Script for NIDIS Coping with Drought Building Tribal Drought Resilience Informational Webinar

July 15, 2021

Slide 1:

Good afternoon, my name is Britt Parker and I am with the National Integrated Drought Information System (or NIDIS) in Boulder, Colorado. Welcome to this informational session on the Climate Program Office FY22 Coping with Drought competition on Building Tribal Drought Resilience. I serve as the manager of this competition and I am joined today by Veva Deheza, the Executive Director of NIDIS. Please note this webinar is being recorded and will be available on the Climate Program Office FY22 Funding Opportunity and drought.gov webpages along with a transcript of the webinar and a frequently asked questions generated through the Q&A portion of our webinar. This FAQ will be periodically updated with questions that come in so that all can benefit from the answers.

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We are holding this webinar in advance of the Letter of Intent due date as an opportunity to clarify the focus and requirements of this competition as well as answer your questions. Our goal is to be as clear and consistent with the information we are providing as possible. We will take questions at the end of this presentation. You may enter your questions at any time in the Q&A box in your control panel. Today I will briefly cover the following topics - what is the Climate Program Office?, what is NIDIS?, important details about the NIDIS CWD competition, briefly go over application requirements, important dates, and then open it up for questions.

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The NOAA Climate Program Office (CPO) manages competitive research programs in which NOAA funds high-priority climate science, assessments, decision support research, outreach, education, and capacity-building activities designed to advance our understanding of Earth's climate system, and to foster the application of this knowledge in risk management and adaptation efforts. The National Integrated Drought Information System sits within the Climate Program Office and the FY22 Coping with Drought competitions are one of eight competitions currently open for FY22. Please note there are two NIDIS competitions this year. This one focused on Building Tribal Drought Resilience and a second focused on Ecological Drought. The informational webinar on the ecological drought competition was held yesterday, and all materials will also be on the Climate Program Office and drought.gov websites.

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The National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), was authorized in 2006 and is a multi-agency partnership that coordinates drought monitoring, forecasting, planning and research at national, state, and local levels across the country. The mission of NIDIS is to help the nation move to an increasingly proactive approach to understand and manage drought risks and impacts, and to improve long-term drought resilience with a mandate to establish a national drought early warning system.

Since its inception NIDIS has been working with various federal, state, local and tribal government agencies as well as a network of researchers, academics, resource managers, and policymakers to support efforts to improve prediction, forecasting and monitoring, and collaborating with existing programs and partners to undertake applied research and drought planning and preparedness. We share this work and collate drought resources on the US Drought Portal.

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While our ultimate goal is a national early warning system, we recognize that impacts and information needs differ across the country, so our approach to achieve this goal is to develop regional Drought Early Warning Systems (or DEWS) - networks of partners sharing information and actions that help communities cope with drought. Each DEWS has many of the same basic ingredients (Observations and Monitoring, Predictions and Forecasting, Planning and Preparedness, Outreach and Communication, and Applied Research) but ultimately have their own flavor to reflect the needs of their region.

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These systems are not simply in place to disseminate forecasts and information, but to encourage innovation by integrating new, locally relevant drought information and supporting the introduction of new technologies that detect and communicate drought risks and warnings. In addition, we encourage learning across the DEWS and value projects and approaches that are transferrable. There are currently 9 DEWS across the US – covering CONUS west of Mississippi, the Midwest, the Northeast, the Southeast. We are also working to strengthen our support to partners in areas such as Alaska, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands, the U.S. Caribbean, and other areas that are not part of a formal DEWS.

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NIDIS recognizes that tribal communities face unique drought challenges and opportunities, requiring customized approaches, tools, and data that may integrate traditional tribal knowledge and cultural, medicinal, and spiritual values. It is also recognized that Indigenous experiences and perspectives of drought vary greatly across the United States. To effectively address tribal needs as mandated by the NIDIS Public Law, NIDIS and partners jointly developed the *NIDIS Tribal Drought Engagement Strategy: 2021-2025* in consultation with tribal partners.

This strategy identifies key activities to implement in partnership with tribal nations over the next five years. Integrating tribal perspectives into NIDIS' work is important to ensure tribal nations are equal partners in responding to drought. The document also presents Guiding Principles of Engagement that NIDIS stives to adhere to in our engagement with tribal nations. These includes: 1) respecting tribal sovereignty, 2) ensuring trust and reciprocity and 3) ensuring DEWS are culturally appropriate and useful for tribal nations.

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Over the past few years, tribal nations have made significant advances in their drought planning activities. Many tribal nations have developed drought (or climate change) risk assessments and/or action plans. Yet, many tribal resource managers have expressed frustration by the lack of adequate funding for implementation of actions to build drought resilience embedded within those plans. Additionally, assessing the feasibility and efficacy of these actions, from the tribal perspective, is critical to ensuring that lessons are learned and shared. This opportunity is intended to contribute to the larger effort to address this gap between planning and implementation.

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Information about the Climate Program Office FY22 Notice of Funding Opportunity, including the 8 competitions that are part of this NOFO, can be found on the Climate Program Office webpage under the Funding Opportunities tab. There is also information on drought.gov.

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Applications should be developed by or in full partnership with tribal nations to fund the implementation of actions - together with research on those actions - to build drought resilience contained in existing plans and strategies.

Plans may include, but are not limited to drought contingency plans; drought, water, or natural resource plans; agricultural resource management plans; or climate adaptation plans.

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Projects could include, but are not limited to:

- green infrastructure
- application of techniques to improve soil health
- diversification of cropping
- installation of fish ladders/maintaining fish refugia
- expansion of tools/response options for fish and wildlife managers
- cultural/native plant range expansion/nurseries
- ecosystem/landscape restoration
- plans/education to increase drought tolerant plants use for homes, farms and ranches

- additional planning/research in advance of implementation

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There must be some research component to the proposed project that could include, but is not limited to, the following exemplar questions:

1. What metrics will you use to know when you are in drought, drought is worsening, or drought is improving; for example, observed changes in plant or animal behavior or landscape changes that indicate drought? How will these feed into monitoring and evaluation of your action?
2. How can a monitoring and evaluation process be designed and implemented that incorporates traditional ecological knowledge/traditional knowledge (TEK/TK) and/or cultural values to define and assess the success of the action to build drought resilience? What metrics will you use to understand whether drought impacts have been reduced or minimized based on your action(s)?
3. Are planning processes and implementation of actions that adhere to traditional ways of knowledge and adapting more effective? How is the effectiveness of these processes and actions defined and captured?

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1. Is there a consideration of observed or future trends (climate change, land use, population, etc.) in the actions to build drought resilience, and if not, how might the actions be adapted to incorporate these trends to increase likelihood of success?
2. What processes or criteria are used to determine which actions to undertake and where they should be implemented? For example, what approaches, tools, metrics, and/or analyses are used - or need to be developed - to understand the full range of benefits and costs, inclusive of traditional knowledge, and cultural, ecological, and other values of importance of potential actions?
3. How can this project improve and document our understanding of the cultural, economic, human health, ecological, and/or other costs or impacts of drought?

We welcome proposals that leverage previous or ongoing work related to climate and drought vulnerability assessments and planning such as those funded under the BIA Tribal Resilience Grants or Department of the Interior Climate Adaptation Science Centers, etc.

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Please note that proposals may address one or more of these and/or other related research questions, and are not expected to/should not address them all.

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Pending the availability of funds, NIDIS anticipates a funding allocation for this competition of up to $1.5 million dollars. Proposals may request funding for up to two-year grants in the form of cooperative agreements with funding up to $500,000 over two years. We anticipate funding 6-7 projects. Applicants should use September 1, 2022 as the start date.

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Project funds will be awarded as Cooperative Agreements, thus ensuring a working partnership and substantial interaction between the Project PIs and the NIDIS Program, NOAA scientists, and other relevant staff. Projects will be expected to submit annual reports and respond to periodic data and information requests including quarterly calls to ensure co-production. Some of our most successful work to date has been accomplished when we work together with our partners and we are looking forward to working closely with our PIs.

Proposals will:

Demonstrate full partnership of tribal nations by including at least one full investigator on the project representing a federally-recognized tribe.

Demonstrate an integrated project team with or considering partners from the public and private sectors; academia (including Tribal Colleges and Universities); local, regional, tribal, and federal governmental entities; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); environmental groups; intertribal councils and consortia, tribal allottee organizations, citizen groups, etc.

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Demonstrate adherence to the Guiding Principles of Tribal Engagement as defined in the *NIDIS Tribal Drought Engagement Strategy: 2021-2025* (pgs 9-11) with include; 1) respecting tribal sovereignty, 2) ensuring trust and reciprocity, and 3) ensuring drought related work is culturally appropriate and useful for tribal nations.

As part of the description of project activities, provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, timeline (seasons), species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist, as NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

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Proposal may:

Demonstrate external contributions (e.g., in-kind contributions and/or funding) to be leveraged with these federal research funds, though there are no match or cost-share requirements.

Leverage previous or ongoing work related to climate and drought vulnerability assessments and planning such as those funded under the BIA Tribal Resilience Grants or Department of the Interior Climate Adaptation Science Centers, etc.

Additional Guidelines for Applicants:

Project teams will be encouraged to work with the NIDIS Tribal Coordinator to share outcomes and lessons learned with other tribal nations and tribal organizations, where appropriate, to strengthen national tribal drought preparedness and response.

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Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and state, local and tribal governments.

For this competition, please see guidelines for requirements for US Federally-recognized tribal government involvement

Please see Subsection G. “Other Submission Requirements” of the full NOFO, for additional information regarding Federal investigators/co-investigators. Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible to receive federal assistance under this notice. However, federal agencies can send their proposals to the competition manager using the same instructions and requirements to be evaluated by the same process and criteria. If the proposal receives a high enough score through the process, they would receive funding through an interagency transfer versus a cooperative agreement mechanism.

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I will now briefly cover the letters of intent and full proposals. Please see the full NOFO documentation on grants.gov to read the full details and to ensure you meet all the requirements. In addition, please ensure you are familiar with the administrative and national policy requirements to which grantees will be subject.

Investigators are strongly encouraged to submit an LOI prior to developing and submitting a full proposal using the FY22 CWD LOI submission form. Investigators unable to submit via the form should email their LOI to britt.parker@noaa.gov. If you email your LOI you will receive confirmation of receipt, if you do not, please follow-up.

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The Letters of Intent are due at 5pm Eastern Time on August 9, 2021. The purpose of the LOI process is to provide information to potential applicants on the relevance of their proposed project to the competition in advance of preparing a full application. While LOIs are strongly encouraged, applicants are not required to submit them and may submit a full application even if they have not submitted an LOI. If an LOI is submitted it should contain the following; competition name, tentative project title, names and institutions of the PIs, a problem statement, brief summary of the work to be completed including methodology and data set needed or to be collected, approximate cost, and relevance to the competition being targeted. If these items are not included or the LOI is submitted late, it will not be considered. Responses to the PIs will be sent within 4 weeks after the LOI due date with an encourage or discourage from applying, though the final decision on whether to submit a full proposal lies with the PI.

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Full proposals are due at 5pm Eastern on October 18, 2021. Failure to comply with the provisions in the NOFO for full proposals will result in applications being returned without review. Full applications are limited to 35 pages, single spaced, using 12-point font type with 1-inch margins on standard 8.5”x11” paper! (for proposals with 3 or more PIs the page limit is 40 pages).

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The required components of a full proposal include the following; title page, abstract, results from prior research, a project narrative, budget narrative and table, abbreviated vitae, current and pending support, a data and information sharing plan, and statement of diversity and inclusion.

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Other components that are not includes in the page limit include; federal budget forms, indirect cost rate agreements, DUNS numbers and letters of support if you have them. Special instructions for multiple applications with the same project are included in the body of the NOFO. Please do not wait until the last minute to access grants.gov as the process can take as long as four weeks if steps are not completed correctly.

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The Letters of Intent are subject to a program led review based on relevance to the targeted competition.

Upon receipt of full applications, an administrative review will be completed for compliance with requirements and completeness. Those that pass will proceed to an independent panel technical review for three criteria – technical and scientific merit, the overall qualifications of

the applicants. Each reviewer will provide one score for each criterion from 1-5. These scores will be combined using the weighting averages to produce a single numerical score for this step. More information on the weighting of the criterion at this step can be found in the NOFO. Projects scoring at least a 3 out of 5 will proceed to an independent panel review for importance, relevance and applicability to program goals where each reviewer will provide a relevance score from 1-5. To determine final score, the scores from the technical review will be combined with the relevance review with a weighting of 60% and 40% respectively.

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Before we wrap up, as I mentioned earlier, NIDIS is offering a second Coping with Drought competition in FY22 focused on Ecological Drought. Applicants will be accepted on research to **improve our understanding, early warning and management of drought risk in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems** to inform more deliberate and expanded decision-making that supports sustainable, healthy and resilient ecosystems.

The competition will focus on two areas

1. Improving our ability to understand drought impacts to ecosystems and ecologically available water and integrating that information into decision-making
2. Integrating ecologically-relevant information to support drought monitoring, planning and action

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Finally, a reminder for where you can find the full NOFO and the CWD Informational Sheet – please read these resources thoroughly to ensure you understand fully the focus and requirements for your proposals. A transcript of this presentation, the presentation slide deck and a FAQ based on your questions will be able on the CPO Funding Opportunities website and we will update the FAQ based on additional questions that come in. Please contact me at any time with additional questions. We will now move to the Q&A portion of the webinar: please type your questions into the Q&A box at this time.

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<Put on screen during the Q&A>