

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
NOAA COASTAL OCEAN PROGRAM GRANTS PROPOSAL APPLICATION  
PACKAGE  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0384**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.**

Beginning in late FY1998, the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Ocean Service (NOS), Coastal Ocean Program (COP) was able to provide direct financial assistance in the form of discretionary research grants and cooperative agreements under its own program for the management of coastal ecosystems. COP financial assistance had been previously provided to non-profit organizations and educational institutions through joint participation in the Sea Grant omnibus vehicle.

The COP is part of a unique federal-academic partnership designed to provide predictive capability for managing coastal ecosystems. Under the authority of [33 U.S.C. Section 1442](#), "Research program respecting possible long-range effects of pollution, overfishing, and man-induced changes of ocean ecosystems", COP supports research on critical issues associated with the Nation's estuaries, coastal waters and the Great Lakes, and translates its finding into accessible information for coastal managers, planners, lawmakers and the public. COP's projects are multi-disciplinary, large in scale and long in duration (usually three to five years). Grants monies are available for related activities. Multi-year funding will be funded incrementally.

All potential NOAA COP grant recipients are required to submit the Standard Form used by NOAA for Federal grants as follows: SF-424; the SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs; the SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs; the CD-511 and 512 Certifications and the SF-LLL (lobbying form) if applicable.

At the time of application, COP grant applicants will be asked to include a COP Project Summary (Abstract) Form in addition to the standard application requirements for Federal grants. A copy of the proposed form is attached with this request. The main purpose of this information collection is to enable COP to provide a summary of each proposed project. The information gathered will enable COP to properly evaluate proposals in a collaborative environment with its partner agencies.

Grant recipients will also be required to file COP Annual Progress Reports and a COP Project Final Report. The proposed formats for this information are attached to this request. The COP Annual Progress Report and the COP Project Final Report provide a consistent, detailed format to grantees.

### **Project Summary (Abstract) Form:**

The Project Summary (Abstract) Form provided at time of application includes a statement of objectives, methods to be employed and the significance of the proposed activity to the advancement of knowledge or education. This information collection shall not be more than one page in length and must be written in the third person. The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly and allows the respondents to summarize these key points in their own words.

### **Reporting Requirements:**

Consistency in reporting requirements for competitive research grant programs is desirable and this is behind COP's efforts in proposing a standardized format/form. In accordance with current OMB guidance, recipients are responsible for managing and monitoring each project, program, sub-award, function or activity supported by an award. The Federal awarding agency prescribes the frequency with which the performance reports shall be submitted, which typically shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or less frequently than annually. A final report will be required upon expiration or termination of grant support.

#### **Format – Annual Performance Report:**

The format chosen provides the minimum information required by this program to evaluate the project's progress with respect to its goals and objectives, schedule for accomplishments, and application to resource management. It has been determined that with respect to research, semi-annual reports are an unnecessary reporting burden, especially for large multi-investigator projects typical of the COP. The request for annual performance reports has been accepted and approved by the NOAA Grants Management Division for COP-sponsored grants or cooperative agreements.

#### **Format – Final Report:**

The use of the Project Final Report format provides the level of detail required to evaluate the effort invested by investigators and staff on project management; any actual accomplishments and research findings; and what goals and objectives were attained. The proposed final report format is compatible with the format in use by other agencies that participate in joint projects with COP, e.g. the National Science Foundation (NSF).

## **2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used.**

### **Project Summary (Abstract) Form:**

The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly by the reviewing officials in the competitive process. It is submitted at time of application.

### **Annual Report:**

For the proposed progress report format, the first section is taken from the COP-implementation plan and has some advantages in that previously-funded investigators will be familiar with the format. Use of this format will provide COP with the necessary information required to evaluate performance for the purpose of renewal of research grants. Since COP's grants are typically three to five years in duration, one annual report will be requested at the end of each year funded. A copy of the annual progress report is maintained in the COP Program Information File and it is electronically transmitted to the Grants Management Division (GMD) through the NOAA Grants On Line system.

### **Final Report:**

Final reports are reviewed to determine if any information products were delivered by the grantee. In addition, the final report is used as a management tool by program managers to determine recipient compliance and performance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the information gathered has utility. NOAA will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Although the information collected is not expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications. Should NOAA Fisheries Service decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

### **3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.**

There is Web availability of the grant application kit on the COP's home page at: <http://www.cop.noaa.gov/>. The Web site offers the public the ability to print all COP – required forms with accompanying instructions from the internet. Applicants are able to electronically submit grant applications at: [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and the progress reports can be submitted electronically by those recipients having electronic access at: <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/flows/home/Login/verifyLogin.do>.

### **4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

No duplication has been identified.

**5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

The program does not significantly impact small business entities.

**6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.**

Summaries are submitted only at the time of application and efficient review of the proposals is not possible without these documents. If annual and final reports are not submitted, monitoring of grant performance would be much more difficult and there would be less benefit to other professionals from the projects.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.**

This request does not require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

**8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and the data elements to be recorded, disclosed or reported.**

A Federal Register Notice published on July 7, 2009 (74 FR 32106) solicited public comments on this submission. No comments were received.

**9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

No payments or gifts are provided (other than grant monies).

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

As stated on the summary and report forms, grant files are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act](#) (FOIA). However, the forms also state, unpublished research results shall not be published without prior permission from the recipient.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

There are no sensitive questions.

**12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).**

Requirement	# of Annual Respondents	# of Responses per Respondent	Total Responses	Average Time per Response	Total Annual Response Time (Hours)
Summary	200	1	200	30 minutes	100
Annual Report	50	1	50	5 hours	250
Final Report	50	1	50	10 hours	500
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>300</b>		<b>300</b>		<b>850</b>

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection.**

No capital expenditures are required.

In the research grant environment, applicants have staff dedicated to the submission of proposals, including clerical support. Both time and dollar costs are charged to grantors under the general and administrative overhead line item on the proposal budget. This includes hours spent for preparation of the other reports.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government.**

The total annualized cost burden to the Government for conducting the collection and handling the information submitted is estimated at \$950.00. This does not include costs for secondary uses of the information or costs for reviewing the annual and final progress reports. The summary form is the only collection of information incurring additional expense. This estimate is based on staff time per response of five minutes for the project summary. A salary cost of \$38/hr was used. The annualized total cost is estimated as follows:

5 min per project summary review (5/60) x 200 annual respondents x \$38.00/hr = \$634.00.

**15. Explain the reason for any program changes or adjustments.**

The number of applications and related documents has decreased, due to a change in the way the Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research program competitions are announced. For most programs, the solicitations now name a specific region and the

priorities that need to be addressed in that region. Previously, the applicants had more leeway in submitting their own ideas for priorities and regions.

**16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publications.**

Not applicable. Grants products may be published, but not applications or reports.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reason why display would be inappropriate.**

Not applicable.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.**

Not applicable.

**B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATICAL METHODS**

This collection does not employ statistical methods.