

NOAA Technology Partnerships Office Instructions for Research Performance Progress Reporting

Purpose and Basis

Purpose

This document provides instructions to grantee Principal Investigators (PIs) for reporting on the progress of Technology Partnerships Office (TPO)-funded and managed research grant projects. TPO is an office within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR).

Basis

The basis for these TPO Instructions is the standard *Department of Commerce (DOC) Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) Instructions* document (hereinafter “DOC Instructions”),¹ which is derived from the U.S. Government’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements for RPPR progress reporting as published in 2 CFR 200.328 “Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance”² of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). These TPO Instructions, although condensed for brevity, are consistent with, and provide additional clarifications to, the full DOC Instructions. Always refer to the DOC Instructions document for additional information that may not be fully described in these condensed TPO Instructions.

Questions

Please review the DOC Instructions¹ for additional details. Contact your grant’s designated Federal Program Officer (FPO) if you have questions, comments, or suggestions.

Clarifications for TPO Projects

The following are TPO-specific clarifications to the DOC Instruction sections, outlined in Appendix A, below.

Normally progress reports are due every 6 months for multiyear grant projects. For **SBIR Phase I grant projects** that are only 6 months long, the reporting frequency shifts from every 6 months to every 3 months. So if you have an SBIR Phase I grant that you are reporting on, please replace “6 months” with “3 months” everywhere in this document below.

1. Accomplishments

Clarification 1, Section 1 “Accomplishments.”

The purpose of Section 1 of the progress report (see Appendix A) is to concisely report on actual progress during the most recent 6-month performance period relative to the proposed work plan,

¹ United States Department of Commerce. 2019. *Grants Policy: RPPR Instructions*. Washington, DC: Department of Commerce. http://osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/

² United States Code of Federal Regulations. 2019. *§200.328: Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office. <https://go.usa.gov/xy8PU>



V1.0

schedule, milestones, and deliverables from the original proposal submitted to NOAA. This is your summary of your proposed work versus the actual work. The description of accomplishments must reflect the incremental progress of the research over the most recent 6-month period, but, if desired, accomplishments in this section may include cumulative progress since the start of the project only if the most recent 6-month reporting period progress is clearly distinguished from prior progress.

All progress reports must concisely provide this comparative proposed-versus-actual progress information, preferably using summary tables (e.g., proposed versus actual tasks completed; proposed versus actual milestones achieved; proposed versus actual deliverables, etc.).

2. Products

Clarification 2, Section 2 “Products.” Report in this section any project products.....which may include publications, conference papers, and presentations in the preceding last six-month period (along with other products as described in Appendix A). Include a full reference and digital object identifier (DOI; <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/what-is-doi.aspx>) and either (1) attach all new publications and presentations on this project from this reporting period to the progress report; or (2) include web links to online versions. When you publish or present, please include language crediting the appropriate NOAA/OAR organization and program (e.g., NOAA/OAR/TPO and the Small Business Innovation Research Program) for financially supporting your project and include the NOAA logo.³ Suggested language follows: “This material is based upon work supported by the SBIR Program within the NOAA Technology Partnerships Office under Grant No. XXXXXXX.”

3. Changes/ Problems

Clarification 3, Section 5 “Changes/Problems.” Explain any deviations from the original proposal (incomplete tasks, missed milestones, late deliverables, etc.) and detail the mitigation plans (task or schedule revisions, revised work plans, etc.) to get back on track. All major task or schedule changes must be pre-approved by TPO through a formal request in Grants Online. If there are no deviations, write that.

4. Special Reporting Requirements

Clarification 4, Section 6 “Special Reporting Requirements.” There are currently no Special Reporting Requirements for the TPO SBIR program.

5. Budgetary Information

Clarification 5, Section 7 “Budgetary Information.” Report here if you are on budget relative to your proposed budget and schedule, and if not, why not and how you plan to get back on budget. The SF-425 form to report actual expenditures is separate from this RPPR and this section, but it obviously related. Note that this required Section 7 was inadvertently excluded from the DOC fillable-form PDF template and the associated Grants Online web form implementation (reference Clarification 8, below), but this information must be included in all progress reports

³ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 2019. *What Is the Significance of the NOAA Logo?* <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/noaalogo.html>



V1.0

through the uploaded report file. It is described in the DOC Instructions¹ and is included below in Appendix A.

6. Page Numbers

Clarification 6, Page Numbers. Include page numbers throughout.

7. Joint Progress Reports

Clarification 7, Joint Progress Reports. Joint progress reports are not relevant to the NOAA SBIR program since each grant project has just one funded grant recipient.

8. Submission to NOAA

Clarification 8, Submission to NOAA. Progress reports may only be submitted through NOAA's Grants Online system; do not submit them via email. Please follow the latest instructions for Grants Online submission in the [Grant Recipient RPPR User Guide](#) available online.⁴ Coordinate with your institution's designated Grant Office Representative to submit your reports through this system. They will have login access and will receive automated email reminders as deadlines approach. Please ask them to add the email address of the lead PI(s) to Grants Online so that they also receive the automated email reminders.

Progress reports will normally be provided to NOAA via the newly-released (as of 2019) standard DOC RPPR fillable-form template in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF), which is available [here](#)¹ and outlined in Appendix A "Outline and Details for Interim and Final Research Performance Progress Reports." This Appendix is a condensed form of the full DOC Instructions referenced above. This new PDF form, mostly consistent with the DOC Instructions document, was first introduced as a new NOAA grant award requirement to new (and eventually existing) grantees via an email memorandum dated March 14, 2019 (distributed March 26, 2019) from NOAA's Grants Management Division. This new DOC PDF fillable-form template is also implemented within NOAA's Grants Online web-based system using a new web-based text-box entry method for each report section as described in the aforementioned *Grant Recipient RPPR User Guide* (starting on page 13).

At this time, TPO-funded Principal Investigators are not required to submit progress reports using the new DOC PDF fillable-form template for TPO grant reports because the template only accommodates text-based entry, and it is not clear when it will be updated to accommodate the embedding of images, tables, and/or figures within the text that TPO encourages PIs to include in these reports. Similarly, the associated Grants Online web-based text-box entry method, meant to mimic the PDF fillable-form template, also does not accommodate any non-text-based content in the text boxes and has overly restrictive character limits (though images can be attached separately at the end as file attachments; see *Grant Recipient RPPR User Guide* page 19).

Instead, until these deficiencies are resolved by DOC and NOAA:

⁴ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 2019. *Grant Recipient Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) User Guide*. <https://go.usa.gov/xyNVG>



V1.0

1. Use the outline in Appendix A in place of the DOC PDF fillable-form template.
2. Include and embed graphical figures and/or tables (or any other non-text-based content) as appropriate within the text in this report file.
3. Convert the report file to PDF for submission to TPO as an uploaded attachment in Grants Online (see pages 19-20 in the [Grant Recipient RPPR User Guide](#) for instructions).
4. Additionally, cut-and-paste the text-based portion of the above report into the Grants Online report submission web-page text boxes following the instructions in the *Grant Recipient RPPR User Guide*. Note that the Grants Online web form does not include the “Special Reporting Requirements” and “Budgetary Requirements” subsections at this time. That required information will only be available to TPO in the PDF you submit as an uploaded attachment in #3 above.

9. NOAA Review

Clarification 9, NOAA Review. Progress reports will normally be distributed to NOAA subject matter experts and program managers for review as described in the *DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions*⁵ section G.05.k which is included in your grant package documentation and online [here](#). Reviews are normally completed within 30 days of submission. In cases where the reviewers have key comments, questions, or suggestions to the PIs, or key information is missing or not clearly and concisely discussed, the progress reports and comments may be returned to the institutions through Grants Online by the Federal Program Officer for revision and resubmission. In this case, your institution’s designated Grant Office Representative will receive an assigned action through Grants Online to revise and resubmit the report based on the provided reviewer comments, and they will need to coordinate directly with the PIs to inform them of the reviewer comments to be addressed. PIs should review the comments and respond to them as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after it is returned by NOAA. Append each of the reviewer comments and your responses at the end of your revised report in a new section “Responses to Reviewer Comments” and resubmit it through the Grants Online system with the help of your institution’s Grant Office Representative.

10. Final Reports

Clarification 10, Final Reports. At the end of the grant performance period, two progress reports are normally due to NOAA through Grants Online:

1. A semi-annual progress report describing incremental performance during the most recent 6-month period (due 30 days after the end of that 6-month period); and
2. A final progress report describing comprehensive performance and final results over the entire grant performance period (due 90 days after the end of that final 6-month period).

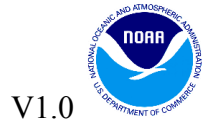
⁵ United States Department of Commerce. 2017. *Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions*. Washington, DC: Department of Commerce. http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20Conditions%2030%20April%202019.pdf



V1.0

For NOAA SBIR Phase I grants only (as mentioned on page 1), the reporting period in #1 above is reduced from 6-monthly to 3-monthly. Also, the final progress report in #2 above is due per the schedule listed in the Specific Award Conditions in the official grant documents, not the normal 90 days later for multiyear grant projects.

The format for both of these reports is identical—the RPPR format detailed in these clarifications and outlined in Appendix A, below. The difference is that the reporting period for the Final Report is for the entire grant performance period, not just the most recent six months. The Final Report must therefore be comprehensive and cumulative and should stand on its own, independent of the content of previously-submitted interim 6-month progress reports. As such, it is fundamentally different from interim semi-annual reports that are more like status reports. It is the single-most important deliverable from the grant project. It fully describes the scientific approach, methods, results, and final conclusions, and the quality of this final product must reflect that fact and that reporting requirement. The length of the Final Report is therefore expected to be much longer than interim reports.

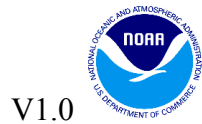


V1.0

Appendix A

OUTLINE FOR INTERIM AND FINAL RESEARCH PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORTS

This appendix is an abridged version of the DOC RPPR PDF fillable-form template and the corresponding DOC RPPR Instructions document. The main outline, headings, and key information are maintained here, but for more detailed instructions and guidance, please refer to the full DOC Instructions available [here](#). Grant PIs may use this Appendix below through copy and paste to a new document file to write reports following these DOC Instructions. Convert to PDF format when done assembling report and before uploading it to Grants Online.



V1.0

Department of Commerce Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR)

1. Federal Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research

2. Federal Grant Award Number:

3. Project Title:

4-5. Project/Grant Period (Start Date, End Date):

6-10. Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) Names, Titles, and Contact Information (email address and phone number):

11-15. Recipient Authorizing Official's Name, Title, and Contact Information (email address and phone number):

20-23. Recipient Organization (name, address, DUNS, EIN):

16. Submission Date:

17. Current Reporting Period (start date, end date):

18. Report Frequency (annual, semi-annual, quarterly):

19. Final Annual Report? (yes or no):



V1.0

Section 1. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

24. What were the major goals and objectives of this project?

25. What was accomplished under these goals?

A table of planned versus actual accomplishments is recommended as a function of each task identified in the funded proposal.

Are the proposed project tasks **on schedule**? What is the cumulative percent toward completion of each task and what are the respective due dates? Table of tasks, percentages, and due dates recommended.

What were the major completed **milestones** this period, and how do they compare to your proposed milestones? Table of proposed and completed milestones with originally planned completion date, actual completion date, and status is recommended.

26. What opportunities for **training and professional development** has the project provided?

27. How were the results **disseminated** to communities of interest?

28. What do you **plan** to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals and objectives?

Section 2. PRODUCTS

29. Publications, conference papers, and presentations

30. Technologies or techniques

31. Inventions, patent applications, and/or licenses

32. Other products

What were the major completed **products** this period, and how do they compare to your proposed products? A table of proposed and completed products is recommended. List the following:

- Publications, conference papers, and presentations;
- Technologies or techniques;
- Inventions, patent applications, and/or licenses; and
- Other products, such as data or databases, physical collections, audio or video products, software, models, educational aids or curricula, instruments or equipment, research material, interventions (e.g., clinical or educational), or new business creation.



V1.0

Please include the following language as described in Sect. G.05.k.3.iv of the *DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions* in all publications and presentations:

“This [report/video/etc.] was prepared by [recipient name] using Federal funds under award [number] from [name of operating unit], U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the [name of operating unit] or the U.S. Department of Commerce.”

Section 3. PARTICIPANTS & OTHER COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

33. What **individuals** from which organizations have worked on this project?
34. Has there been a **change** in the active support of the project director(s) (PD), principal investigator(s) (PI), or senior/key personnel since the preceding reporting period?
35. What other **organizations** have been involved as partners?
36. Have **other collaborators or contacts** been involved?

Section 4. IMPACT

37. What was the impact on the **development of the principal discipline(s)** of the project?
38. What was the impact on **other disciplines**?
39. What was the impact on the **development of human resources**?
40. What was the impact on **teaching and educational experiences**?
41. What was the impact on **physical, institutional, and information resources that form infrastructure**?
42. What was the impact on **technology transfer**?
43. What was the impact on **society beyond science and technology**?
44. What **percentage** of the award’s budget was spent in a foreign country(ies)?

Section 5. CHANGES/PROBLEMS

45. Changes in approach and reasons for the change.
46. Actual or anticipated problems or delays and actions or plans to resolve them.



V1.0

- 47. Changes that had a significant impact on expenditures.
- 48. Significant changes in use or care of human subjects, vertebrate animals, biohazards, and/or select agents.
- 49. Change of primary performance site location from that originally proposed.

Section 6. SPECIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Report on any special reporting requirements specified in the award Terms and Conditions, as well as any other award specific reporting requirements (**see also TPO-specific Clarification 4, above**). If there are no special reporting requirements, state that.

Section 7. BUDGETARY INFORMATION

Is the project on budget? Much of the quantitative budget information is submitted separately in the Federal Financial Report SF-425. However, describe here any major budget anomalies or deviations from the original planned budget expenditure plan and the associated reasons and how you plan to get back on budget. **See TPO-specific Clarification 5, above.**

Section 8. PROJECT OUTCOMES

50. What are the **outcomes** of the award?

Are the **performance measures** defined in the proposal being achieved and to what extent?

What is an “outcome”? Project outcomes are much different from accomplishments or products. Outcomes are broad benefits that the public or society realizes from this project, whereas products/deliverables are more concrete benefits specific to NOAA (e.g., a new forecasting technique or model, new knowledge, new data, etc.). An outcome is the response when the public asks you “so what?” or “why should I care?”

Section 9. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTORS (VOLUNTARY)

Refer to the DOC Instructions for this information

