

Department of the Treasury  
Departmental Offices

**Application and Reports for the Direct Component and the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program of the Office of Gulf Coast Restoration, Office of Fiscal Assistant Secretary**

*Supporting Statement and Request for Clearance*  
OMB No. 1505-0250

**1. Circumstances necessitating the collection of information**

Authorized under the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE Act) (P.L. 112-141), the Department of the Treasury implements several provisions of the Act, more specifically the Direct Component and the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program. These programs require Treasury to award grants from the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund (Trust Fund) equally to the five Gulf Coast States impacted by the *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill. The Direct Component recipients include Alabama, 23 Florida counties, Louisiana, 20 Louisiana parishes, Mississippi, and Texas. Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas equally share the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program allocations from Trust Fund deposits.

In general, for the Direct Component, the following projects, programs, and activities are eligible for funding under the Direct Component, based on the eligibility criteria described in Treasury's regulations. *See 31 CFR 34.201.*

- (1) Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region
- (2) Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, and natural resources
- (3) Implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal, or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring
- (4) Workforce development and job creation
- (5) Improvements to or on State parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill
- (6) Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure
- (7) Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure
- (8) Planning assistance
- (9) Administrative costs
- (10) Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast region, including recreational fishing
- (11) Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region.

For the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program, each Gulf Coast State may establish one or more centers of excellence to focus on science, technology, and monitoring research only on the Gulf Coast Region based on five eligible disciplines. *See 31 CFR 34.704.*

- (1) Coastal and deltaic sustainability, restoration, and protection, including solutions and technology that allow citizens to live in a safe and sustainable manner in a coastal delta in the Gulf Coast Region
- (2) Coastal fisheries and wildlife ecosystem research and monitoring in the Gulf Coast Region
- (3) Offshore energy development, including research and technology to improve the sustainable and safe development of energy resources in the Gulf of Mexico
- (4) Sustainable and resilient growth, economic and commercial development in the Gulf Coast Region
- (5) Comprehensive observation, monitoring, and mapping of the Gulf of Mexico.

## **2. Use of the data**

The collection information: (1) identifies eligible recipients and activities; (2) determines the appropriate amount of funding; (3) ensures compliance with the RESTORE Act, the regulation (31CFR Part 34), and Federal laws and policies on grants (*Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards 2 CFR 200, herein OMB Uniform Guidance*); (4) tracks recipients' progress; and (5) reports on the effectiveness of the program.

## **3. Use of information technology**

Treasury uses the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS's) GrantSolutions.gov shared-service provider system to manage the application submission process. Eligible recipients complete fillable forms and return the grant application electronically via GrantSolutions.gov. Eligible recipients complete fillable multiyear plan forms and an operational self-assessment form electronically and return those forms directly to Treasury. Eligible recipients enter progress information on fillable forms and submit the progress reports electronically through GrantSolutions.gov. Data from grant applications and reports are stored electronically.

## **4. Efforts to identify duplication**

The information is not known to overlap with any other data collected under previously approved information collections.

## **5. Impact on small businesses and entities**

This collection is limited to certain states, counties, and parishes named as eligible entity recipients in the RESTORE Act and regulation. All efforts have been made to minimize burden on small entities therein.

## **6. Consequences of less frequent collection and obstacles to burden reduction**

Collection is at a minimum: grant applications for when funds are available; semi-annual reporting to assess progress of the activity funded by the awarded grant; multiyear plan submission subject to the eligible recipient's time tables; and operational self-assessment updated annually.

## **7. Circumstances requiring special information collection**

There are no special circumstances causing the information collection to be conducted in a manner described in 5 CFR 1320.6.

## **8. Solicitation of comments on information collection**

Treasury published a notice soliciting comments on information collection in the *Federal Register* on April 28, 2016. *See 81 FR 25493.* Treasury received comments from five respondents.

Two respondents requested more detailed directions to assist eligible recipients prepare multiyear implementation plans and address best available science grant application requirements for projects designed to protect or restore natural resources. They also requested sample application forms. In response to the comments, Treasury changed the multiyear plan matrix and narrative forms by providing clearer directions to help eligible recipients complete their forms. Treasury modified the grant application narrative form to clarify the information needed to address the best available science requirements. Treasury will continue to offer technical assistance to eligible recipients as they prepare application and reporting forms.

Two respondents observed that some hyperlinks on the Environmental Checklist were inoperable and recommended several clarifying edits. In response, Treasury modified the form to address the comments and corrected the hyperlinks. Periodically, Treasury will review the Environmental Checklist links and resolve inoperable hyperlinks.

One respondent raised questions about the OMB Uniform Guidance. Although the comments do not apply to the information collection directly, Treasury offers technical assistance to eligible recipients on the Uniform Guidance. A vendor engaged by Treasury conducted six grants management training classes in the Gulf Coast region for personnel from eligible states, counties, and parishes. Treasury will continue to offer grants management technical assistance to eligible applicants and recipients in the future.

One respondent observed that the 3% administrative cost cap under the RESTORE Act appears to be insufficient to develop an application and manage a grant. Although the comment does not apply to the information collection directly, Treasury provides technical assistance and meets with eligible recipients to discuss and help resolve issues related to RESTORE Act-specific

requirements (e.g., the 3% administrative costs cap and indirect costs). Treasury will continue to offer this technical assistance to eligible recipients in the future.

One respondent asked whether an eligible recipient could submit a grant application that includes financing costs for a project begun before grant funds are available for distribution. Although the comment does not apply to the information collection directly, Treasury has addressed this and other policy matters in frequently asked questions (FAQs) and guidance documents published periodically on its website and distributed to eligible recipients. Treasury will continue to provide FAQs to eligible recipients and publish guidance documents on its website.

One respondent indicated it faced startup costs associated with the cost of applying for and receiving RESTORE Act grants. However, the cost of applying for federal grants in general is not specifically related to the RESTORE Act and this information collection.

#### **9. Provision of payments to record keepers**

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents.

#### **10. Assurance of confidentiality**

The Department is subject to all Federal regulations with respect to confidentiality of the information provided in this collection of information and provides no other assurances of confidentiality to respondents.

#### **11. Justification of sensitive questions**

No personally identifiable information (PII) is collected.

## **12. Justification**

<b>Reporting</b>	# Respondents	# Responses Per Respondent	Total annual Responses	Hours per response	Total Burden	Cost to Respondent (@ \$150 per hrs.)
Operational Self-Assessment	48	1	48	2	96	\$14,400
Multiyear Plan	47	1	23.5	5	117.5	\$17,625
Application - Direct Component	47	1	47	8	376	\$56,400
Application - Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program	5	1	5	8	40	\$6,000
Direct Component Activity Milestones Report	47	2	94	1	94	\$14,100
Direct Component Activity Status of Performance Report	47	2	94	2	188	\$28,200
Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program Activity Milestones Report	5	2	10	1	10	\$1,500
Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program Status of Performance Report	5	2	10	2	20	\$3,000
<b>Total Reporting</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>331.5</b>	<b>2.840</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>\$141,225</b>

<b>Recordkeeping</b>	# Record keepers				Total Burden	Cost to Respondent (@ \$150 per hrs.)
Application - Direct Component	47				4,700	\$705,000
Application - Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program	5				500	\$75,000
<b>Total Recordkeeping</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5,200</b>	<b>\$780,000</b>
<b>Total Burden</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>383.5</b>	<b>16.0143416</b>	<b>6,142</b>	<b>\$921,225</b>

**13. Estimated total annual cost burden to respondents**

There are no annualized capital/startup costs for the eligible recipients to provide this information collection. Receiving grant awards under the RESTORE Act specifically does not require grantees to incur startup costs beyond those costs generally associated with receiving federal financial assistance.

**14. Estimated cost to the federal government.**

There are no additional costs incurred to the government as a result of implementing the information collection.

**15. Reasons for change in burden**

The total burden is 6,142 hours, 722 hours less than the August 2014 initial estimate of 6,864 hours. Treasury attributes this reduction to (1) revisions Treasury made to the grant application form; (2) Treasury's provision of more detailed instructions for completing reports to eligible recipients; and (3) grant recipients gaining familiarity with the RESTORE Act and Federal laws and policies on grants.

**16. Plans for tabulation, statistical analysis and publication**

There are no plans for publication. The Treasury Department will conduct numerous types of analysis on these data. These analyses will include assessments of eligibility and effectiveness of program activities (e.g. types of activities, amounts funded) as well as compliance checks.

**17. Reasons why displaying the OMB expiration date is inappropriate**

Display of the expiration date may be confusing to respondents. Non-display of expiration date is requested.

**18. Exceptions to certification requirement**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.