Guidance for Sea Grant 2017 Annual Reports

Covering February 1, 2017 – January 31, 2018

Overview

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) is continuing to work on clarifying guidance in order better improve communication. As such, this guidance document includes the same annual report guidance that has been provided to programs over the past three years of our current four year cycle, captured in grey boxes, but also includes context and clarification where possible.

Annual reporting is a necessary part of the Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PIE) process, and an important part of program evaluation. On an annual basis, programs submit an annual report to the NSGO via PIER (Planning, Implementation and Evaluation Resource) database. Annual Report information provided in PIER is used by each program and the NSGO to evaluate progress relative to the program's strategic plan and targeted national performance measures and metrics. Annual Reports are also a way for the program to conduct a self-evaluation of its progress toward accomplishing its four-year strategic plan.

The annual review conducted by the NSGO is an important process to assess each program on an annual basis. This is an opportunity for the programs to work closely with the program officer to demonstrate annual results. Constructive dialog between the program officer and the Sea Grant program is an important step to improve the annual review process. This will also assure continued program improvement and cooperation throughout a 4-year cycle. The role of the program officer should be that of a liaison (honest-broker), communicating with programs, as all four annual reports will be included as input to the quadrennial evaluation.

The annual report is the source of much of the information that NSGO will use to describe the program to the public, NOAA, Congress, and others, and program review helps ensure the information is accurate and thoughtfully prepared. The annual report is also a reference and information resource for the program and Program Officer, to keep abreast of what programs are accomplishing. The annual report should be reviewed with an eye toward learning basic information about the financial and physical makeup of the program, what issues the program is currently working on, how they are tackling those issues, and how successfully those issues are being addressed. The annual report is also a source of information about how well the program is progressing, and whether it is changing course, seizing new opportunities, or perhaps faltering or failing to perform in some areas that are important to the programs.

Annual Reporting for each year of the 2014-2017 four year cycle:

Year 1: 2014 Annual Report (Feb. 1, 2014 – Jan. 31, 2015)
Year 2: 2015 Annual Report (Feb. 1, 2015 – Jan. 31, 2016)
Year 3: 2016 Annual Report (Feb. 1, 2016 – Jan. 31, 2017)

Year 4: 2017 Annual Report (Feb. 1, 2017 – Jan. 31, 2018)

At the end of each annual report year the final outputs will include a program annual report, the NSGO Review of said report, and a Directors response to the NSGO Review. These items will be used during the quadrennial review.

Annual Report Timeline

- Thursday, Feb 1st – NSGO sends annual report guidance to Programs
- Friday, June 8th – Program deadline for annual report input into PIER database
- Tuesday, July 31st – NSGO completion of Annual Report review; informs program review complete
- NSGO Review will not happen this year due to site visit activities

Annual Report Structure

The Annual Reports have a time timeframe of February to January of each year (e.g. Feb. 1, 2017 – Jan. 31, 2018). The annual report document is not submitted by the program as a single document, but rather as a collection of five categories of information reported to the PIER database by the program at any time during the year:

I. Estimated Level of Effort per Focus Area
II. Impacts and Accomplishments
III. Leveraged Funding
IV. Performance Measures
V. Program Metrics

PIER then collates and organizes this information into a single reviewable report. The individual categories of information can also be viewed in separate components in PIER at any time. The Annual Report can be viewed in either the downloadable version or in the separate components in PIER.

To view/print the entire Annual Report:

1. log into PIER
2. Click "Annual Report " under "Resources - Reports" section in the left hand navigation bar
3. Select program and Annual Report Year (2017) - At this point leave the other 2 drop boxes to default
4. Click "Run Report"
5. Click the "Expanded Impacts" button by "Download:" and save the downloaded report
6. View/Print in web browser

Annual Report Review Process

Once a program has completed submission of an annual report into the PIER database, the Program Officer will download the full report and notify the program via email that the report was received and that review of the report will begin. The Program Officer will work with program to clarify any errors or 'red flags', address questions, as well as discuss opportunities/challenges that programs may have. During this time the Program Officer will work with the program to make any changes to the PIER database, if appropriate. Once annual report review is finished, the PIER database status will be updated to show that the annual report information has been approved. The Program Officer will then inform the program via email that review of the annual report is complete.

Annual Reporting Guidance

Annual reports are due each year the first week of June, a specific June due date will be announced in February of each year. Please follow the instruction below on what information is being requested from programs during annual reporting.

The 2017 Annual Reports are due June 8, 2018.

Programs should submit their annual report content through the Sea Grant Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation Resources (PIER) database system, found at https://pier.seagrant.noaa.gov.

Guidance for entering the information into PIER can be found here.

To gain access to PIER, a new user should make the access request to his own program's management team before the request goes to the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO). Once approval from the program's management team is determined, 1) a member of the program's management team needs to send an email to: oar.sg.info-admin@noaa.gov requesting PIER access and 2) the new user needs to register in PIER (https://pier.seagrant.noaa.gov).

If you are a current user and are: 1) having issues accessing PIER, 2) have questions about the guidance, or 3) would like to report an issue with PIER, please send an email request to oar.sg.info-admin@noaa.gov.

The information below provides an outline of the content required for the February 1, 2017 – January 31, 2018 annual reporting period.

Annual Report Categories of Information

I. Estimated Level of Effort per Focus Area

Overview and Purpose:
The first table on the Annual Report shows the Estimated Level of Effort per Focus Area for the selected Annual Report year. Estimated level of effort data demonstrate the amount of effort in dollars dedicated to each National Focus Area:

- Healthy Coastal Ecosystems
- Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Resilience Communities and Economies
- Environmental Literature and Workforce Development

The estimated level of effort table provides context for Program Officer review of the entire annual report - budget of the program, the scale of leveraged funds, and the distribution of funding (effort) across focus areas. It provides a lens through which the Program Officer can scale program expectations for the other sections of the report.

This information is used to communicate the effort each Program contributes toward each National Focus Area and is used in the quadrennial review. The goal is to ensure that the emphasis given to merit funding ratings during the quadrennial review is related to the emphasis a program places on a specific focus area.

Reporting Guidance:

Programs should report resources directed to each focus area through PIER in the estimated level of effort section. Estimated Level of Effort data demonstrate the amount of effort in dollars dedicated to each National Focus Area. This information is accumulated across all projects on an annual basis.

The first table on this PIER Estimated Level of Effort section shows the Estimated Level of Effort by Focus Area for the selected Annual Report year. To generate an initial estimate, the system assigns 100% of the funding for each project to that project's primary focus area. If appropriate, the program can change this distribution on an individual project basis in the tables for "Distribution of Effort across Focus Areas by Project" or "Distribution of Effort across Focus Areas for Program-Level (i.e., not associated with a project) Leveraged funds".

Programs and program officers should check the 'estimated level of effort per focus area' section of the database to make sure that there aren't any projects without an assigned focus area. If there are projects without an assigned focus areas, PIER will highlight these in a grey box titled, "About Unassociated Records", there will also be a table labeled in red text listing the projects in question. The grey box titled "About Unassociated Records", will inform the user about the issue and how to resolve it. If there are any issues, program officers will need to work with the program to resolve them, but it is the responsibility of the programs to make changes in PIER. The Annual Report will also highlight projects without an assigned focus area in a separate table on the first page of the report.

The Level of Effort summary table at the top of the 'estimated level of effort per focus area' section of PIER is calculated from the level of effort information on all of your individual projects (the second table of the page), and any managed leveraged funds the program reported (third table). It is the responsibility of the programs to make changes in PIER. There are two ways a program may change the overall Estimated Level of Effort:

1. Change the values in the individual project table (PIER Project section) and the managed leveraged funds tables (PIER Leveraged Funding section).
2. Or changes to level of effort can be made on the PIER 'estimated level of effort per focus area' section: if the projects or managed-leveraged funds are associated with more than one national focus area, click edit, adjust the percentages for each national focus area, and click save.

Changes should be reflected in the top summary table.

Note: For bulk Extension, PD, and management projects that contain multiple focus areas, PIER will assign 100% to the primary focus area. A program will need to go into PIER and assign level of effort to each focus area in those projects.

II. Impacts & Accomplishments

Overview and Purpose:
These statements are used for communication products and materials, partnership building, and program evaluation. Impacts and accomplishments will be featured on the National Sea Grant website and searchable by the public.

Impact statements should effectively describe the significant economic, societal and/or environmental benefits of a program's research, extension, education and communications work. Impact statements document the verifiable results of Sea Grant's work and how our efforts have made a difference in the lives of coastal residents, communities and environments, help decision makers and constituents understand how our programs are making a difference, and enable the Sea Grant network to reflect on and improve our work.

The National Sea Grant Office uses impact statements to communicate value of Sea Grant's work, as talking points for Sea Grant and NOAA leadership, to inform legislative activities, and to demonstrate the ability of Sea Grant to take advantage of new opportunities. In addition, impacts are featured in national newsletters, national stories, social media, websites, and other communication products and materials.

Accomplishments effectively describe the key actions, activities or products resulting from Sea Grant activities. Accomplishments can reflect ongoing activities or key results that may not yet have had a significant economic, societal and/or environmental benefit, but lay the foundation for one. Accomplishments document important milestones, are Sea Grant outputs, feed into impacts, and answer questions of accountability.

Reporting Guidance:

Project impacts and/or accomplishments realized from February 1, 2017 to January 31, 2018 from either current or previously-funded projects should be entered into PIER throughout the year. Impacts and accomplishments need to be linked to at least one project(s) and connected to the 2014-2017 programs' strategic plan in PIER by selecting the appropriate strategic plan, state focus area(s), and goal(s).

Impact statements should concisely and effectively describe the significant economic, societal and/or environmental benefits. Accomplishment statements are distinct from impact statements in that they describe the key actions, activities, or products resulting from Sea Grant research, extension, education, and communications projects.

Impacts and accomplishments are publicly available on Sea Grant's website, so it is imperative that they be concise and clear. Some of the best practices and lessons learned are below.

BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED
For additional guidance on writing a strong impact and examples visit the NSGO website, here.

1. Format impacts and accomplishments using the "4 Rs": Recap, Relevance, Response, and Results;
2. In order to create concise Impacts and accomplishments please follow these length guidelines;
    a. Titles should be no more than 120 characters;
    b. Recaps should be no more than 500 characters;
    c. The body of the impacts or accomplishment (Relevance, Response, and Results) should be concise and no more than 250 words;
3. Clearly distinguish between true impacts to society, as opposed to Sea Grant accomplishments (i.e., outputs or activities);
4. Clearly define the role that Sea Grant played in the impact or accomplishment;
5. Make sure your impacts and accomplishments work as stand-alone statements by including your state or program name and by writing in the third person (example: "Arizona Sea Grant developed a regional weather preparedness toolkit that resulted in 4,716 tsunami-ready communities in Sonoran Desert." instead of "We developed a

regional weather toolkit…”);
6. Avoid jargon and specialized acronyms. If you do use them, define abbreviations and acronyms in the body of your impact or accomplishment;
7. Provide data to independently authenticate and validate the stated impact, if available and appropriate;
8. Select no more than 20 impacts to ‘Feature’. While we encourage you to select impacts from this reporting cycle, you may feature impacts from as far back as 2014. If you have already identified 20 'Feature' impacts in PIER, you will need to deselect some before you can select new ones. Featured impacts are used to populate reports, presentations, fact sheets, and handouts throughout the year. You can un-select or select to feature an impact at any time in PIER; and
9. Please make sure to review your impacts and accomplishments for typos/grammar.

Impacts and accomplishments are publicly available on the Sea Grant’s website, so it is imperative that they be concise and clear.

- Impact statements should effectively describe the significant economic, societal and/or environmental benefits of our research, extension, education and communications work.
- Accomplishment statements effectively describe the key actions, activities or products resulting from Sea Grant research, extension, education and communications work. These are distinct from impact statements in that they reflect ongoing activities or key results that may not yet have had a significant economic, societal and/or environmental benefit, but that lay the foundation for such a benefit.

Impacts and accomplishments need to be linked to one or more project(s) and connected to the 2014-2017 program strategic plan by selecting the appropriate strategic plan, state focus area(s), and goal(s).

In the guidance provided in the grey box above, it mentions to format impacts using the “4 Rs”. Listed below is additional guidance to assist you in addressing what the “4 Rs”: Recap, Relevance, Response, and Results are:

1. Recap:
    a. A one sentence recapitulation that captures the essence of the preceding three points;
2. Relevance:
    a. Why did our program conduct this effort?
    b. What needs were originally expressed for this work?
    c. What was the situation/problem and why was it a problem?
    d. What aspects of your current implementation plan are addressed?
3. Response:
    a. What did our program do?
    b. Who were the principal partners, collaborators, contributors?

    c. What were the key elements?
    d. Who was the target audience?
4. Results:
    a. What is the social, and/or economic, and/or environmental payoff of our work?
    b. Who benefitted?
    c. How?
    d. What happened as a result of the work described?
    e. How was information collected to verify the impacts (surveys, observation, etc.)?
    f. What was the geographic scope of the impact?

Note: If a program has an update to a project that is not an accomplishment or impact, the program can alternatively provide a project “Update”. Project “Update” is a new section in PIER. The purpose of "Updates" in PIER is to provide status updates for projects. The information will be used when the "Grant Progress Report" is generated, which can be uploaded to Grants Online to fulfill performance progress reporting requirements. Below are the steps for providing the updates on projects, and generating the Performance Progress Report (PPR).

1. The Updates page is listed in the left navigation bar as the last item below "Implementation - Project Management Elements."
2. To get started, click the button "Add New Record" or click “Select” to edit or view details for an existing update.
3. General Information Tab *Some Records Lock after Submitted*
    a. On this tab, you can select from a list of "Canned Responses" which provide a DRAFT Title and Narrative regarding the update. You will need to edit the information to tailor the canned response to be appropriate for the project(s). Alternatively, you can input a custom Title and Narrative. These fields lock for editing when the project is submitted to the NSGO.
4. Canned Responses include:
    a. "Project is completed”
    b. "Project is on track"
    c. "Project is on track, except for"
    d. "Project has issues"
5. Associated Projects Tab
    a. Projects currently associated with a specific update are at the top of the workspace. Associate the Update with one or more projects using the checkboxes on the right side of the table. Projects can be filtered by Award #, Project ID, or Title.

III. Leveraged Funding

Overview and Purpose:

The PIER leveraged funding page stores information about leveraged funding at the program level. These are funds that the programs use to carry out their missions in additional to federal and match. Funding resources include all NOAA federal, matching and leveraged funds that are managed by programs, and used to meet the goals and objectives of the four-year strategic plan. The three types of funds are defined below:

1. **Federal funds** provided as grants or cooperative agreements,
2. Non-federal "**matching funds**" or "**cost share**", which are required by law on most Sea Grant awards (33 U.S. Code § 1124), and
3. **Leveraged Funds** are funds above Sea Grant's appropriation and associated match. Any funds that come through the NSGO is not considered leverage funds. Leveraged funding comes from outside sources and can be of two types:
    a. **Managed** and administered by the Sea Grant institution/program. Managed leverage funding along with appropriated funds (federal and associated match) and pass thru funds that are managed by programs are used to determine level of effort per national focus area. Level of effort per national focus area is used in the quadrennial evaluation process to determine merit funding.
    b. **Influenced** by the Sea Grant institution/program. "Influenced" refers to funding not administered/managed by Sea Grant. A program may still use influenced leverage funds to accomplish the goals and objectives of its four-year plan. An example is an extension agent who is primarily funded through Land Grant, but is also considered a Sea Grant extension agent. The funding he or she receives (provided the funding is not already included as match on the Sea Grant award) would be leveraged dollars "influenced" by Sea Grant since USDA Land Grant dollars are not managed by Sea Grant.

Reporting Guidance:

Leveraged Funds are those above Sea Grant's appropriated funds and associated match. Unlike match, leveraged funds can be from federal or non-federal sources. Leveraged funds must be designated as managed (i.e., administered by the program) or influenced (not administered by the program). Leveraged funds that pass through the National Sea Grant Office should not be reported as part of this section in PIER.

On the leveraged funds page of PIER, indicate which are managed and which are influenced. If these funds are associated with a single project, please indicate that on the leveraged funds page of PIER. If they are associated with multiple projects, please enter multiple rows, each associated with a single project, and the amount that went to that project.

For the purposes of keeping the economic impacts (the Economic Impacts outcome-based performance measure) separate from the investments of leveraged funding, PIER and the annual report have separate places to report different types of funding.

Leveraged funds, are moneys invested in additional Sea Grant-related work that can be either directly managed by the program or influenced by the program. If the program helps secure additional grants or new money is leveraged as a result of previous work of the program, those would be considered leveraged funds.

Note: All grants not managed by the program are to be added to the Leveraged Funding section in PIER. For more information on the Economic Impacts performance measure, please see the section below.

IV. Performance Measures

Overview and Purpose:
The program's progress toward their program strategic plan and the Sea Grant's network's progress toward the National Strategic Plan is tracked through Performance Measure reporting. In other words, the individual program strategic plans include performance measures and targets that align with and support national performance measures for the national focus areas:

- Healthy Coastal Ecosystems
- Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Resilience Communities and Economies
- Environmental Literature and Workforce Development

Programs are required to report on national performance measures and any state program performance measures.

Reporting Guidance:

Programs will need to report the "Actual" value for the annual report timeframe of February to January (e.g. Feb. 1, 2017 – Jan. 31, 2018) for each of the performance measures (annual, not cumulative numbers):

- Number of resource managers who use ecosystem-based approaches in the management of land, water, and living resources as a result of Sea Grant activities
- Number of acres of coastal habitat protected, enhanced, or restored as a result of Sea Grant activities
- Number of fishermen, seafood processing and aquaculture industry personnel who modify their practices using knowledge gained in fisheries sustainability and seafood safety as a result of Sea Grant activities
- Number of communities that adopt/ implement sustainable economic and environmental development practices and policies as a result of Sea Grant activities

- Number of people engaged in Sea Grant-supported informal education programs
- Number of Sea Grant-supported graduates who become employed in a job related to their degree within two years of graduation

Detailed information is needed for the measures listed below. Please clearly describe Sea Grant's role and the end-users for these measures. The NSGO is required to provide detailed information on all of these measures to NOAA, DOC, and OMB.

- Number of communities that adopt/ implement hazard resiliency practices to prepare for and respond to/ minimize coastal hazardous events.
  - Identify coastal community;
  - Identify the county (or parish or borough);
  - Report the number of trainings/times technical assistance was provided; and
  - Report if the community (where hazard resiliency was provided) is improved.
  - Report them via the "Hazard Resiliency Training" page in PIER

- Number of Sea Grant tools, technologies and information services that are used by our partners/customers to improve ecosystem-based management.
  - Products are broadly defined as tools, technologies, and information services.
  - Report them via the "Products" page in PIER;
  - Describe the product/service/tool, Sea Grant's role, and the end user; and
  - Report if developed or used.
  - If applicable, an impact statement recap can be pasted as the description.
  - *Example: Rhode Island Sea Grant-Funded PI Scott Lindell has tested various materials for mussel spat collection and stocking, and have concluded that Spanish Ropes do not work well in New England waters, that Canadian Socks are best for small scale startup ventures, and that New Zealand Continuous Ropes are best for large scale ventures seeking best efficiency. Findings have been presented to existing mussel growers and are being adopted for use, and are available to new ventures, at least of which one known entity (A.T. Marine) will be utilizing these tools.*

- Number of Sea Grant products that are used to advance environmental literacy and workforce development.
  - Report environmental literacy and workforce development (ELWD) products via the "Products" page in PIER.
  - Describe the product/service, Sea Grant's role, and the end user.
  - Report if developed or used.
  - If applicable, an impact statement recap can be pasted as the description.
  - *Example: A North Carolina graduate fellow developed a traveling trunk and*

related curriculum on ocean predators, using data from a National Marine Fisheries Service-funded project and educational training through the Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence Southeast. The trunk is based with partners at North Carolina Maritime Museum and is used by North Carolina teachers.

- Economic and societal impacts derived from Sea Grant activities (market and non-market; jobs and businesses created or sustained)
  - Describe the economic impact, Sea Grant's role, the beneficiary, and any associated projects.
  - If applicable, an impact statement recap can be pasted as the description.
  - Report them via the "Economic Benefits" page in PIER
  - *Example: Crawfish farms were created in Plaquemines Parish as a result of working with experts from across both the Louisiana Sea Grant (LSG) and Louisiana State University AgCenter programs. LSG helped two local landowners revitalize old existing ponds and construct new commercial ponds. One landowner with crawfish production at a small scale level, one landowner with crawfish at a commercial production level with more expansion in acreage planned for next year.*

Definitions of each performance measure can be found on the NSGO Inside Sea Grant website here.

Please read through the detailed information that is needed for the measures listed above for Hazard Resiliency Training, Products (EBM and ELWD), and Economic Benefits. Review of program submission will be looking for details in the descriptions based on the requested information above.

For the purposes of keeping the economic benefits (the economic impacts and benefits outcome-based performance measure) separate from the investments of leveraged funding, PIER and the annual report have separate places to report different types of funding.

- The Economic Impacts performance measure highlights change in economic impact - the jobs, businesses, dollars, and non-market value - that communities or businesses generate or save due to Sea Grant assistance (i.e., providing information to help communities, industries or businesses expand, make better decisions or avoid mistakes). Sea Grant provides the information and training that informs business decisions, and in some cases firms create or sustain jobs as a result. Moreover, Sea Grant activities can have positive effects on restoring, maintaining or improving environmental goods and ecosystem services, broadly defined as natural capital.
- Leveraged funds, on the other hand, are moneys invested in additional Sea Grant-related work that can be either directly managed by the program or influenced by the program. If

the program helps secure additional grants or new money is leveraged as a result of previous work of the program, those would be considered leveraged funds.

Reporting economic benefits and impacts under the economic impact performance measure should be focused on economic changes: value added or saved as a result of Sea Grant science and information delivery. This measure is purposely narrowly focused on the types of market and non-market impacts that are generated or saved due to Sea Grant assistance.

- Reported businesses created/sustained should have associate jobs.
- Jobs created/sustained should include the wages associated with those jobs. (www.bls.gov).

Filters for this measure; if the activity describes any of the below criteria it shouldn't be reported under the economic impacts performance measure per the guidance definition, here:

- Sea Grant direct investments
- Leveraged Funds
- Existing positions filled by SG-trained persons (Unless it is required training only available through SG)
- Any values using economic impact multipliers
- Volunteer hours
- Statistical lives saved

Note: if it's too complicated, it should be reported as an Impact or Accomplishment. Performance reporting is not expected to capture everything that the program does.

A Note on Attribution: The program has to play an essential role in order to report on this (or any) performance measure. We define essential as described by stakeholders and partners as essential for the project's ultimate success.

V. Program Metrics

Overview and Purpose:
Program metrics are used to explain the scope and work of the National Sea Grant College Program.

Reporting Guidance:

Programs will need to report the "Actual" value for the annual report timeframe of February to January of each year (e.g. Feb. 1, 2017 – Jan. 31, 2018) for each of the program metrics (annual, not cumulative numbers). Definitions of each metric can be found on the NSGO website, here. Sea Grant's national metrics include:

- Sea Grant Staffing
- Core Funding Proposals

- Volunteer Hours
- Sea Grant Financially-Supported Students and Fellows and Degrees (Undergraduate, Graduate)
- Number of Preschool (P)-12 Students Reached Through Sea Grant-Trained Educators or Directly through Sea Grant Education Programs
- Number of P-12 Educators that participated in Sea Grant Education Programs
- SG-Sponsored/Organized Events
- Attendees at SG-Sponsored/Organized Events
- Public or Professional Presentations
- Attendees at Public or Professional Presentations
- Clean Marina Certifications
- HACCP Training

The following metrics will be entered by the NSGO:

- Sea Grant Knauss Fellowships
- Sea Grant/NMFS Fellowships (New and Continuing)
- Number of peer-reviewed publications –
    - Sea Grant-funded documents are submitted by the Sea Grant programs to the National Sea Grant Library on an ongoing basis. To be included in the 2017 Annual Report, documents for this reporting period are due to the National Sea Grant Library by June 8, 2017; the NSGL will report Number of peer-reviewed publications to the National Sea Grant Office. For guidelines, submission forms and other information, visit http://nsgl.gso.uri.edu/about/