

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject:	Desalination and Water Purification Research Cooperative Agreements Process
Purpose:	Establish requirements for reviewing, approving, and administering Desalination and Water Purification Research (DWPR) cooperative agreements under the Desalination and Water Purification Research Program (DWPR Program). The benefit of this Directive and Standard (D&S) is the establishment of uniform requirements to promote consistency and efficiency in DWPR Program implementation.
Authority:	Water Desalination Act of 1996 (Desal Act) (Pub. L. 104-298), as amended by the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act of 2016 (WIIN Act) (Pub. L. 114-322; Section 3801); Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902; and the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Pub. L. 111-11; section 9509).
Approving Official:	Science Advisor
Contact:	Research and Development Office (08-10000)

1. Introduction.

- A. The DWPR Program was established under the Water Desalination Act of 1996 to develop more cost-effective, technologically efficient ways to desalinate and purify impaired waters. Under the DWPR Program, the Bureau of Reclamation provides cost-share, through financial assistance agreements (FAA), on a competitive basis for a broad range of participants to conduct research projects in water treatment.
 - B. This D&S sets forth the requirements, responsibilities, and selection processes for DWPR awards conducted under the DWPR Program. Other Reclamation requirements concerning FAAs are described in Reclamation Manual (RM) D&S, *Requirements for Award and Administration of Financial Assistance Agreements (Grants and Cooperative Agreements)* (ACM 01-01), and elsewhere in the RM and are applicable to the DWPR Program.
2. **Applicability.** This D&S applies to all Reclamation employees engaged in the selection, award, and oversight of the DWPR Awards, including activities that are related to the development of each DWPR Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA); the review and selection of applications for financial assistance and award of funding; and the post-award oversight and monitoring of FAAs under the DWPR Program.
 3. **Program Budgeting.** The Science Advisor will provide guidance and oversight on research prioritization and formulate a budget request to conduct DWPR Program Awards. It includes funding associated with the costs for selecting, awarding, and overseeing DWPR projects selected for funding.

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4. **DWPR Program Awards.** The following specific requirements apply to DWPR Program Awards.
 - A. **Conditions for Applying.** To be eligible for funding, an eligible applicant must apply by the deadline and must meet all the requirements of the FOA, including describing an eligible project.
 - (1) **Eligible Applicant.** Specific information regarding applicant eligibility will be included in each FOA. Eligible applicants across the United States include: States, Indian Tribes, irrigation districts, water districts, private sector organizations, Federal laboratories, educational institutions, and non-profit entities.
 - (2) **Ineligible Applicant.** The Grants Officer (GO) from the Mission Support Organization (MSO) will inform applicants that have applied but are subsequently determined to be ineligible for funding of that determination in writing within the timeframe set in the FOA.
 - (3) **Application Meets FOA Requirements.** Reclamation will consider only those applications that meet the specific requirements as outlined in the FOA (e.g., submission deadline, cost-share requirements).
 - (4) **Cost-Share.** Reclamation will provide cost-share requirements as stated by the Authorities governing the DWPR Program and these will be detailed in the FOA.
 - (5) **Pre-Award Costs.** The FOA will describe in detail the conditions under which pre-award costs incurred by an applicant may be included as project costs.
5. **Selection Process for Financial Assistance.** The DWPR Program Administrator, in consultation with the Research and Development Program Manager (R&D Program Manager) and Science Advisor, develops FOAs that align with Reclamation's mission and overall strategic plan. The DWPR Program Administrator also consults with the GO to ensure that all FOAs are developed in accordance with government-wide, Departmental, and Reclamation requirements related to financial assistance.
 - A. **Selection Process.** Reclamation's process for selecting projects for DWPR funding is as follows:
 - (1) **Preparation of the FOA.** DWPR FOAs will be prepared consistent with the goals of the Desalination Act, Departmental guidance, and this D&S. Each DWPR Program FOA will identify specific requirements, including applicant and project eligibility, application deadlines, cost-share, and evaluation criteria.
 - (a) **Development.** The DWPR Program Administrator will develop the FOAs and will consult with the GO to ensure that all DWPR Program FOAs comply with all financial assistance requirements.

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- (b) **Evaluation Criteria.** The evaluation criteria for DWPR Program FOAs will be consistent with the goals of the Desalination Act, Reclamation priorities, and Departmental guidance and will be described in detail, including associated point values, in each FOA.
- (2) **Posting the FOA.** The GO will post all FOAs on Grants.gov.
 - (a) **Commissioner Consultation.** The Science Advisor will seek to ensure Commissioner's concurrence that the DWPR FOA aligns with Reclamation's mission and overall strategic plan. Any significant changes to a DWPR Program FOA will require the Science Advisor to have a consultation with the Commissioner prior to posting the FOA on Grants.gov. A consultation will also be provided if requested by the Commissioner.
 - (b) **Application Deadline.** An FOA will include an application deadline, which typically is at least 60 calendar days from the date of posting.
- (3) **Receipt of Applications.** The GO will create a master proposal list of all applications received. Each application will be date and time stamped when received to ensure that only applications received by the application deadline are considered for funding, as stated on the FOA. The information to be captured in this master list will include the following:
 - (a) an application control number;
 - (b) applicant name, contact information, and address;
 - (c) the project title;
 - (d) location;
 - (e) date of application receipt;
 - (f) requested Federal cost-share; and
 - (g) total project costs.
- (4) **Establishment of the Application Review Committee (ARC).** In consultation with the Science Advisor and R&D Program Manager, the DWPR Program Administrator will select the members of the ARC prior to the deadline for applications submitted in response to the FOA.
- (5) **Initial Screening.**
 - (a) The GO will screen all applicants submitted prior to the application deadline to assess applicant eligibility, non-Federal cost share, and to ensure that each application meets FOA requirements.

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- (b) The GO will request additional information to clarify eligibility from the applicant and will consult with the DWPR Program Administrator, as necessary.
 - (c) If an application is determined to be ineligible for funding at this stage, the GO, after consultation with the DWPR Program Administrator, will notify the applicant in writing of that determination in accordance with requirements set forth in the FOA.
 - (d) The GO will forward accepted applications to the DWPR Program Administration for further review and consideration by the ARC, including determination of project eligibility. Project eligibility shall be determined based on requirements set forth in the FOA.
- (6) **ARC Review.**
- (a) The ARC reviews and evaluates submitted proposals based upon the established evaluation criteria and assesses the budget as proposed in relation to the tasks outlined in the application. The DWPR Program Administrator oversees the review of proposals by the ARC.
 - (b) Prior to reviewing accepted applications, each ARC member will provide a signed Confidentiality and Document Security form and Conflict of Interest Certificate to the GO, who will serve as a point of contact to the DWPR Program Administrator and ARC members during review.
 - (c) The ARC will:
 - (i) review and evaluate assigned proposals individually and provide a brief project description;
 - (ii) convene to discuss their evaluated applications with other members of the review committee to identify any issues or discrepancies;
 - (iii) develop a consensus ranking;
 - (iv) recommend projects to be considered further for funding; and
 - (v) make additional recommendations as appropriate within the scope of the ARC review.
 - (d) The ARC's recommendation must be based on the merits of the proposals as evaluated against the selection criteria and the amount of funding available.
- (7) **Red-Flag Review.** The Red-Flag Review will follow the ARC review.

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- (a) The DWPR Program Administrator will consult with the Science Advisor and R&D Program Manager, on results of ARC review, comprised as a ranked list of applications along with brief project descriptions.
 - (b) The Science Advisor will transmit a list of recommended applications for funding to the regional directors; Director, Technical Service Center; Director, Policy and Administration; and Director, Program and Budget for review and recommendations.
 - (c) The DWPR Program Administrator will transmit results of the ARC review to the GO, who will conduct a cost-share review of the recommended applications, including review of the applicant's proposed non-Federal cost-share funding if applicable.
 - (d) The DWPR Program Administrator will consider all comments received during red-flag review and will convene the ARC as necessary to assess those comments and determine whether any modifications to the ARC's ranking or recommendations are warranted.
- (8) **Budget Review.** The GO, if necessary, will conduct an initial review of the applicant's budget documentation for costs associated with proposed project tasks. Final budget approval is completed by the GO.
- (9) **Approval Process for Project Selection.**
- (a) **Project Recommendation.** The Science Advisor will transmit a prioritized list of proposals recommended for funding to the Commissioner based on the ARCs review, the responses to red-flag review, and available funding.
 - (b) **Commissioner Consultation.** The Science Advisor will consult with the Commissioner regarding the project funding awards recommendations of the Science Advisor.
 - (c) **Final Selection List.** Following consultation with the Commissioner, the DWPR Program Administrator will document the final project selection list, including justification of any deviation from the ARC's final recommendations in writing.
- (10) **Notification to Applicants of Status.** The GO will notify each applicant of the status of its application for funding in writing.
- (11) **Debriefings.** The GO will include a statement in each unsuccessful notification letter offering the applicant a debriefing. The DWPR Program Administrator will conduct the debriefing to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the applicant's project and proposal.

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B. Award Information.

- (1) **Evaluation.** The GO will conduct and document, for each project selected for funding, all required pre-award due-diligence activities including, but not limited to:
 - (a) pre-award clearances, determinations, reviews, and approvals;
 - (b) reasonableness of proposed costs;
 - (c) financial strength and stability of the organization (as appropriate); and
 - (d) adequacy of financial and business management systems, personnel practices, procurement procedures, and accounting policies and procedures, as established by applicable Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars and regulations.
- (2) **Results.** An MSO-certified Grants Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) will consult with the DWPR Program Administrator, and, as necessary, the GO will determine whether to remove the project from further consideration, if the results of pre-award reviews and clearances are unsatisfactory. If the results of all pre-award reviews and clearances are satisfactory, an award of funding will be made once the FAA is finalized.
- (3) **Revisions to Scope of Work Prior to Award.** The DWPR Program Administrator will determine, during the development of the FAA, whether any proposed revisions are likely to affect project benefits and costs and will reconvene the ARC as necessary to determine whether to recommend reconsideration of award of funding for the revised project.
- (4) **Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance.** The GO will issue a notice-to-proceed letter to the DWPR Program Award recipient once the environmental and cultural resources compliance is complete. If a DWPR project includes ground disturbing activities, Reclamation will authorize ground disturbing activities to proceed on the DWPR project only after environmental and cultural resources compliance is complete.
- (5) **FAA.** FAAs executed in support of DWPR Program Awards, in addition to the standard requirements for FAAs executed by Reclamation, must include major milestones and estimated dates for completion within the Scope of Work section. The FAA must also include program-specific requirements as identified in this D&S and the FOA.
- (6) **Amount of Award.** Reclamation will only consider funding projects in excess of the amount requested in the application or included in the FAA if Reclamation has substantial involvement and has caused additional costs to be incurred. In this

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case, Reclamation may cost-share the additional costs up to the maximum funding limit identified in the FOA.

- (7) **Performance Period.** DWPR awards must be completed within the terms established in the FOA and the specific date in the FAA, unless a time extension is approved by the GO after receiving a recommendation from the DWPR Program Administrator as provided in Paragraph 6.B.

6. Post Award.

- A. **Reporting.** DWPR Program Awards require additional information to track project progress, in addition to financial assistance reporting requirements described in ACM 01-01.
 - (1) **Interim Project Reports.** The GOTR will monitor and follow-up with DWPR Program Award recipients to ensure that the required technical project reports are submitted within the timeframe identified in the FAA.
 - (2) **Final Project Presentation.** The GOTR will coordinate and work with the DWPR Program Award recipient and make arrangements for a final presentation at the Reclamation office in Denver, CO. If travel is not possible, other form of a virtual presentation could be arranged, the decision would be made by the DWPR Program Administrator.
 - (3) **Recipient Noncompliance.** The GO will determine whether failure by the DWPR Program Award recipient to comply with the terms and conditions of the FAA, such as noncompliance with the reporting requirements, requires suspension and/or termination of the agreement. Reclamation will also consider recipient noncompliance during any future red-flag reviews conducted as part of the DWPR Program.
 - (4) **Final Project Report.** DWPR Program Award recipients are required to submit a final technical project report which will be made public via the DWPR website.
- B. **Modifications (Change in Scope and Time Extensions).** Projects are required to be completed within the timeframe stated in the FAA and shall not exceed the stated Federal cost-share. If a DWPR Program Award recipient is unable to complete the entire project without exceeding the project costs, changing part of the scope, or exceeding the timeframe described in the FAA, the following shall apply:
 - (1) **Request to Modify the FAA.** The GOTR will consult the DWPR Program Award recipient, to develop a formal written request forwarded from the GOTR to the DWPR Program Administrator for consideration, if a change in scope or time extension is requested by the DWPR Program Award recipient.

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- (2) **Analysis of Benefits.** The scope of a project may be scaled back only if the impact to the project benefits will not be significant. The significance of the impact will be determined based on consideration of all the expected benefits of the project and whether the scaled-back project can accomplish the purposes for which the award was made.
 - (3) **Approval Process.** The DWPR Program Administrator will evaluate the request and transmit a recommendation to the GO and GOTR.
 - (4) **Formal Modification.** The GO will prepare and execute a formal modification to the FAA based on the DWPR Program Administrator recommendation on how to proceed.
- C. **Expenditures.** In general, and as practical based on the project, the GO and the GOTR will ensure that the non-Federal share of project costs are expended at the same or greater rate as the Federal share of project costs, and that costs are appropriate and accurate. The GOTR and DWPR Program Administrator will communicate on expenditures issues that arise.
 - D. **Communication of Project Results.** The DWPR Program Administrator will work with R&D office staff to post final project reports to the DWPR website, and to develop other results dissemination materials as appropriate.
 - E. **Close-Out.** Reclamation personnel will follow the standard Reclamation and office procedures for closing-out FAAs.
7. **Definitions.**
- A. **Applicant.** An entity that applies in response to a DWPR FOA.
 - B. **Application Review Committee or ARC.** The committee established to review and rank all DWPR Program Award applications submitted by accepted applicants. The ARC is generally comprised of staff members from Reclamation with expertise in water treatment. The ARC could also include other Federal employees from agencies outside of Reclamation, when appropriate.
 - C. **Change of Scope.** Modification of a FAA to revise the scope of work provided in the original FAA.
 - D. **DWPR Program Administrator.** Reclamation employee who administers the DWPR Program Reclamation-wide
 - E. **DWPR Program Award.** A Federal financial assistance agreement entered between Reclamation and a DWPR Program award recipient that provides funding to assist the recipient on a water treatment related research project.

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- F. **Financial Assistance Agreement or FAA.** As defined in ACM 01-01.
 - G. **Funding Opportunity Announcement or FOA.** A notice on Grants.gov of a competitive Federal grant funding opportunity available to the public.
 - H. **Grants Officer or GO.** As defined in ACM 01-01.
 - I. **Grants Officer Technical Representative or GOTR.** As defined in ACM 01-01.
 - J. **No-Cost Time Extension.** Modification of a FAA to extend the completion date of a DWPR project without the provision of additional Federal funding to the DWPR award recipient or substantial changes to the scope of work, budget, or other terms and conditions of the FAA.
 - K. **Non-Federal Cost-Share.** The contributions provided by non-Federal entities or funding partners to fund the non-Federal share of the project. Non-Federal cost-share under DWPR is provided through cash or in-kind contributions, which may be in the form of real property, equipment, supplies, and other expendable property, as well as the value of goods and services directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to a DWPR project.
 - L. **Pre-Award Costs.** Costs associated with a DWPR project that are incurred prior to the date of execution of the FAA.
 - M. **Project Costs.** The costs associated with commencing and completing a DWPR project including, but not limited to, costs for materials and supplies, environmental and cultural resources compliance costs, and labor costs.
 - N. **Red-Flag Review.** The review conducted by Reclamation offices following the results of the ARC review to identify any reasons why a proposed project would not be feasible or otherwise advisable, including environmental or cultural resources compliance issues, permitting issues, legal issues, past performance, or financial position, and to address any specific concerns or questions raised by members of the ARC.
8. **Review Period.** The originating office will review this release every 4 years.

RECLAMATION MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Effective Date: _____

Release No. _____

Ensure all employees needing this information are provided a copy of this release.

Reclamation Manual Release Number and Subject

Summary of Changes

NOTE: This Reclamation Manual release applies to all Reclamation employees. When an exclusive bargaining unit exists, changes to this release may be subject to the provisions of collective bargaining agreements.

Filing instructions

Remove Sheets

Insert Sheets

All Reclamation Manual releases are available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>

Filed by: _____

Date: _____