

# 1NOAA National Estuarine Research Reserve FY2015 Performance Progress Report and Post Award Guidelines

## **Introduction**

This document provides guidance for the content and submission of NERR award progress performance reports. These reports are required on a semi-annual basis and provide information to the Office for Coastal Management (OCM) and the Grants Management Division (GMD) to determine if NERR programs are adhering to the terms of financial assistance awards, making appropriate progress toward award tasks, supporting the goals and objectives of the management plan, and addressing CZMA Section 312 Evaluation necessary actions.

## **New in FY2015 Grant Reports**

In previous versions of this reporting guidance, detailed instructions on developing success stories has been provided. Reserves were encouraged to submit at least one success story per year through their grant progress reports. Moving forward, site liaisons will work with Reserve to develop success stories throughout the year. Site liaisons will be working with the OCM Communications Team to promote these stories. It is envisioned that each story can be used and adapted several times (one-pagers, web content, briefing materials, etc.). Note: CTP is required to submit at least one CTP success story in the performance measures database following the CTP Performance Monitoring Guidance.

## **Reporting Requirements**

Award recipients are responsible for upholding the standard terms and conditions for all NOAA awards including timely submission of semi-annual progress reports, financial reports, and post award action requests. Performance progress reports should be submitted every six months from the start of the award via NOAA's Grants Online System <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov/>. Reports must be submitted no later than **30 days** after the end of the performance period. For example, if the award starts July 1, the reporting period is July 1 through December 31 and the progress report is due by January 30. Final reports are not comprehensive; they cover only the last six month period of the award and are due within **90 days** after the end of the award period. All financial and progress report requirements should be met during this period so that the award can be closed out in a timely manner. Please note that post award action requests will not be processed if progress and financial reports are not up to date. NOAA's Grants Management Division will suspend payment on awards if reports are late.

## **Progress Report Contents**

All recipients should follow the format below for consistency providing valuable, comparable information across the system. Each semi-annual report should include:

### **A. Report Heading**

Reserve name

Report contact name, email and phone number  
Grant or cooperative agreement number  
Reporting period  
Date of submission

## **B. Progress and Status of Award Tasks**

The status of each task should be described following the CAMMP format of the award for the six month reporting period only. The reports should describe the activities that have taken place to achieve the outcomes outlined within each task of the grant. Outcomes, the results and/or products from conducting activities, should be described when appropriate. Given that outcomes are written for each award based on a 12 month scope of work, some outcomes may not be fully realized until the end of the award. While awards are 18 months long, most tasks should be completed and reported on within the 12 month time frame. If anticipated milestones are not being met, the challenges or obstacles should be explained. Post award action request approvals will be made based on this information.

This section should provide a summary of progress on each task. Each entry should include the task title, description of activities, status of milestones (not started, in progress/on schedule, not on schedule, completed) and challenges related to meeting milestones if appropriate, and outcomes gleaned from the tasks when appropriate.

## **C. Section 312 Evaluation Progress**

The evaluation metrics and status of evaluation recommendations progress provide important data for the periodic evaluation of individual programs. A separate guidance document for reporting 312 measures is included.

## **D. Performance Measures**

The activity of collecting performance measures falls in an operations and management task. All performance measures should be reported in the performance measure database. All measures should be reported on for the first two six-month periods of each operations award, except the two research measures which are reported only at the twelve-month report period. The Performance Measure Guidance can be found in Appendix 1. The NERRS Performance Measures Database Guidance Document for Reserve Users can be found in Appendix 2. Reserve personnel can use the NERRS Performance Measures Database throughout the reporting period to keep draft reports before submitting their semi-annual reports.

*Managers are expected to ensure that all required elements are submitted for a given time period.* A Manager Summary Report has been created to assist you in viewing in one place all the performance measures for a given reporting period and verify that all reports are submitted. Instructions for creating a Manager Summary Report can be found in Appendix 2, pages 28-30. Requirement: Once you have created your Manager Summary Report and verified that all reports have been submitted, select 'Print' and save the summary report as a Word document. Attach this document to your Grants Online Progress Report. This will provide verification that

you have met the Performance Measures Reporting Special Award Condition of your cooperative agreement.

**Overview of Performance Measures**

Report Name	Requirement	Reporting Frequency	Notes
Volunteer and Research Measures	<b>REQUIRED</b>	Volunteers - every six months Research - once a year at second reporting period	The Research and Monitoring Database must be up-to-date in order for accurate values to be submitted in the performance measures database report.
CTP Training Activities	<b>REQUIRED</b>	Every six months	Every training activity must be submitted.
CTP Outcomes	<b>REQUIRED</b>	One CTP Success Story required for FY2015 grant	
CTP Technical Assistance	<b>OPTIONAL</b>	Submit as they occur	If reserves submit a CTP Success Story associated with a Technical Assistance activity, you will need to submit a CTP Technical Assistance report for that activity.
Education Output Indicators	<b>REQUIRED</b>	Every six months	

**E. Optional Addendum**

We understand that it often takes more than the NOAA federal and state cost share to operate a reserve. We encourage reserves to describe activities relevant to the mission of the reserve, but may be outside the scope of the operations grant. This information will enable OCM to capitalize on opportunities within and outside of NOAA and share this information with NOAA partners and leadership about innovative projects and challenges at the reserve. It would be advantageous to describe the partners and leveraged funds that support this work.

**Annual reports**

Annual comprehensive reports are not required per the award reporting guidelines. For those sites that produce an “annual report”, please make them available to the NERR community.

## **Post award requests**

### **List of Award Action Requests**

The actions below may be initiated by the recipient within NOAA's Grants Online System.

\*indicates that an amendment is required

**Bold** indicates most commonly conducted actions. Additional guidance on these actions is provided below.

<b>* No Cost Extension – Prior Approval Required</b>	<b>No Cost Extension - Prior Approval Waived (Research Terms and Conditions)</b>
<b>Reprogram or Rebudget</b>	<b>Satisfied Special Award Conditions</b>
<b>Extension to Close Out</b>	Equipment Purchase
* Change in Scope	Foreign Travel
* Transfer of Award	Sole Source Contract
Change in Principal Investigator	Other
Change in Institution Name	Absence of more than 3 months or 25% by project director or PI
Change in Key Person Specified in the Application	Inclusion of cost that require prior approval based on cost principles
Transfer of funds allotted for training to other categories of expenses	* Sub award, transfer or contracting out of any work under the award if not described in the approved application
Pre-Award Cost	*Termination for Convenience

### **No-Cost Extension (GMD Approval Required- i.e. Prior Approval Required)**

A formal request to extend an award must be submitted by the award recipient authorized representative via the NOAA Grants Online System 30 days prior to the end date of the award. Approval by the Federal Program Office (OCM) and Grants Management Division (GMD) is required. The recipient proceeds at its own risk of incurring costs beyond the award expiration if the request is not submitted to NOAA at least 30 days prior to the expiration.

Any extension request submitted to NOAA after the expiration of the award will be denied. Requests for reconsideration of extreme circumstances that resulted in failure to request an extension before the end of the award period must be submitted in writing and will only be considered by the Grants Officer on a case- by-case basis. Awards which are not in compliance with all terms and conditions of the award, including submission of all required reports, will not be reconsidered.

All no-cost extension requests must clearly justify why the extension is needed and explain what activities are remaining to be accomplished under the award and what funds are still available to support the activity. In addition, the award must be in compliance with all terms and conditions of the award, including submission of all required reports. The justification block within the GOL system must be filled out, and a budget (SF424A) of remaining funds must be attached. See example below.

## Key Points

Due to a State Department of Environmental Affairs hiring freeze, we have been unable to hire an education assistant to complete activities within the education and outreach task, specifically production of the estuary literacy concepts brochure, community outreach product and completion of the K-12 Estuary Education Program market analysis and needs assessment. The hiring freeze has been lifted and we will be able to hire the education assistant and complete the project within the next six months. Additionally, the State Department of Environmental Affairs is requiring additional review of equipment purchases and we have not been able to purchase the YSI 6600 instrument, as indicated in the System-wide Monitoring Program task. We have recently gotten preliminary approval for this purchase and will be able to complete the acquisition shortly. Hence, we request a six-month no-cost extension, extending the award from December 31, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

The budget of remaining funds is below.

← State reason for request- need to say more than “we need more time to expend funds.”

← State specifically the work that has yet to be achieved. This should be commensurate with what is designated in the award. If a new activity will be performed, a reprogramming request should be made. If there is a departure from original intent, a change of scope may be warranted.

← Indicate the length of extension request and dates.

Object Class Categories	Federal	State	Total
a. Personnel	20,000	15,000	35,000
b. Fringe Benefits	2,000	1,500	3,500
c. Travel			
d. Equipment	7,000		7,000
e. Supplies			
f. Contractual			
g. Construction			
h. Other			
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of a-h)	29,000	16,500	45,500
j. Indirect Charges			
k. TOTALS (sum of i and j)	29,000	16,500	45,500

← Provide a budget of remaining funds showing federal and non-federal amounts by object class category that

## **Re-Programming or Re-budgeting Request**

Creation of a new direct cost line item category within an approved budget for costs allowable under the applicable cost principles will not require prior approval from the Grants Officer unless the new direct cost category exceeds 10% of the total Federal share of the award.

A reprogram request must be submitted for NOAA approval when:

- reprogramming funds to a new, not identified in the original budget, direct cost line item category where the amount exceeds 10% of the total Federal share of the award.
- reprogramming a cumulative amount greater than 10% of the total (Federal and non-Federal shares) budget last approved for awards with a Federal share exceeding \$100,000. If you reprogram 10% or less, you do not need to request GMD approval; however, an account of reprogram activities under 10% needs to be maintained for when you exceed the 10%, you are combining what you have done and what you intend to do over the 10% so the cumulative transfer is transparent.

These requests shall include an SF-424A showing the total budget for the award along with a detailed budget narrative explaining the funds transferred. It is advisable to submit the last approved 424A and the new 424A for a clear comparison of last approved budget and proposed budget. All remaining federal and non-federal shares should be illustrated on the revised 424A as this will serve as the budget for the rest of the award. The supporting text should clearly describe where the funds are moving from and to and the activities that will take place that support the intent of the award. The narrative request needs to describe the reason for these changes and ensure that the original scope of work is not being altered. If the scope of work is changing, then a change of scope request is required.

The reprogramming request is submitted to the Program Officer who forwards the request, along with a recommendation, to the Grants Officer, who will make the final determination.

The approval of a reprogram request does not normally result in an amendment to the award. The recipient's Authorized Representative(s) will be notified by Grants Online of the approval or rejection of the request.

## **Extension to Close-Out Period**

The close-out period starts the day after the award has closed and provides 90 days to submit all reports required by the terms and conditions of the award and liquidate all obligations incurred. Once the award is closed, the only action you can take in Grants Online is to extend the close-out period. You can do this at any point during the 90 day close-out period and the maximum request for extension is 60 days.

An extension to the closeout period should only be requested to complete the preparation of final reports and make final payments. During this time, you can draw down funds from the Department of Treasury ASAP payment system.

An approval of the Extension to Closeout does not result in an amendment to the award. The recipient's Authorized Representative will be notified by Grants Online of the approval or rejection of the request. Additional work on the award project is prohibited during the closeout period.

### ***Satisfied Special Award Conditions***

Some awards contain Special Award Conditions that require evidence of completion. Examples are environmental assessments, property deeds and associated documents, and building permits.

The Special Award Conditions are available in a drop-down list on the Award Action Request details page. Once selected, the SAC Description text box will automatically be filled out with the Special Award Condition details. You will need to fill out the justification in the provided text area and attach associated files.

The approval of a Satisfied Special Award Conditions request does not normally result in an amendment to the award. The Recipient Authorized Representative(s) will be notified by Grants Online of the approval or rejection of the request.

### ***No-Cost Extension (GMD approval waived –i.e. Prior Approval Waived)***

All recipients covered under 15 CFR Part 14 (e.g., educational institutions/non-profits), with non- construction awards are herein granted authority to initiate a one-time no-cost extension to the award period of up to one year without prior approval as long as the recipient notifies the Grants Officer through Grants Online using the “No-cost Extension Prior Approval Waived (Research Terms and Conditions)” link least 10 days prior to expiration of the award with an explanation of the reason for the extension. Grants Online will prohibit you from requesting an extension any less than 10 days in advance of award expiration. If an additional no-cost extension is required, you must request a no-cost extension GMD approval required. The FPO and GMD review and approve this request.

Only certain organizations, which are conducting research, are eligible for No-cost Extension Prior Approval Waived (Research Terms and Conditions). Grants Online enforces this business rule. If your organization is not an eligible type, the link to create the No Cost Extension – Prior Approval Waived (Research Terms and Conditions) will be disabled. The following organization types are eligible for Research Terms and Conditions:

- o Public/State Controlled Institution of Higher Education
- o Nonprofit with 501C3 IRS Status (Other than Institution of Higher Education)
- o Private Institution of Higher Education
- o Individual
- o For-Profit Organization (Other than Small Business) and Small Business
- o Hispanic-serving Institutions, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions
- o Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities
- o Non-domestic (non-US) Entity

The execution of the No Cost Extension - Prior Approval Waived (Research Terms and Conditions) by the recipient is completely automatic in Grants Online. Once the notification is submitted to NOAA by the recipient's Authorized Representative, the new award end date is immediately reflected in Grants Online and in the ASAP system. Notifications are sent to the Program Officer and the Grants Officer of the new award end date. This action does not result in an amendment to the Award.

## **Resources**

NOAA's Acquisition and Grants Home Page

**<http://www.ago.noaa.gov/ago/index/cfm>**

The grantee link includes information and links to policies, manuals, Grants.Gov, Grants Online, training, federal forms and the ASAP (Automated Standard Application Program). The Department of Treasury Financial Management Services ASAP allows grantee organizations receiving federal funds to draw from accounts pre-authorized by NOAA and other federal agencies.

NERRS Intranet

**<https://www8.nos.noaa.gov/nerrsintranet/>**

All guidance documents and reporting tools can be found on the intranet under the Grants and Performance Measurement tab within the 'NERRS Guidance, Policy and Planning Documents' section.

NERRS Research Database

**<https://www8.nos.noaa.gov/nerrs/>**

The NERRS Research Database houses reserve research and monitoring projects and products. Products should be entered using "add publication" function.

NERRS Performance Measure Database

**<https://www8.nos.noaa.gov/ERDPM>**

Reserves will submit all performance measures through the NERRS Performance Measures Database. Reports should be submitted in accordance with the Grants Online reporting timeline: reports are due thirty days after the reporting period ends. Reserve personnel can use the NERRS Performance Measures Database throughout the reporting period to before submitting performance measures reports to OCM.

## **Appendices**

1. Performance Measure Guidance
2. NERRS Performance Measures Database Guidance Document for Reserve Users
3. Reporting Guidance for Recommendations and Evaluation Metrics