2022-2023 SEA GRANT COMPANION OMNIBUS GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2006727

Released November 2020
(*Updated September 2021: removed 90-2 references*)

This companion guidance document is offered by the National Sea Grant Office as a helpful tool to programs reviewing the 2022-2023 Sea Grant Omnibus Application Requirements. It provides additional useful tips, resources, screenshots, and other pieces of information beyond the requirements to further aid in the preparation of the omnibus application package.

This companion guidance follows the same format as the 2022-2023 Sea Grant Omnibus Application Requirements document and, where applicable, lists additional information under specific sections. Examples of how supplemental information is presented include:

Helpful narratives:

<u>1. Project Narrative</u>

Project Narratives should be written such that they are able to stand on their own if an outside person were to ask what Sea Grant does, hopes to accomplish, and how Sea Grant programs are managed and staffed....

Links and external resources:

<u>2. Budget Narrative</u>
a) Sea Grant 90-4 Form
The Sea Grant 90-4 Form can be found here:
http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/SeaGrantFormsandTemplates.aspx.

If no additional guidance is included here, the section will look like this:

A. Eligible Applicants
No additional guidance.

Sea Grant programs are also strongly encouraged to engage with their federal program officer early in the application development process to ensure complete and correct applications are submitted.

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I. Program Description
No additional guidance.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability
Program directors will receive funding level guidance from the director of the National Sea Grant College Program. If you have specific questions related to your funding, please ask your federal program officer. For example, some Sea Grant programs receive additional funds either through Sea Grant or other parts of NOAA and/or the federal government. These funds should not be included in your omnibus application unless your federal program officer directs you to include them.

B. Project/Award Period
No additional guidance.

C. Type of Funding Instrument
No additional guidance.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants
No additional guidance.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement
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. In addition, the cumulative match for each year of the grant must be at least 50% of the cumulative federal request for that year. For example, year 1 match must be at least 50% of year 1 federal dollars, year 2 match must be at least 50% of year 2 federal dollars, and so on.

Match may be in the form of selected "in-kind" services, unrecovered indirect (see below), or additional funds from a specified institution, agency, industry, or non-federal program. No funds from federal entities can be used as match, unless specified in their respective statutes. Funds are still considered as federal for purposes of matching even when initially given to a state or local agency. According to 2 C.F.R. 200.96, "in-kind" contributions mean the value of non-cash contributions (i.e., property and services) that benefit a federally assisted project or program; and are contributed by non-Federal third parties, without charge, to a non-federal entity under a federal award.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility
No additional guidance.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package
The omnibus application package is available from http://www.grants.gov.

You can find the application package by clicking this link: NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2006727, or by following the instructions below:

Since this is an institutional opportunity, it does not show up when you search for it from the grants.gov homepage. Instead, to find the opportunity, hover over the "Applicants" tab and then select "How to Apply for Grants."

Then click on "Search for Opportunity Package."

Then, fill out the query with the opportunity number, NOAA-OAR-SG-2022-2006727, and hit "Search."

B. Content of the Application

<u>1. Project Narrative</u>

a) Project Proposal Narrative
Project proposal narratives should be written such that they are able to stand on their own if an outside person were to ask what Sea Grant does, hopes to accomplish, and how Sea Grant programs are managed and staffed. The project proposal narrative should be a primarily forward-looking document that concentrates on a Sea Grant program's plans and outcomes for the next two years in alignment with its strategic plan. A program's omnibus application may have multiple projects within the project narrative. Please pay attention to project titles and attempt to use professional, clear, concise, and informative titles as these may be shared with agency leadership or Congress. Do not use acronyms, or shorthand language. Consult your federal program officer with any questions you may have on how your program's work should be captured in the following categories described below.

- Management/Administration Projects - The management and program administration project should contain the project summary, budget, and new or revised material not covered in the program's strategic/implementation plans - such as the program organization chart, management team information, management objectives, advisory and oversight structure, oversight and reporting mechanisms, and a short resume/CV for the director (PI). If the program has completed an overall data management plan for the entire omnibus, it should also be included here.
- Program Development - No additional guidance for the application process. For more information regarding implementation and use of program development funds, please contact your federal program officer.
- Research Projects – For research project selection guidance see Section IV. G of this document.
- Communication, Extension, and Education Projects - Sea Grant communications, extension, and education projects may be from one to two years in duration, and together should describe the totality of your communication, extension, and education efforts over the next two years. Short resumes/CVs for other program key personnel (i.e., research coordinator, extension lead, education lead, communications lead, etc.) should be included with their associated project descriptions. If these key program personnel change during the performance period of the omnibus award, a "Change in Key Person Specified in the Application" Award Action Request should be submitted via Grants Online along with the new key program personnel's CV.
- Future Competed Projects - If you have more than one "Future Competed Project" placeholder, please use names that clearly identify these projects as future competed placeholders, and that also describes the distinction between them, for example: Future Competed 2023 Research Projects and Future Competed 2023 Fellowship Projects.

Each project within the omnibus application must be described within the following documents:

b) Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire

As detailed below, an individual Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire must be submitted for projects and/or sub-projects included in an omnibus package that meet certain criteria. While the omnibus package does not have to be re-organized or broken out by projects/sub-projects that may or may not require an environmental questionnaire, each questionnaire should reference the project title and provide a clear descriptor of the sub-project and action as described in the omnibus application.

It is recommended that programs work with their federal program officer to submit NEPA packages via email as soon as they are available in order to allow more time for NEPA review.

(1) **When to Complete an Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire**
The categories of activities listed in the Omnibus Application Requirements briefly summarize the questions you will encounter on the Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire. When considering your program's projects, and reviewing this list, determine whether or not you would answer "n/a" to all of the categories on the list. If the project is not applicable to any of the items, then you do not need to submit an abbreviated questionnaire. Please do not submit questionnaires that respond "n/a" to all questions as this is not helpful in the review process.

However, when considering your program's projects, if a project might have a response to one of these items on the listed activities, then please fill out a questionnaire so the federal program officer has the information necessary to conduct an environmental review.

Below are examples and types of actions for which Sea Grant programs are expected to submit a completed questionnaire:

- RESEARCH
All research projects inherently involve the category of 'research' as outlined in the list of activities that require a questionnaire. Therefore, competitive and noncompetitive research projects (including social science research) must have separate completed abbreviated questionnaires for each project submitted with the omnibus package.

- EXTENSION AND EDUCATION
Extension activities must adhere to the same requirements and exceptions noted in the application requirements. NOAA legal counsel has confirmed that each individual extension activity (e.g., a Citizen Science Monitoring Program, Aquaculture Extension Model Shellfish Farm, etc.) that triggers an environmental compliance concern requires an individual environmental review by the National Sea Grant Office.

We understand that many Sea Grant programs combine their extension activities into a single extension project. In such cases, the Sea Grant program should assess the omnibus extension project(s) and determine if individual actions (i.e., sub-projects within the larger extension project) trigger any of the categories of activities outlined in the application. If an action includes one of the described activities (e.g., research, permits, biological take, etc.), then that action must have a separate abbreviated questionnaire submitted to provide the details necessary to assess that action for environmental compliance. When an extension agent provides expertise or advice on a project funded externally to the omnibus award (e.g., a grant or award obtained from an entity outside of Sea Grant), the environmental compliance responsibility lies in the funding agency for that project, and a questionnaire should not be submitted as part of the omnibus package.

Education activities, whether included in the extension portion of the omnibus or as a separate section, must also adhere to the same requirements and exceptions. This is particularly important for education projects that include any interaction with the environment (i.e., any field activities and trips, especially those that include field work such as environmental sample collection, seining, plankton tows, sediment cores, etc.).

Some extension and education projects may not have complete details determined at the time the omnibus is submitted (e.g., exact site location for activities). Please provide details in the questionnaire that cover the possible parameters of the project (e.g., a list of the possible sites based on previous work) so the federal program officer can assess whether the activity, under all likely circumstances, will meet environmental compliance.

Per the omnibus guidance, please note the few exceptions of projects or actions that do not need an abbreviated environmental compliance questionnaire by stating "This project does not require an Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire, as it is covered under the [INSERT EXCEPTION] exception in the federal funding opportunity." Requesting, collection, and submitting this additional information after the omnibus submission deadline will delay the final approval of the omnibus package, so the program should do their best to preemptively supply all necessary information for projects and actions that meet the listed criteria.

(2) How to Complete an Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire
The questionnaire should be filled out thoroughly and with sufficient detail that the federal program officer can accurately assess environmental compliance and potential impact of the activity on the environment. Training webinars reviewing how to complete an Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire were provided to Sea Grant programs by the National Sea Grant Office (NEPA 101 and NEPA 202) and can be viewed here: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation

c) Data Management Plan
No additional guidance.

d) Institutional Review Board (IRB) [if applicable]
No additional guidance.

e) Do not include the following for each project:
No additional guidance.

<u>2. Budget Narrative</u>

As a reminder, additional budget narrative guidance provided by NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) can be found [HERE](#).

a) Sea Grant 90-4 Form
To facilitate review of the budget narrative, please **place each form in the following order**, combine them into a single PDF document titled budget narrative, and then upload that single PDF to your grants.gov application. If possible, a PDF bookmarked by project ID would be appreciated!
- Overall and annual 90-4 form for the entire omnibus
- Overall and annual 90-4 form for project 1
- Budget justification narrative for project 1
- Overall and annual 90-4 form for project 2
- Budget justification narrative for project 2
- Overall and annual 90-4 form for project 3
- Budget justification narrative for project 3
- etc.

Ensure that each Sea Grant 90-4 form is properly filled out with the project ID number, and start and end dates. When printing the Excel form to PDF, please ensure the full sheet is captured and no information is cut-off.

It is very important that the total federal and non-federal matching fund amounts from the Sea Grant 90-4 forms equal the total application federal and non-federal match amounts on the SF- 424 and SF-424A form. Failure to do so may delay approval of the application, or impose conditions on the grant preventing funding or execution of certain activities, until all questions are satisfactorily answered. Detailed guidance on filling out the standard federal forms and assurances can be found in Section IV.B.3.

Both the Sea Grant 90-4 form and SF-424A form break down the budget request into categories, but those categories are not identically labeled. The table below shows how items on a SF-424A form correspond to items on the Sea Grant 90-4 form. The funding amounts placed on each form in the corresponding categories should match. If you have additional questions about filling these forms, please talk with your federal program officer.

Relationship between Information on a Sea Grant 90-4 Form and SF-424A Form

Sea Grant 90-4 Form	SF-424A Form	
	6. Object Classes	
A. 2. Total Salary and Wages	a.	Personnel
B. Fringe Benefits	b.	Fringe Benefits
E. Total Travel	c.	Travel
C. Permanent Equipment	d.	Equipment
D. Expendable Supplies and Equipment	e.	Supplies
Include as category under G. "Other" called "Contracts" or "Contractual Services"	f.	Contractual
Almost never used, would be categorized under G. "Other"	g.	Construction
F. Publication and Documentation Costs, PLUS everything in G. "Other", including sub-awards, but excluding any contracts for services or construction	h.	Other

b) Budget Justification Narratives
Each project must include a budget justification narrative that explains budget items for each year in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested. Please see below for more guidance on what kind of information should be included in the budget justification. Contingencies or miscellaneous charges may not be included in your budget.
The budget justification can be a text document that is converted into a PDF for upload into grants.gov after being combined with the 90-4 forms.

For additional guidance on object class categories, please see the NOAA GMD Grants Narrative Guidance.

3. Overall Omnibus Application

a) SF-424 Form "Application for Federal Assistance"
Critical information to include:
- Program Director (should be listed in Section 8F: "Person to be contacted on matters involving this project")
- Grant start date of February 1, 2022 and an end date of January 31, 2024
- Accurate EIN and DUNS for the host institution
- Authorized representative identified and signature of authorized representative or designee must match
- Funding amounts - The National Sea Grant Office will send written notice of your institutional allocation for FY 2022 to FY 2023. It will include your base funding and merit funding, and may include additional Sea Grant-appropriated or pass through funds that have been arranged with your program. This allocation is subject to the availability of resources.
  - If you have questions about your institutional allocation funding amount, contact your federal program officer first.

- ○ You may not request more federal funds than are provided in the allocation without advance approval from the National Sea Grant Office and you may not pledge matching funds less than 50% of your federal request, unless a waiver justified by statute is granted.
- Total amounts listed in the SF-424, SF-424A, and Sea Grant 90-4 forms must be the same. Please ensure applications are completed as accurately as possible, and in accordance with the guidance. Failure to do so may result in rejection, delayed approval of the application, or impose conditions on the grant preventing funding or execution of certain activities until all questions are satisfactorily answered.
- More information about this form and further instructions for filling out a SF-424 form can be found on grants.gov here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424-instructions.html

b) SF-424A Form "Instructions for Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs"
Critical information to include:
- This form is used to report the budget breakdown of your application's federal funding request **and associated matching dollars by year**, for the two years of the omnibus grant. The SF-424A filled out in grants.gov should be laid out as shown below. Failure to do so will result in a return of your application for revision and delays in processing.
- Section B must have separate columns for federal and non-federal dollars by year.

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. Sea Grant Omnibus Yr 1 - FEDERAL	11.417	$	$	$ 1,000,000.00	$	$ 1,000,000.00
2. Sea Grant Omnibus Yr 1 - MATCH	11.417				500,000.00	500,000.00
3. Sea Grant Omnibus Yr2 - FEDERAL	11.417			1,000,000.00		1,000,000.00
4. Sea Grant Omnibus Yr2 - MATCH	11.417				500,000.00	500,000.00
5. Totals		$	$	$ 2,000,000.00	$ 1,000,000.00	$ 3,000,000.00

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SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total (5)
	(1) Sea Grant Omnibus Yr 1 - FEDERAL	(2) Sea Grant Omnibus Yr 1 - MATCH	(3) Sea Grant Omnibus Yr2 - FEDERAL	(4) Sea Grant Omnibus Yr2 - MATCH	
a. Personnel	$ 300,000.00	$ 100,000.00	$ 300,000.00	$ 100,000.00	$ 800,000.00
b. Fringe Benefits	100,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	400,000.00
c. Travel	100,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	400,000.00
d. Equipment	100,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	400,000.00
e. Supplies	100,000.00		100,000.00		200,000.00
f. Contractual					
g. Construction					
h. Other	100,000.00		100,000.00		200,000.00
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	800,000.00	400,000.00	800,000.00	400,000.00	$ 2,400,000.00
j. Indirect Charges	200,000.00	100,000.00	200,000.00	100,000.00	$ 600,000.00
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	$ 1,000,000.00	$ 500,000.00	$ 1,000,000.00	$ 500,000.00	$ 3,000,000.00
7. Program Income	$	$	$	$	$

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SECTION C - NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES				
(a) Grant Program	(b) Applicant	(c) State	(d) Other Sources	(e)TOTALS
8. Sea Grant Omnibus Yr 1 - MATCH	$ 500,000.00	$	$	$ 500,000.00
9. Sea Grant Omnibus Yr 2 - MATCH	500,000.00			500,000.00
10.				
11.				
12. TOTAL (sum of lines 8-11)	$ 1,000,000.00	$	$	$ 1,000,000.00

SECTION D - FORECASTED CASH NEEDS				
	Total for 1st Year	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
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13. Federal	$ 1,000,000.00	$ 250,000.00	$ 250,000.00	$ 250,000.00	$ 250,000.00
14. Non-Federal	$ 500,000.00	125,000.00	125,000.00	125,000.00	125,000.00
15. TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	$ 1,500,000.00	$ 375,000.00	$ 375,000.00	$ 375,000.00	$ 375,000.00

SECTION E - BUDGET ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT				
(a) Grant Program	FUTURE FUNDING PERIODS (YEARS)			
	(b)First	(c) Second	(d) Third	(e) Fourth
16. Sea Grant Omnibus Yr 2 - FEDERAL	$ 1,000,000.00	$	$	$
17.				
18.				
19.				
20. TOTAL (sum of lines 16 - 19)	$ 1,000,000.00	$	$	$

SECTION F - OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION	
21. Direct Charges:	22. Indirect Charges: 38.5% fixed IDC rate on modified direct costs
23. Remarks:	

d) SF-424B Assurances
No additional guidance.

e) CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying
No additional guidance.

f) SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
No additional guidance.

C. Unique entity identifier and System and Award Management (SAM)
No additional guidance.

D. Submission Dates and Times
No additional guidance.

E. Intergovernmental Review
No additional guidance.

F. Funding Restrictions
No additional guidance.

G. Other Submission Requirements

For competitive projects refer to the [National Sea Grant College Program's National Competition Policy](#) and the [Omnibust Application Requirements Document](#).

For each merit reviewed, non-competed project, the external peer-reviews need to include title, project, and the name and affiliation of each reviewer. Use a filename that identifies each review by a title and project number that matches the title and project number you will use for that project in your omnibus application. If there were follow-up conversations and changes that address problems raised by the reviewers, please include a short summary describing the changes in the review file as well. If questions or concerns arise from the reviews, please contact your federal program officer before your official application submission so you can talk through any issues you might anticipate with their review. As a reminder, these reviews should not be submitted with your application package, and should instead be emailed directly to your federal program officer.

H. Address for Submitting Proposals
No additional guidance.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria
No additional guidance.

B. Review and Selection Process
No additional guidance.

C. Selection Factors
No additional guidance.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates
No additional guidance.

VI. Award Administration Information
No additional guidance.

VII. Agency Contacts

No additional guidance.

VIII. Other Information

General Reference Information

- National Sea Grant Office, Policy for the Allocation of Funds, FY 2014 and Beyond (2014), available at http://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/0/Documents/network_resources/resources/Sea%20Grant%20Policy%20for%20the%20Allocation%20of%20Funds%20FY%202014%20and%20Beyond%20-%209-23-14.pdf
- Department of Commerce Current Standard Terms and Conditions, available at https://osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20Conditions%2030%20April%202019.pdf, or at https://go.usa.gov/xRpRU
- Department of Commerce Grants Manual, available at http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Grants%20Manual%20-%2024%20October%202016.pdf
- Grants Online Recipient Assistance for Award Action Requests, available at http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/grantsonline/Documents/AAR_Assistance/Recipient_AAR_Help.pdf
- Grants Online Quick Reference Guide for Grantees, available at http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/grantsonline/Documents/Quick%20Reference%20Guides/GrantRecipients_Quick_Ref_Guide.pdf
- Department of Commerce Grants Policy website: http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/default.htm