be

presented at the AP meeting on Tuesday. To request informational materials related to the AP discussion or to submit public comments on overfishing definitions and rebuilding analyses, see **ADDRESSES**. Agenda items for the joint AP meeting include discussion of:

1. Objectives for the HMS FMP and Billfish FMP amendment;
2. Rebuilding scenarios for overfished stocks of Atlantic HMS;
3. Development of overfishing criteria and definitions for Atlantic HMS;
4. Research and monitoring requirements in HMS fisheries;
5. Permitting and reporting requirements in HMS fisheries; and
6. Enforcement issues in HMS fisheries.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Jill Stevenson, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, phone (301) 713-2347, at least 7 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: February 23, 1998.

Bruce Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 98-5182 Filed 2-27-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 021798C]

New England Fishery Management Council; Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce

ACTION: Closed Meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a one-day closed meeting, with a session open to the public before and after the closed meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 18, 1998 at 9:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Tara Ferncroft Conference Resort, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923; telephone: (978) 777-2500.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 5 Broadway, Saugus, MA 01906-1036.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New