Project Development Guide

This document is meant to provide general recommendations in the development of your stewardship project plan and in applying to NOAA Planet Stewards for funding. It is not meant to be comprehensive in noting all the items or steps you may need to undertake to plan a project for NOAA Planet Stewards funding support.

1. **Familiarization**:

   - Before developing your project, review the Supporting Stewardship, Focus Area Resources, and What Success Looks Like web pages, this document, as well as the Application Walkthrough, and the Example Project Proposals.

2. **Initial Planning and Research I**:

   - Think of specific quantifiable outcome(s) you intend to reach as a result of your project. What would indicate success? Examples of quantifiable outcomes might be lbs. of marine debris collected, lbs. or cubic meters of invasive species removed, numbers of native flora (trees, bushes) planted, acres of native habitat restored, lbs. of atmospheric carbon dioxide sequestered, etc.

   - Begin looking for sources and references to support your strategy to address the issue you've identified. You will also want to cite these resources when you complete your application. More information about addressing this may be found in the Application Walkthrough.

3. **Initial Planning and Research II**:

   - Think about how you might achieve your project outcome(s). This is the beginning of your implementation plan. Consider the following:

     ○ Who should be involved in your project?

     ○ Where will your project take place?

     ○ What activities will you carry out to achieve your project's desired outcome(s)?

     ○ What educational activities could you do to inform participants about your project's issue?

     ○ How should you conduct outreach? With whom?
       ■ Before your project — to get people interested and involved.

- During your project — to let people know what you're doing.
- After your project — to communicate your achievements.

- What resources will you need to carry out your project's activities?

- When will your project activities take place over the course of the funding period - AKA the academic year?? (August through June)

- As you organize your initial plan, go back and review the [Supporting Stewardship](#), [Focus Area Resources](#), and [What Success Looks Like](#) web pages, as well as the [Application Walkthrough](#), and [Example Project Proposals](#) again. See if there are any points you may have missed and might want to include in your project proposal.

4. **Making Connections I**:

- As early in your planning process as possible, seek out and discuss your project plan ideas with anyone whose permission and involvement you must have to initiate and implement your project (e.g., school administrators, organizational managers, local government managers/officials).

- Seek out organizations, agencies, organizations, or businesses in your community you might partner with to help meet the goals of your project, such as museums, parks, nature centers, or other schools.

- Meet with these individuals to understand any logistical issues that may affect your project and discuss how you may address them. Based on these discussions, continue to develop and refine your general project plan.

- Ask them for a letter of support. To facilitate submission of support letters, we recommend you:

  - Create draft language and request that individuals personalize it for you depending on their affiliation to the project.

  - Set a deadline by which you expect to receive the letter of support from them.

- Letters of support are one of the two parts of your project plan you will need to upload as part of your application.

- Letters of support **MUST** be written on the submitting individual's school or organization letterhead, be dated, and signed by the individual.

- In addition to receiving permission from the appropriate individual(s) to initiate and implement your project, it is also important to determine who will be receiving funds on your behalf, and the process for allocating funds to you — provided your project is funded. Before submitting your application, we strongly recommend you:

  - Determine who will be receiving funding on your behalf.

  - Let that person know you are submitting a federal funding application.

- ○ Have that person acknowledge they will receive federal funds on your behalf for the project, should it be funded.

- ○ Verify their process for receiving funds (check or direct deposit) from NOAA Planet Stewards.

- ○ Check their process for allocating funds to you to purchase the necessary items in your budget.

5. **Making Connections II**:

- ● Seek out and discuss your project idea with individuals who will play an active role in your project (e.g., educator colleagues, external partners, members of the community, volunteers, scientists, really anyone who will work directly with students or project participants). See if they have any ideas or recommendations to support or improve on your initial project plan. Based on these discussions, continue to refine your general project plan.

- ● Ask them for a letter of support and follow the guidelines offered above.

6. **Refining your Project Plan**:

- ● Now that you've put together a draft stewardship plan and had conversations with lots of individuals who will be involved in your project, you should have a pretty good idea of:

  - ○ Your project's issue.

  - ○ Your project's objective(s).

  - ○ The place(s) you will carry out your project.

  - ○ The activities you will carry out to achieve your objectives.

  - ○ How and to whom you'll conduct project outreach to.

  - ○ The resources you'll need to carry out your project's activities.

- ● It's time to refine and organize your project plan to get it ready for submission to NOAA Planet Stewards. Here are our recommendations:

  - ○ Organize your project activities broken out by month for the duration of the funding period (August through June)

  - ○ Within each month, break out each activity by type [e.g., planning meetings, lessons or activities, lectures by STEM career professionals, pre- and post-project surveys, hands-on stewardship (note which activities will be collecting data), communications].

  - ○ List and briefly describe each activity you will carry out each month, noting how it helps fulfill your project's objective(s). If an activity repeats itself over subsequent

months, you should list it within the appropriate month, but need only describe it the first time.

- ○ Each activity's description should include:

  - ■ Who will be actively involved in each activity and what they will do? For students, include the number and grade levels. For adults, include names and titles (if known).

  - ■ The materials or resources you will need to carry out the activity. Detailed information about specific materials or resources should be included in the project budget as appropriate.

  - ■ Transportation needed to and from an activity site, if appropriate.

  - ■ Any meals, snacks, or beverages to be provided (e.g., lunch at an activity site or snacks at an afterschool event, presentation, or as part of a project wrap up party).

- ○ Your budget is one of the two parts of your project plan you will upload as part of your application. This provides you some flexibility in how you format and present it. We recommend that you:

  - ■ Organize it as a table, dividing the materials/resources out according to categories [e.g., activities (educational, stewardship, data collection); outreach; transportation; food; awards/prizes; in-kind donations].

  - ■ Make sure it is clear, either in your activity description or in the budget, what each item/ resource will be used for. Include a link to items online, if available.

- Before writing up your proposal, we recommend you review the four Example Project Proposals.

7. **Submitting your Application**

- "You should now have all the elements of your stewardship project proposal organized and ready to submit to NOAA Planet Stewards for federal funding consideration. Note the following important items

  - ○ The Google Form used to apply for funding is not conducive to editing, and it won't save your progress. We recommend downloading the Application Walkthrough document and using it as a template to write your application. Then, copy and paste your answers to the application questions into the Google Form when you are ready to submit. Using a template will also provide you with a complete copy of your proposal in the event there is an error uploading it to the system.

- Many sections of the Google application form will only accept a certain number of words/characters. **We strongly recommend you either write your application or check the word/character count of each application section in a Google Doc prior to submitting it**. Different word processing programs count words and characters differently and we would not want any part of your proposal to be cut off in submission.

- Before submitting your letters of support, make sure:
    - They are on the letterhead of the school or organization affiliated with the individual(s).
    - They are dated and signed by the individual.
    - **The files are correctly named and numbered per application instructions.**
- Before uploading budget document, make sure:
    - All the required information is present.
    - The document is properly formatted.
    - **The file is correctly named**.