

Webinar Questions and Answers for Salinity NOFO RSAS00353 July 11, 2023

- 1) Pg. 18 of the NOFO announcement speaks about the required a budget narrative. Could you please clarify if the budget narrative will be a document that is in addition to the Appendix A- Cost Estimation Sheet? Or does Appendix A fulfill the requirement for a budget narrative?

We need a narrative to back up the cost estimate sheet for each line item noted. If Column D in Appendix A “Rationale for proposed cost” has enough detail that can be used. (Note if selected we may need more back up documentation once it comes to the grant office for budget review). Note Appendix A is only an example of a budget, it does not have to be used.

- 2) On pg. 21 of the NOFO announcement the following sentence is found, “**Provide sufficient pressure and appropriate velocity where topography enables it to allow for the future installations of on-farm improvements (i.e. sprinkler systems).** Should the word velocity be changed to volume? (I think the 2019 FOA had this same mistake, if indeed it is a mistake.)

“Provide sufficient pressure and appropriate velocity where topography enables it to allow for the future installations of on-farm improvements (i.e. sprinkler systems)”, “appropriate velocities” is the correct term. The idea is if the velocities in a pipeline are too high then all the pressure is lost through head loss. It also makes the pipeline difficult to regulate as small changes in deliveries have an outsize impact on other deliveries in the pipeline. The requirement is to prevent entities from proposing pipeline project with excessive velocities that you prevent then from effectively operating on-farm improvements (i.e. sprinkler systems).

- 3) Would you like to emphasize that pressurized systems are still required if there is sufficient elevation change to create pressure for sprinklers, even though the new on-farm enable worksheet does not score based on pressure?

The emphasis in the above line is on future installation of on-farm improvements given the constraints of topography. Sprinklers are just one example of such improvements, which we acknowledge in the new on-farm enable worksheet. But the system needs to be designed to operate in a way that would allow these improvements. We don't think this line contradicts the new on-farm scoring system.

- 4) On pg. 27 of the NOFO announcement the following sentence is found, “**Reclamation encourages applicants to submit their applications electronically through Grants.gov; however, electronic submittal of applications is not required.**” Is the statement about “not required” no longer valid?

Applications can only be submitted and accepted through Grants Solutions. Removed that sentence. See update below.

Updated D.2

Electronic Submittal via Grants.gov - Grants.gov is an internet website that can be used to find and apply for grant funding opportunities. In order to electronically submit an application, you must complete the Grants.gov registration process. The registration process can take approximately 7-21 days to be completed; therefore, registration should be done in a sufficient amount of time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required submission deadlines. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you receive your e-authentication credentials. When submitting through the grants.gov website, submit only one original. For more information regarding applying via Grants.gov, please visit the “Get Registered” and “Apply for Grants” links at www.grants.gov.

- 5) On pg. 48 of the NOFO announcement the following sentence is found, “**All applicants must also be registered with and willing to process all payments through the Department of Treasury Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system.**” Also on pg. 48 the following sentence is found, “**All of the information on the enrollment process for recipients, including the enrollment initiation form, can be requested by email from sha-dro-asap_enr@usbr.gov.**” In past FOAs only the recipients of a notice of intent to award letter were asked to enroll in ASAP. Is the requirement that all applicants register a change to ease future ASAP bottlenecks?

Correct ASAP is not required in order to apply, only if selected. There is another section (See below) that discusses ASAP in the NOFO. I have removed the section noted above.

F. 2.1. Automated Standard Application for Payments Registration

All applicants must also be registered with and willing to process all payments through the Department of Treasury Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system. All recipients with active financial assistance agreements with Reclamation must be enrolled in ASAP under the appropriate Agency Location Code(s) and the UEI Number prior to the award of funds. If a recipient has multiple UEI numbers, they must separately enroll within ASAP for each unique UEI Number and/or Agency. All of the information on the enrollment process for recipients, including the enrollment initiation form, will be sent to you by ASAP staff if selected for award.

Note that if your entity is currently enrolled in the ASAP system with an agency other than Reclamation, you must enroll specifically with Reclamation in order to process payments.

- 6) On pg. 51 of the NOFO announcement there is a description of the **Buy America Domestic Procurement Preference**. Would you like to bring this requirement to the attention of applicants during the question-and-answer webinar since it has not been a requirement in recent FOAs?

Yes, this topic will be discussed.

- 7) On pg. 58 of the NOFO announcement the State Representative for Colorado is listed as **Mr. Alex Funk**. This person is no longer with the State of Colorado. Would you like to contact the following person to ask the current representative? amy.ostdiek@state.co.us
I also suspect that **Mr. Paul Harms** may not be the current State Representative for New Mexico. Perhaps you would like to contact the following person to check Helen.Sobien@state.nm.us

Updated contacts in NOFO and uploaded in Grants solutions

- 8) On pg. 6 of the “Application 2023 Salinity NOFO” it is necessary to list the **TOTAL & AMORTIZED RECLAMATION COSTS**. When using Appendix A (one of the Related Documents on grants.gov) to determine total Reclamation Costs would you like to emphasize that only the tabs that list Reclamation funding will be used to calculate the total & amortized Reclamation Costs?

Updated on Application form and uploaded in Grants solutions.

- 9) Pg. 9 of the “Application 2023 Salinity NOFO” contains a link to a Cost Estimate spreadsheet that is different than the cost estimate spreadsheet that is included in the “Related Documents” on grants.gov. Should both cost estimate spreadsheets be filled out and submitted?

Updated on Application form and uploaded in Grants solutions.

- 10) Pg. 10 of the “Application 2023 Salinity NOFO” contains a link to an Enable on-farm worksheet that is different than the worksheet that is included in the “Related Documents” on grants.gov. Should both on farm enable worksheets be filled out and submitted?

Updated on Application form and uploaded in Grants solutions.

- 11) Regarding obtaining cost share funds, the statements below are found in the NOFO or in application form. The statements use both the terms “application” and “award”. Applicants may become confused about when they must have secure cost share commitments. Could you please clarify?

Section D.3.2 (pg. 28 of the NOFO):

Commitment Letter(s) for Cost Share funding (if applicable) Funding must be secure at time of application.

The application form (pg. 6):

PART III – PROJECT COSTS AND FUNDING PLAN – ALL COST SHARE FUNDING MUST HAVE SIGNED DOCUMENTATION TO PROVE VALID. APPLICATION WILL BE REMOVED IF THIS STANDARD IS NOT MET.

The application form (pg. 7):

Other (list each source): Funding MUST be secured prior to award.

Section E.2 (pg. 43 of the NOFO):

Reclamation may approve an award prior to an applicant securing cost-share funds if Reclamation determines that there is sufficient evidence and likelihood that the non-Salinity Funding will be available to the applicant by the start of the project.

At time of application, we require a “letter of commitment”. Then, if selected proof of the secured funds are required before award.

12) The application form (pg. 7) has the table shown below. It is my understanding that there is a general prohibition against using more than one source of federal funds for a single project. Could you clarify if such a prohibition exists with the salinity grant? If the prohibition does not exist, could you please provide an example of other federal funding that would be accepted?

FUNDING REQUEST SUMMARY: *[Use * to denote an in-kind contribution]*

FUNDING SOURCE	FUNDING AMOUNT
Basinwide/Basin States Program:	
Other Federal (list each source):	
Other (list each source): Funding MUST be secured prior to award.	
TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING:	

Many variables apply here, you cannot double dip. Example: cannot apply NRCS salinity funding to this project. *If applicants have this come up, reach out and we will address at that time to clarify if it may be used.

13) Section B.3 (pg.16 of the NOFO) has the statement shown below.

*If an entity chooses to help fund their project(s) with additional non-Salinity Funding, this will create a cost share project with two or more non-Federal funding sources. The non-Salinity Funding and the Salinity Funding shall be spent **concurrently** at the agreed-upon cost share percentage.*

The way **Appendix A** is structured could be interpreted to show that some items of labor, materials etc. will be paid 100% using Reclamation funds and some items of labor, materials, etc. will be paid 100% using non-Reclamation funds. Under this interpretation it could be highly burdensome to make purchases in such a way as to maintain the agreed-on cost-share. Would one solution be to enter each item of labor, materials, etc. into both the Reclamation and non-Reclamation sheets in such a way that the total cost of each item reflects the anticipated cost share percentage?

Appendix A is only an example of a budget, it does not have to be used. You may add a column or note on the spread sheet.

- 14) In Appendix A are the sheets for labor for such things as the applicant's staff, and not for labor provided by a contractor?

How are you claiming labor, is it direct or subcontract.

- 15) In the past the required Official Resolution (pg. 28 of the NOFO) was a document such as meeting minutes that shows the majority of the shareholders of the applicant's company voted in favor of submitting the NOFO application. Is this the case for this NOFO also?

Yes

- 16) When submitting the application documents in Grants.gov should the applicants submit the Salt Load worksheet and table that were sent to Reclamation by the August 11 deadline, or should the applicants submit only the written response from Reclamation which provides the salt load reduction estimate?

Send the Salt Table along with written response from Reclamation.

- 17) The Appendix A Cost Est. Sheet is in a new format from previous FOA's.

- a. The summary of contractor costs ("Contracts") tab has no room to input detailed cost information for line items bid to contractors for construction. Do you expect each contractor named in the first column to have an associated tab similar in format to the summary of materials, supplies and services ("Materials") tab that lists items such as pipe installation, delivery structures, etc? Do you expect us to create and delete tabs in this workbook as needed to fully document each subcontractors detailed cost estimate? For example, tabs for NEPA, Design, Construction, materials (purchased by applicant), etc?

Yes, you can add or adjust as needed. Again, Appendix A is only a sample / guidance that may be used.

- b. The rationale column in the "Materials" tab leaves very little room for detail. There is only enough room for phrases such as "engineer's estimate," "supplier quote," or "historical basis from past projects." Is this what is expected here?

Yes, And then you can send estimates, or quotes as an attachment and reference in Colum D.

- c. Is the Budget Narrative mentioned on pg 18 of the NOFO meant to be a document in a word or pdf format separate from the excel appendix A format?

As long as there is enough information in in the rationale we won't need a separate budget narrative, But yes, if you need more room, use a PDF or word document that provides a discussion of, or explanation for, items included in the budget application.

d. The Summary of proposed costs (“Summary of Costs”) tab does not have a “Total Reclamation funding” that separates the grand total into reclamation and non-reclamation funding. This could be a useful row that we may add in to differentiate.

Yes, you may add as you see fit.

e. The escalation rates in the labor and materials tabs are already set but in fields that can be adjusted. Are these expected to be adjusted? If so, is there a range that would be acceptable? And would we have to justify if we change the values from the presets?

Yes, you may update the rate and give rationale to escalation.

18) The 2017 and 2019 applicants saw unprecedented price increases due to COVID-19 and associated supply chain disruption. The USBR supplemented the agreements with additional funds in order for those projects to move forward. Is the general assumption that events such as these are unable to be planned for and therefore no major changes in structure to the budget or grant application will be made to accommodate for these types of situations in the future?

Yes

Buy American Act information:

De Minimis: Ease of administration is important to reduce burden for recipients and agencies. Federal agencies may consider whether a general applicability public interest waiver should apply to infrastructure project purchases below a de minimis threshold. An agency may consider whether a public interest waiver should apply when necessary to ensure that recipients and Federal agencies make efficient use of limited resources, especially if the cost of processing the individualized waiver(s) would risk exceeding the value of the items waived. Agencies may consider adopting an agency-wide public interest waiver that sets a de minimis threshold, for example, of 5 percent of project costs up to a maximum of \$1,000,000.

Also can be found on Page 51 Section F.2.7 of the NOFO.