Office of Oceanic & Atmospheric Research Delegations & Directives

CIRCULAR NUMBER: 216.6 **EFFECTIVE:**

Subject: Evaluating and Approving Cooperative Institute-Led Proposals Reliant on NOAA Resources

SECTION 1. PURPOSE. This document establishes an OAR-wide policy for situations where Cooperative Institute (CI) employees are seeking additional funding for projects beyond that provided in the Cooperative Agreement.

SECTION 2. SCOPE. A CI is a NOAA-supported, non-federal entity that has established an outstanding research program in one or more areas that are relevant to the NOAA mission. CIs are established at research institutions that have a strong education program with established graduate degree programs in NOAA-related sciences. A CI engages in research directly related to NOAA's long-term mission needs, including those that require substantial involvement of one or more research units within the parent organization, or other organizations, and one or more NOAA programs. The CI provides significant coordination of resources among non-governmental partners and promotes the involvement of students and postdoctoral scientists in NOAA-funded research. The funding mechanism underlying these arrangements is a cooperative agreement, which allows for "substantial involvement" between NOAA scientists and university employees. These two groups interact closely, on a continuing basis, and are often collocated. To accomplish the goals and objectives of the governing cooperative agreement, many CI employees are permitted use of federal infrastructure (e.g., facilities, computer hardware and software, telecommunication equipment) by NOAA, which maintains sole discretion over any use or possible use of Federal resources.

Issue: CI employees might have interests in applying for funding for research beyond that available through the NOAA cooperative agreement in order to enhance their scientific contributions and/or career development. In some cases, such research may provide valuable leveraging to enhance or accelerate accomplishment of a NOAA laboratory's mission. In other cases, the research funded through these "outside" grants may provide little or no benefit to the laboratory, or to NOAA.

Resolution: NOAA Laboratory and Program Directors have a responsibility to ensure that Federal resources under their control (people, funds, and infrastructure) are used appropriately. If a CI employee wants to seek funding that involves use of NOAA resources at the host facility (e.g., office space, computers, lab equipment) in any amount, then the NOAA Laboratory or Program Director and the CI Director must approve the decision in advance. Alternatively, if NOAA resources are not to be used, then approval is needed only from the CI Director. NOAA's approval of CI funding proposals will often depend on the timing of funding initiatives and other circumstances. For example, if a CI employee's salary is currently fully (100%) funded through the existing NOAA cooperative agreement from a source of funding that is about to end, a new

funding initiative may be approved by the NOAA Laboratory or Program Director and the CI Director.

SECTION 3. POLICY. There are two general categories of proposals for which a CI employee may provide the primary intellectual contribution:

NOAA OAR Division/Laboratory is the lead institution on the proposal. If a CI scientist will provide the primary intellectual contribution to the proposal, then the CI principal investigator (PI) will be given a designation of "Non-NOAA PI" to recognize their leadership on awarded proposals

CI is the lead institution on the proposal. When the lead institution is the CI's university, then the CI scientist who is the primary intellectual contributor is the designated PI on the proposal, subject to CI and university policy.

When a CI employee is interested in applying for funding outside the boundaries of the CI award, the CI and the NOAA Laboratory or Program Director must evaluate whether the employee will be using NOAA resources, including but not limited to office/lab space, administrative resources, IT resources, and instrumentation. If such resources would be used, the CI employee must obtain a letter of support from the Laboratory or the Program that would provide the in-kind support before submitting the proposal. The NOAA Laboratory or Program Director providing the in kind support has the authority to sign such letters and can delegate that authority to other NOAA employees.

Each NOAA Laboratory or Program Director should consider providing in-kind support to such proposals when:

a. The proposed work benefits NOAA by directly contributing to the laboratory or program's strategic research priorities, and/or NOAA's mission agency responsibilities, and
b. The proposed research falls within one of the CI scientific themes identified in the cooperative agreement.

The attached External Funding Proposal Checklist (EFPC) should be used to help the director assess the necessity and benefits of the proposal to NOAA. Laboratory and Program Directors must, at minimum, consider the factors in the EFPC and decision memorandum when evaluating a request for in-kind support. Other factors may be considered, if appropriate.
Additionally, a decision memorandum should be drafted by the requester for the NOAA Laboratory or Program Director's signature. This memorandum should bring all of the disparate information from the checklist together, as well as capture information that doesn't fit into one of the checklist categories.
The Laboratory or Program Director (or Designee) shall be given a minimum of one week to review the EFPC and decision memorandum, and provide a decision.

SECTION 4. APPLICABILITY.

This policy applies to all OAR research laboratories and programs.

SECTION 5. RESPONSIBILITIES.

1. CI employee (the PI) completes EFPC and decision memorandum (See Enclosure A).
2. PI initiates a request for in-kind support by submitting the EFPC and decision memorandum for consideration to the NOAA Laboratory or Program Director (or designee).
3. NOAA Laboratory or Program Director (or designee) reviews the EFPC and decision memorandum.
4. NOAA Laboratory or Program Director (or designee) provides written decision to CI employee.

SECTION 6. EFFECT ON OTHER ISSUANCES. NAO 216-107: NOAA Policy on Cooperative Institutes. This policy complies with NAO 216-107.

Craig N. McLean
Assistant Administrator

05 May 2018
Date

ENCLOSURE A

External Funding Proposal Checklist

1. Cooperative Institute (CI): _____

2. NOAA Laboratory: _____

3. Principal Investigator: _____

4. Proposal Title: _____

5. Proposal Abstract: _____

6. Proposal Budget : _____

7. Proposal Funding Source (Agency and Funding Opportunity Number):

   _____

	Yes	No
8. Is the CI employee's salary fully (100%) funded by NOAA through the existing CI award?	☐	☐
9. Can the proposal be submitted directly by NOAA? If yes, why is it more advantageous for the proposal to be submitted by the CI? _____	☐	☐
10. How does the proposed research align with and contribute directly to one or more of the NOAA laboratory or program's strategic research priorities and NOAA's mission agency responsibilities? If yes, please explain. _____	☐	☐
11. Is the proposed research a high priority for the program, lab, and/or NOAA? Briefly explain. _____	☐	☐
12. Would the proposal enhance the NOAA laboratory or program (e.g., stature, research capabilities)?	☐	☐
13. Would the CI employee(s) who would participate in the proposed work continue to contribute sufficiently to the NOAA lab or program or NOAA's goals to merit having offices in the lab and/or access to other lab resources?	☐	☐