

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**U.S. Department of Commerce**  
**National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration**  
**NOAA Coastal Ocean Program Grants Proposal Application Package**  
**OMB Control No. 0648-0384**

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A**

**Abstract**

This is a request for revision and extension of a current information collection. Revisions to the approved annual and final reports for the Competitive Research Program (CRP) include the request for publication of digital object identifiers (DOIs). Additional information requested for RSP semi-annual and final reports include end-user details. The Key Contacts Form will be removed from the package as the information contained in this document can be found in the Standard Form (SF)-424 form and Summary Title Page. Therefore, the estimated burden hours will be reduced by 150 hours.

The National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) provides direct financial assistance in the form of discretionary research grants and cooperative agreements under its own program for the management of coastal ecosystems. Financial assistance had been previously provided to non-profit organizations and educational institutions through joint participation in the Sea Grant omnibus vehicle. CRP supports research on critical issues associated with the Nation's estuaries, coastal waters and the Great Lakes, and translates its findings into accessible information for coastal managers, planners, lawmakers and the public. The NOAA Restore Science Program (RSP) provides direct financial assistance through grants and cooperative agreements for research, observation, and monitoring to support, to the maximum extent practicable, the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem, fish stocks, fish habitat, and the recreational, commercial, and charter-fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico.

The main purpose of this information collection is to enable CRP and RSP to provide summaries of each proposed project and their current and pending Federal funding. The information gathered will enable CRP and RSP to properly and quickly evaluate proposals in a collaborative environment with its partner agencies.

**Justification**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

Beginning in late FY1998, the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Ocean Service (NOS), Coastal Ocean Program (COP), now known as the Competitive Research Program (CRP) under the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS), 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 CRP 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”, CRP 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. CRP’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.

Included in the request is the NOAA Restore Science Program (RSP). This program is housed in NOAA/NOS/NCCOS and provides direct financial assistance through grants and cooperative agreements for research, observation, and monitoring to support, to the maximum extent practicable, the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem, fish stocks, fish habitat, and the recreational, commercial, and charter-fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico. NOAA was authorized to establish and administer the Program, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, by the [Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies \(RESTORE\) of the Gulf States Act of 2012](#) (Pub. L. 112– 141, section 1604). Identified in the RESTORE Act as the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring, and Technology Program, the Program is commonly known as the NOAA Restore Science Program.

All potential NOAA CRP and RSP grant recipients are required to submit the Standard Forms 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, CRP and RSP grant applicants will be asked to include a CRP Project Summary (Abstract) Form and a Current and Pending Form in addition to the standard application requirements for Federal grants. Copies of these proposed forms are included in this request. The main purpose of this information collection is to enable CRP and RSP to provide summaries of each proposed project, and their current and pending Federal funding. The information gathered will enable CRP and RSP to properly and quickly evaluate proposals in a collaborative environment with its partner agencies.

CRP grant recipients will also be required to file CRP Annual Progress Reports and a CRP Project Final Report. RSP grant recipients will be required to file RSP Semi-Annual Progress Reports, a Gantt Chart and a RSP Project Final Report. The proposed formats are included in this request. The CRP Annual Progress Report and the CRP Project Final Report provide a consistent, detailed format to grantees. All potential NOAA CRP and RSP grant recipients are required to submit the SF used by NOAA for Federal grants as follows: the 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 (if applicable).

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

At the time of application, RSP grant applicants will be asked to include a Gantt chart, in addition to the standard application requirements for Federal grants. The format chosen provides the recipients with a

consistent way to show the milestones across projects. This format allows the recipients to easily follow and update their progress.

CRP grant recipients will also be required to file an Annual Progress Report, and a Project Final Report. RSP grant recipients will also be required to file a Semi-Annual Progress Report, and a Project Final Report. The report forms provide a consistent, detailed format to grantees.

**2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

The main purpose of this information collection is to enable CRP and RSP to provide summaries of each proposed project and their current and pending Federal funding. The information gathered will enable CRP and RSP to properly and quickly evaluate proposals in a collaborative environment with its partner agencies.

**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.

**Current and Pending Form:**

The Current and Pending Form Federal Funding Form provided at the time of application describes all current and pending federal financial/funding support for all principal and co-investigators, including unfunded collaborators making a substantial contribution to the research. Continuing grants are also included. The current and pending form is used by Federal Program Managers and merit reviewers to evaluate and determine the capability of the investigator and collaborators to complete the proposed work in light of present commitments to other projects.

The Grants Management Division of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) will utilize the “Current and Pending Support Form” for research financial assistance awards.

**Reporting Requirements for CRP and RSP:**

Consistency in reporting requirements for competitive research grant programs is desirable and this is behind the CRP and RSP 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-CRP 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 for established programs, especially for large

multi-investigator projects typical of the CRP. The request for annual performance reports has been accepted and approved by the NOAA Grants Management Division for CRP-sponsored grants or cooperative agreements.

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

#### **Format- RSP Semi-Annual 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 semi-annual progress reporting is necessary for newly established programs.

A copy of the semi-annual progress report is maintained in the RSP Program Information File and it is electronically transmitted to the GMD through GOL.

#### **Format-CRP and RSP Final Reports-**

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 CRP and RSP. The Final Report is electronically transmitted to GMD through GOL.

Final reports are reviewed to determine if any information products were delivered by the recipient. 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.

#### **Format – RSP Gantt Chart:**

The format chosen provides the recipients with a consistent way to show the milestones across projects. This format allows the recipients to easily follow and update their progress.

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 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 collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using**

**information technology to reduce burden.**

There is Web availability of the grant application kit on the NCCOS's home page at: <https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/about/funding-opportunities/>. The Web site offers the public the ability to print all CRP and RSP 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. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2**

No duplication has been identified. The final report required for each grant award as part of the standard Federal grant award conditions does not have a government-wide standard format (although the federal government grant-making programs have been making periodic efforts to develop one). The format CRP developed is similar to the National Science Foundation (NSF format); however, each funded grant award is required to report progress. No duplication is performed since each award has different objectives to meet.

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

The collection of information does not impact small businesses or other small entities. NOAA collects the least amount of information necessary to ensure compliance with grant requirements.

**6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

The Project Summary Form, Current and Pending Form, and Gantt Chart (RSP only) are submitted only at the time of application. An 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 would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.**

There are no special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

**8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

A Federal Register Notice published on June 8, 2021 (86 FR 30410) solicited public comments on this submission. No comments were received.

In response to a separate solicitation of comments on the burden sent to nine grantees 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 on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

. We received comment from three grantees:

1. Comment-Thanks for your email and the option to comment. LightDeck likes the current forms and does not have any recommendations for improvement
2. Comment- My only comment would be that I agree with your estimate of time for the project summary, key contacts and current and pending federal support. I am not familiar with the CRP reports so cannot comment on those.
3. Comment-We believe that the transition to the RPPR format has increased the time needed for reporting, so we would suggest at least 10 hours be allocated for the annual report and at least 16 for the final report. Maybe others don't spend as long on them, but we find that they can sometimes be time-consuming (especially the very first report that goes in).

Program office response to comment 3 -I want to clarify that the only portion of the RPPR Form that is required for CRP recipients to complete is questions 1-23 which includes general information about the institution. The response for all other questions is "see attached" and are covered in the annual or final report that is uploaded into Grants Online. CRP has a specific OMB approved annual and final report template that is in lieu of the questions in the RPPR form. With that being said, do you still suggest 10 hours for the annual report and 16 hours for the final report?

Response from grantee-We discussed this again, and would suggest changing the time to 8 hours for annual reports, 12 hours for final reports, as that format is a little less burdensome.

Program office action- updated the burden hours.

An additional Federal Register Notice published on October 8, 2021 (86 FR 56256) soliciting public comments on a proposed revision to the Current and Pending Funding form. No comments were received. After discussion, it was determined that that form will not be updated at this time.

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift 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 the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.**

As stated on the 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.

The information is covered by the Privacy Act Systems of Records Notice, GSA/GOVT-9, System for Award Management.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.**

There are no sensitive questions.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.**

Information Collection	Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents/year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
Project Summary (Abstract)	Physical Scientist	300	1	300	.5	150	44.98	6,747
Current and Pending	Physical Scientist	900	1	900	.5	450	44.98	20,241
CRP Annual Report	Physical Scientist	50	1	50	8	400	44.98	17,992
CRP Final Report	Physical Scientist	25	1	25	12	300	44.98	13,494
RSP Semi-Annual Report	Physical Scientist	50	2	100	6	600	44.98	26,988
RSP Final Report	Physical Scientist	25	1	25	10.5	262.5	44.98	11,807.25
Gantt Chart	Physical Scientist	150	1	150	1	150	44.98	6,747
<b>Totals</b>				<b>1550</b>		<b>2312.5</b>		<b>104,016.25</b>

**\*300 hours added for NIST use of the form (600 responses).**

**\*Cite official source of hourly wage rate - The estimate of average burden per response is based on expert review of proposed questions. BLS's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* - a good wage source.**

<https://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm>



**13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).**

No capital expenditures or operating and maintenance costs associated with this information collection. All submissions for this collection are electronic so there are no miscellaneous costs.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Oversight	ZP-IV	212322	4%		8492.88
Other Federal Positions	ZA-III	151109	1%		1,511.09
Contractor Cost					
Travel					
Other Costs:					
<b>TOTAL</b>					10,003.97

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.**

Information Collection	Respondents		Responses		Burden Hours		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	
Project Summary (Abstract)	300	300	300	300	150	150	
Current and Pending Funding Support	900	900	900	900	450	450	
CRP Annual Report	50	50	50	50	400	250	Response time adjusted pursuant to feedback from grantee
CRP Final Report	25	25	25	25	300	250	Response time adjusted pursuant to feedback from grantee.
RESTORE Semi-Annual Report	50	50	100	100	600	550	.
RESTORE Final Report	25	25	25	25	263	263	
RESTORE Gantt Chart	150	150	150	150	150	150	
Key Contacts	0	300	0	300	0	150	This collection is being removed as the information is available elsewhere.
<b>Total for Collection</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1550</b>	<b>1850</b>	<b>2313</b>	<b>2213</b>	
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-300</b>		<b>-300</b>		<b>100</b>		

Information Collection	Labor Costs		Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	
Project Summary (Abstract)	6,747		0	0	
Current and Pending Funding Support	20,241		0	0	
CRP Annual Report	17,992	Not previously calculated	0	0	
CRP Final Report	13,494		0	0	
RESTORE Semi-Annual Report	26,988		0	0	
RESTORE Final Report	11,807.25		0	0	
RESTORE Gantt Chart	6,747		0	0	
Key Contacts	0		0	0	This collection is being removed as the information is available elsewhere.
<b>Total for Collection</b>	<b>104,016.25</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>104,016.25</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

**Revisions to the approved annual and final reports for CRP include the request for publication of digital object identifiers (DOIs).**

This provides a formal method of collecting information required in the CRP NOFO under the Data Reporting Requirement section. The data reporting requirement is a direct result of the White Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) issued a Memorandum on Feb. 22, 2013 entitled Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Research directing each Federal agency that conducts over \$100 million

annually in research and development expenditures to develop a plan to support increased public access to the results of that research

([https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp\\_public\\_access\\_memo\\_2013.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp_public_access_memo_2013.pdf)). In response to the OSTP Memorandum, the NOAA Research Council issued the NOAA Plan for Increasing Public Access to Research Results (PARR) in February 2015

(<http://doi.org/10.7289/V5F47M2H>).

As stated in the NOFO, “environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion [typically within two years of collection, publication, or the original end of the award, whichever is earliest], free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program.” There are two types of data requested in the FFO:

(1) “Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to the NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.”

(2) “Environmental data are recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as, correlative data such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata. Digital audio or video recordings of environmental phenomena (such as animal sounds or undersea video) are included in this definition. Numerical model outputs are included in this definition, particularly if they are used to support the conclusion of a peer-reviewed publication. Data collected in a laboratory or other controlled environment, such as measurements of animals and chemical processes, are included in this definition.”

**Additional information requested for RSP semi-annual and final reports include end-user details.** The changes were made to simplify and streamline reporting for lead investigators and to make it more straightforward for the RSP to track end user engagements as part of the performance management plan for the RSP.

**16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.**

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 reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

The agency plans to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all instruments.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.”**

The agency certifies compliance with [5 CFR 1320.9](#) and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#).