

# **Minibus Pre and Post Award Instructions**

2014 Minibus Application due: **June 10, 2014**

Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2014-2004060

*(These instructions are based on the Omnibus instructions provided last year. Places where significant changes were made are **highlighted**.)*

## **Competitive Research Project Selection**

As described in the minibus funding memo that you received, two thirds of your minibus funding must be spent on competitive resilience research. This may be done by funding relevant proposals that were part of your previous competition, or you may hold a new competition. If you hold a new competition, your minibus proposal should contain a "Future Competed Research" project.

As stated in your minibus funding memo, if you hold a new competition, the selected research projects must be identified by September 30, 2014 in a letter of intent to your Program Officer. (This does not mean that the project has to start by September 30; only that it has been identified to your Program Officer.)

Minibus applications that contain a "Future Competed Research" project, as happened with the omnibus, will be given a Special Award Condition (SAC) requiring full documentation of the selected projects, and you cannot start those projects until you have satisfied this SAC.

As with all Core competitively selected research projects,

a) You must follow normal research competition procedures (published RFP, external technical reviews, participation of your Program Officer in the technical review panel, etc.). (All of these requirement have already been met if you are only funding projects that were reviewed and discussed at your last technical review panel.)

b) Following the technical review, a letter of intent must be submitted to your Program Officer prior to the notification of investigators. Your Program Officer will review the letter within five working days and either concur with it or discuss modifications. The letter of intent should list all proposals being considered (title, PI, PI affiliation, request amount), with technical panel scores or recommendations. Indicate which projects you have selected for funding with minibus funds, and include the rationale for inclusion (or exclusion) if any included projects deviate from the technical review panel's scores or recommendations.

## **All Other Projects**

Just as with omnibus proposals, all other projects submitted in the minibus application except for any Management project, are subject to the requirements for peer review every four years, and should be included in the peer reviews when they next occur.

Some programs may be receiving additional pass-through or other funds, either through Sea Grant or other parts of NOAA or other agencies. These funds were not mentioned in the minibus funding memo you received on or around May 9. Projects funded with these additional funds should *not* be

included in your Minibus Proposal unless your FPO directs you to include them. Please discuss these projects with your FPO to find out how to apply for these additional funds.

### **Minibus Application**

The Sea Grant minibus proposal will become part of your 2014-17 omnibus award, and so will continue to form the legal basis for the award of federal grant funds to the Sea Grant programs. The intent of the NSGO is to only request material required to process an award or to fulfill grant oversight responsibilities.

To obtain the application package, and to submit your omnibus proposal to Grants.gov, find the portal through the “apply for grants” button. Click “Download application package.” Then use the “Funding Opportunity Number”: **NOAA-OAR-SG-2014-2004060**.

Download the application by selecting the download links. While the application file may open directly, you may also save the file to your computer for future reference and use. You do not need Internet access to read and fill in the application file, once you have saved it to your computer.

### **Format**

Like the omnibus submissions last year, the minibus submission should have attachments that describe the projects: the "Project Narrative", the "Budget Narrative", and the "90-2 Long Form" Project Summary.

The Project Narrative should include copies of the proposals of each project in the minibus. The Budget Narrative should include all projects' overall Sea Grant Budget form 90-4 (for the entire period of that project), the 90-4 forms for each separate year followed by the budget justification for that year. As with the omnibus submissions, the 90-4s need to show man-months (Full Time Employees = 12 man months) on the 90-4s, so please make sure this section is filled out for each year.

**If (*and only if!*) your negotiated indirect cost rate agreement has changed since you submitted your omnibus application, please include a copy of your current indirect cost rate agreement in your final submission in the budget narrative section.**

### **“90-2 Long Form”**

**The 90-2 template must be included with the minibus submission. This template can be found on the NSGO website at <http://seagrants.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/SeaGrantFormsandTemplates.aspx>. Use the 90-2 "Long Form" located there. This is an updated version of the "90-2 Bulk Upload Template" that you submitted with your 2014-17 omnibus application last fall. It has been updated with more than a thousand new partners, and contains some experimental new features to help validate the data entered.**

This Long Form has tabs that accommodate up to 50 different projects. Just as you did with your omnibus submission, fill out a single 90-2 form for your minibus application, and fill out one 90-2 tab on that form for each project in your omnibus, and fill out the Table of Content with by-year funding data for each project. *Do not fill out a separate 90-2 tab for each year of the project! Only one 90-2 per project is needed.* Attach the completed 90-2 Long Form, to the minibus application using the "Other Attachments Form" within the omnibus application package.

Note! Some Sea Grant Programs reported that their Office of Sponsored programs used third-party software to prepare their grants.gov application packages, and the third-party software would not allow an Excel spreadsheet to be attached. If that happens to you, please contact [dorn.carlson@noaa.gov](mailto:dorn.carlson@noaa.gov) to discuss a workaround. It is not sufficient to attach a PDF copy of the 90-2 Long Form to the grant application--that does not contain enough information to upload the projects into PIER. Contact Dorn Carlson at [dorn.carlson@noaa.gov](mailto:dorn.carlson@noaa.gov) or 301-734-1080 with questions about the 90-2 Long Form.

### **Additional Suggestions for Some Projects**

*Management and Program Administration:* The management and program administration project should contain the project summary, budget, and new or revised material not covered in the programs strategic/implementation plans (including program organization chart, oversight and reporting arrangements, management team information, advisory and oversight structure, management objectives and the short resume/CV for the PI). If your management projects do not have any new personnel not already reported in your omnibus, no CVs are needed.

*Outreach, Extension, Communication, and/or Education Projects:* Each minibus proposal can include an outreach component. Outreach includes Sea Grant extension, communications, and when it is part of extension, education.

The proposal is the document of record to the outside world with regard to each program's outreach efforts in marine resources use, development and conservation; goals and plans for the next four years; and, the manner of carrying out the objectives. The proposals may be written as additions to the corresponding proposals in your 2014 omnibus application, or may be written as stand-alone project descriptions.

(The guidance from here to the end is the same as the omnibus submission guidance provided last year.)

**NEPA Questionnaire** (<http://seagrant.noaa.gov/funding/forms/questionnaire.pdf>)

Like the omnibus application, your minibus application should include one NEPA questionnaire that covers all the projects in the application. You *don't* need a separate NEPA form for each project in the minibus. You will need to know certain things about every project in order to fill out the one required NEPA questionnaire, though.

With the diversity of projects that might be coming in, we can't say in advance which sections of the questionnaire would be applicable to your omnibus. If any sections do not apply to any of the work proposed in your minibus, type N/A in the first box of that section and leave the rest of that section blank.

You should be considering these NEPA questions during your project competition and technical review, and consulting with your Program Officer if any projects appear to raise NEPA issues, so that they can be resolved before the omnibus is submitted.

The NEPA questionnaire should be answered based on the overall omnibus, and answers should be a brief as possible.

The sections on the form are:

A. Project Information - here you should provide general information about the overall omnibus grant. If the answer to any of questions A.4-A.12 is yes, indicate in your response which projects in your omnibus trigger this yes answer, and explain.

B. Funding Information - you can leave blank

C. Federal Involvement - you can leave blank

D. Project Location - provide general information about the overall omnibus grant, eg, "The coastal regions and state waters of the state of \_\_\_\_" (if that's true for your omnibus). If some projects go farther afield than that, identify the projects and briefly describe the locations. If the answer to any of questions D.2-D.4 is yes, indicate in your response which projects in your omnibus trigger this yes answer, and explain

E. Permits - If the answer to any of these questions is yes, indicate in your response which projects in your omnibus trigger this yes answer, and explain. Otherwise put "n/a" in answer to E.1. and leave the rest blank.

F. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Activity

G. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Activity related to damage assessment and restoration

H. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Activity related to fisheries sampling and research

If the answer to any questions in sections F-H is yes, you should indicate in your response which projects in your omnibus trigger this yes answer, and explain. Otherwise put "n/a" in answer to the first question of each section, and leave the rest blank.

You may be planning research, outreach, or education that is intended to support another activity covered in these sections of the questionnaire; for example, research that might support a new zoning regulation or restoration project, or outreach or education that might support a local economic development program. If your only role in these covered activities is to provide research, outreach, education or similar support, this does not need to be claimed in these sections, unless the research, outreach, or education activity itself is covered. For example, if you wanted to do an education or research project that involved introducing pathogens into the environment, you would need to answer question F.2.

If you have other questions about the NEPA questionnaire, please contact Dorn Carlson at [dorn.carlson@noaa.gov](mailto:dorn.carlson@noaa.gov) or 301-734-1080.

### **Post Award**

- Accept Awards/Amendments immediately. Slow acceptance may hold up the NOAA Grants Office from making any additional awards on that same grant number.
  
- Before sending back an award/amendment for any issues you see, please contact your program officer. Many times the questions/issues can be fixed without declining an award/amendment (and preventing the process from having to start over).

### **Suggestions for Completing Budget (90-4) and Budget Justification**

#### **MATCHING FUNDS**

A 50 percent match of the federal funds (i.e., one dollar of match for every two dollars of federal money received) is required on all Sea Grant proposals unless otherwise specified. It is not necessary that every individual project within it has 50% match, as long as the overall minibus application has 50% match.

Note that it is important to track match contributions carefully to be able to demonstrate sources and amounts if audited. Any match contributions identified by investigators are subject to federal audit that may result in additional costs to the institution.

Match may be in the form of selected "in-kind" services or additional funds from a specified institution, agency, industry, or nonfederal program. No funds from federal entities can be used as match.

***For Matching Funds, NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) expects you to consider the following questions:***

- Is a match (non-federal share) required for this program?

- If yes, does the application meet the matching requirements?
- Are the sources of match clearly identified? (i.e. cash or in-kind)
- Does the application provide adequate documentation to support in-kind contributions?
- Does the application exclude matching contributions, cash or in-kind, used for other programs?
- Does the application exclude federal funds used as match?
- Are all matching contributions necessary for accomplishing the project?
- Are all matching contributions in compliance with federal cost principles?

## **A. SALARIES AND WAGES**

### **Budget**

Assign personnel to the various categories according to the explanations provided which conform to NOAA/Sea Grant usage (these definitions do not necessarily conform to usage in your institution). Identify project personnel by position title as indicated on the form. Use accurate current salaries as the basis for calculating salaries and wages for each individual (do not use percentages). If funds are being requested to support a vacant position, so indicate (vac. pos.) and use a salary rate appropriate to the position. Enter months of effort as full-time equivalents, regardless of how many calendar months the individual will work on the project for both Sea Grant and matching funds. Entries must be done in separate columns as indicated on the form. Note: The number 1 audit finding is failure to keep good time and attendance records.

### **Budget Justification**

For Salaries and Wages, NOAA Grants Management Division expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Is each individual identified by position?
- Are time commitments such as hours/weeks/months per year for each position?
- Are the total charges for each position listed along with an explanation of how the costs were calculated?
- Do the combined charges for all activities of any individual exceed 100% of their time including match for the project?
- Do the time commitments and charges appear reasonable?
- Are all individuals employees of the applicant organization? (If not, explain)
- Is a cost of living increase built into the budget?
- Are salary increases justified for the grant period?

- Are any salary/personnel costs unallowable (i.e., Federal Employees or legislative personnel)

## **B. FRINGE BENEFITS**

### **Budget**

Fringe benefits are those customarily paid by the grantee institution, following its usual practices in the payment of such benefits.

### **Budget Justification**

For fringe benefits, NOAA Grants Management Division expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Are fringe benefits identified as a separate item?
- Are all the elements that comprise fringe benefits indicated?
- Do the fringe benefits and charges appear reasonable?
- Are the total charges for each person listed along with an explanation of how the charges were calculated?
- Are fringe benefits charged to federal and matching categories in the same proportion as salaries?
- Statement to the effect "Approved institutional rates"

## **C. PERMANENT EQUIPMENT**

### **Budget Justification**

For any item(s) of equipment that has a useful life of more than one year and costing \$5,000 per unit or more, a description of the item and associated costs is required.

For permanent equipment, NOAA Grants Management Division expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Is each item of equipment listed?
- If over \$5,000 is there a description of how it will be used in the project?
- If over \$5,000 has a lease vs. purchase analysis been completed? Note: Often a lease versus buy analysis is as simple as noting that it must be bought because no one leases it. In this case, the recipient should submit a statement of non-availability stating at least three sources that were contacted about leasing.
- If one has not been completed prior to submitting the minibus, it will need to be prepared and submitted through grants online prior to purchase/lease through an "equipment purchase" award action request.
- Does this equipment purchase change the budget? If so, then a rebudget request would need to be submitted.

- For each item of equipment, is the number of units, cost per unit and total cost specified?
- Is each item of equipment necessary for the successful completion of the project?
- Are the charges for each item reasonable and realistic?
- Are disallowed costs excluded?
- Contingencies charges must be excluded!  Reasonable miscellaneous can be allowed, but must be justified.

**D. EXPENDABLE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT**

**Budget Justification**

Expendable supplies and equipment must be described according to major categories, e.g., chemical reagents, computer paper and supplies, glassware, lumber, etc. Fuel for boats should be budgeted here rather than under travel. Fuel for vehicles should be budgeted under E. Travel. The justification may be based on historical costs (note as such). For Expendable Supplies and Equipment, NOAA Grants Management Division expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Are supplies itemized by type of material or nature of expense?
- For general office or business supplies, is the total charge listed along with the basis for the charge (i.e. historical use rates)?
- For other specific supply categories, is the number of units, cost per unit and total cost specified?
- Are the charges necessary for the successful completion of the project?
- Are the charges reasonable and realistic?
- Are disallowed costs (e.g. liquor, entertainment) excluded?
- Contingencies or miscellaneous charges must be excluded!

**E. TRAVEL**

**Budget Justification**

The budget narrative is required for all travel.

For Travel, NOAA Grants Management Division expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- For foreign and domestic travel, is each trip listed along with the destination, estimated mileage, method of travel, cost per mile and duration, number of travelers, per diem rate for meals and

lodging?

If actual trip details are unknown, what is the basis for the proposed travel charges?  Is the requested travel directly relevant to the successful completion of the project?  Are the travel charges reasonable and realistic.

Note: Funding for unknown foreign travel may be approved but the travel itself is not authorized until an award action request is submitted and approved.

## **G. OTHER COSTS**

### **Budget Justification**

For Other Costs, NOAA Grants Management Division expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Are items listed by type of material or nature of expense?
- For each charge, is the number of units, cost per unit and total cost specified?
- Are the charges necessary for the successful completion of the project?
- Are the same charges listed elsewhere?
- Are the charges reasonable?
- Are disallowed costs (e.g. liquor, entertainment) excluded?**
- Are charges which duplicate indirect cost items excluded?

For G.6., Sub award, NOAA Grants Management Division expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Is each sub award listed as a separate item? (Separate budgets are required for sub awards regardless of the dollar value.)
- Are the products/services to be acquired described along with the applicability of each to the project?
- Do the costs appear reasonable and realistic?
- Are any sole source contracts contemplated?
- If yes, is a sole source justification included with the application which describes why the proposed sole source entity is the only source capable of meeting the applicant's project needs?
- Are disallowed costs excluded?
- Contingencies or miscellaneous charges must be excluded!

- Are there contracts with non-US organizations?
- Do you have a CD-512 on file for each of your sub grants or subcontracts?

**H. INDIRECT COSTS Budget**

- Indirect Cost is the institution's negotiated Facilities and Administrative (Indirect) cost rate and its relation to those elements of the proposed grant budget to which that rate is to be applied.
- An institution will identify the direct costs to which indirect costs can be applied. An explanation for all indirect costs must be included in the budget justification.
- If indirect costs are allowed on federal funds, then it is allowed on the matching funds.
- Unrecovered indirect cost may be included as part of cost sharing and matching.

Note: The recipient **must use the indirect rate submitted with the application or upon award for the entire award period unless approved by the Grants Officer.** Thus, if the grantee receives a new NICRA, the grantee must submit an AAR requesting to use it and be approved to use this, before it can be used.

### **Budget Justification**

For indirect costs, NOAA Grants Management Division expects the budget justification to address the following questions:

- Are indirect costs requested?
  
- Is the correct rate being used? (If a lower rate than is authorized in the indirect cost rate agreement is being proposed you must explain why your organization is deviating from the approved rate.)
  
- Is the rate applied to the correct base?  Are charges which duplicate direct costs excluded? (If no, explain/revise.)

## Sample Budget Justifications

### Year 1

#### **A. Salaries and Wages.**

1. Senior Personnel. a. (Co) Principal Investigator(s). \$20,500. Two months salary coverage is budgeted for the Principle Investigator, who will be responsible for the project coordination and oversight , training field crews, data analysis, and report and manuscript preparation, as well as outreach activities Note: If only one PI, then the man-months of effort and dollar amount are self-explanatory. If there are multiple senior personnel, please list. For example, PI Kola Garber (2 man-months Federal/1 man-month match; \$12,000/\$6000) and Co-PI Sami Grimes (1 man-month Federal / 1 man-month match; \$5000/\$5000) to do "x".

2. Other Personnel. b. Research Associates. \$8,000 A total of 5 months of research associates time [2.3 Federal (\$10,000) +2.7 match (\$12,000)] is required to complete Year 1 of the proposed study. Sampling including comp time, preparation and Tucker trawl sampling. Create electronic data base, preparation of education and outreach graphics Note: Technicians and Other personnel need to be well justified.

**B. Fringe Benefits.** \$8,550 - Fringe benefits are calculated at 30%

**C. Permanent Equipment** \$6,500 to purchase a Sony high definition digital camera to photograph the location of spat Note: include buy vs. lease justification

**D. Expendable Supplies and Equipment.** \$3,700 \$3,700 is requested to cover: costs of a YSI model 85 Dissolved oxygen, temperature, conductivity meter and case (\$1,600), nets - 1X1m neuston net (\$500), 0.5 X 0.5m neuston net(\$300), Replacement tucker trawl (\$500), Calibration of flow meters (\$500), miscellaneous supplies(\$300)

**E. Travel 1. Domestic.** \$2000. \$2000 is requested for hotel, registration fee, per diem, and flight for the PI and student to travel to the World Aquaculture Society Meeting in New Orleans, LA from October 13-18, 2011 to present results of this study. (Note: if the exact meeting is unknown, you can explain that, too, i.e. To Be Determined).

**G. Other. 2. Statistical Consultation/Data Analyses.** \$1,000. Statistical consulting (Dr. Smith or person with similar expertise) to discuss alternative approaches for dealing with non-linear data and incorporating environmental variables in the predictions of organisms density from sampling.

**6. Sub award.** -\$3,500 to ECO Lab for analytical services for nutrient analyses: for transect studies (7 transects) x (5 samples per cycle) x (2 seasons) x \$10 per sample =\$3,500

### Year 2 Same format as year 1