



WPO Instructions for Completing Research Performance Progress Reports

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

The basis for these WPO 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*”²² of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). These WPO 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 WPO Instructions.

Submit research performance progress reports through the NOAA’s Grants Online system only. Please do not submit them via email. If necessary, 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. (Exception: If the grant recipient is an organization that is managed outside of Grants Online, progress reports must be submitted by email to the Federal Program Officer.)

When submitting your reports, follow the latest instructions for Grants Online submission in the Grant Recipient RPPR User Guide available online³³, as well as the instructions below “**Submitting Reports to NOAA**”. These instructions provide additional guidance specific to awards funded and managed by WPO.

Submitting Reports to NOAA:

1. Refer to the WPO RPPR template, provided at the end of this document.

The template will be used to provide all the required information.

2. Create the Detailed Progress Report pdf attachment

- a. Make a copy of the template and answer all the questions in the template.
- b. Include and embed graphical figures and/or tables (or any other non-text-based content) as appropriate within the text of the completed template.
- c. Convert the completed template to a PDF file and upload it as an attachment in Grants Online when submitting the RPPR (see pages 19–20 in the [Grant Recipient RPPR User](#)

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>

³ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 2019. *Grant Recipient Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) User Guide*. <https://go.usa.gov/xyNVG>

[Guide](#) for instructions on how to do this).

3. Create the online RPPR

- a. Cut-and-paste the text-based portion of your responses from the completed template into their corresponding boxes in the Grants Online web form, following the instructions in the *Grant Recipient RPPR User Guide*. All boxes in the Grants Online web based form require a response to be entered for the system to consider the report complete.

4. Both the Detailed Progress Report pdf attachment and the online RPPR are required

***Note* The Grants Online web form does not include Section 6 “Special Reporting Requirements” nor Section 7 “Budgetary Requirements” at this time. That required information will only be available to WPO in the PDF file you submit as an uploaded attachment.**

Joint Progress Reports:

For joint projects involving multiple institutions with separate awards, a single, coordinated progress report that includes information from each institution is highly recommended instead of separate reports with content unique to each institution. The title page should clearly identify all of the separate award numbers and contact information for each institution funded under the joint project, and the report should clearly identify what work was completed by each separately funded PI. Each separate awardee will need to submit this joint progress report to Grants Online to satisfy individual award reporting requirements.

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*⁴ section G.05.k which is included in your award package documentation and online [here](#). Reviews are scheduled to be completed within 90 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.

Final Reports:

At the end of the award performance period, two progress reports are due to NOAA through Grants Online:

1. A performance period progress report describing incremental performance during the

⁴ 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

- most recent performance period (due 30 days after the end of that performance 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 the final performance period).

The format for both of these reports is identical. The difference is that the reporting period for the Final Report is for the entire award performance period, not just the most recent performance period. The Final Report must be comprehensive and cumulative and should stand on its own, independent of the content of previously-submitted interim progress reports. As such, it is fundamentally different from interim reports that are more like status reports. The Final Report describes the scientific approach, methods, results, and final conclusions, and the quality of this final product must reflect that reporting requirement. The length of the Final Report is therefore expected to be much longer than interim reports.

Sharing and Government Use of These Materials:

As part of WPO's commitment to sharing research results and other accomplishments, and to maximize the value of NOAA's federal award dollars to the tax-paying public, progress reporting information submitted to WPO, including Final Reports, image(s), and presentations, may be included (with proper credit given) in a variety of NOAA outreach materials and in publicly-accessible NOAA locations including, but not limited to, an annual report, presentations, and websites. WPO does not share with the external community any awardee proposals or interim progress reports (although summary graphics or select key information embedded in those interim reports may be shared as needed).

Section G.05.k.1 of the *DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions* reminds award recipients that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally/organizationally identifying information (PII), confidential/proprietary technology, processes, or financial information that PIs would not ordinarily disclose to the public or competitors and that is created or obtained relating to a DOC financial assistance award. Therefore, before submitting Final Reports to NOAA through Grants Online, please:

1. Include the acknowledgement statement on the title page to confirm the submitting institution performed redactions as appropriate.
2. Use the Adobe Acrobat "Redact" functionality to mark for redaction, but do not actually redact, the following: personally/organizationally identifying information, confidential/proprietary technology, processes, and/or financial information.
3. For each marking, note the reason per Appendix B, FOIA Exemptions. WPO anticipates that most markings will be classified as "Exemption 4: Information concerning business trade secrets or other confidential commercial or financial information is exempt" or "Exemption 6: Information that, if disclosed, would invade another individual's personal privacy, is exempt."
4. Provide both the unredacted and the proposed redacted versions to NOAA via GrantsOnline, which allows the Federal Program Officer to see both versions. Only the version with the redactions accepted will be posted or shared following NOAA's review and approval.

The above is not required for interim progress reports that are not generally shared publicly. To ensure that the Final Report is accessible, consider reviewing the [Section 508 accessibility standards](#).

Note: Per the *Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions* (C.03, “Intellectual Property Rights,” April 2019), “The rights to any work or other intangible property, produced or acquired under a Federal award are determined by 2 C.F.R. § 200.315 (Intangible property). The non-Federal entity owns any work produced or purchased under a Federal award subject to the DOC’s royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work or authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for Government purposes.”

Questions

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

Appendix A

NOAA READINESS LEVELS (RLs)

There are nine readiness levels (RL) defined in [NOAA Administrative Order 216-105B](#)^{5 5} as follows:

RL 1 Basic Research: “Basic research, experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view. Basic research can be oriented or directed towards some broad fields of general interest, with the explicit goal of a range of future applications.”

RL 2 Applied Research: “Applied research, original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific, practical aim or objective. Applied research is undertaken either to determine possible uses for the findings of basic research, or to determine new methods or ways of achieving specific and predetermined objectives.”

RL 3 Development: “Proof-of-concept for system, process, product, service, or tool; this can be considered an early phase of experimental development; feasibility studies may be included.”

RL 4 Development: “Successful evaluation of system, subsystem, process, product, service, or tool in a laboratory or other experimental environment; this can be considered an intermediate phase of development.”

RL 5 Development: “Successful evaluation of system, subsystem process, product, service, or tool in relevant environment through testing and prototyping; this can be considered the final stage of development before demonstration begins.”

RL 6 Demonstration: “Demonstration of a prototype system, subsystem, process, product, service, or tool in relevant or test environment (potential demonstrated).”

RL 7 Demonstration: “Prototype system, process, product, service or tool demonstrated in an operational or other relevant environment (functionality demonstrated in near-real world environment; subsystem components fully integrated into system).”

RL 8 Demonstration: “Finalized system, process, product, service or tool tested, and shown to operate or function as expected within user's environment; user training and documentation completed; operator or user approval given.”

RL 9 Deployment: “System, process, product, service or tool deployed and used routinely.”

^{5 6} National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 2019. *NAO 2016-105B: Policy on Research and Development Transitions*. <https://go.usa.gov/xyNVE>

Appendix B

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) EXEMPTIONS

[Provided by the NOAA FOIA Team on June 12, 2019.] Not all records are releasable under the FOIA. Congress established categories of information that are unreleasable in response to a FOIA request because release would be harmful to governmental or private interests. These categories are “exemptions” from disclosures. Still, even if an exemption applies, agencies may use their discretion to release information when there is no foreseeable harm in doing so and law does not otherwise prohibit disclosure. There are nine categories of exempt information:

Exemption 1: Information classified to protect national security. The material must be classified under an Executive Order.

Exemption 2: Information related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency.

Exemption 3: Information prohibited from disclosure by another federal law. Additional resources for invoking Exemption 3 are available on the Department of Justice FOIA Resources page.

Exemption 4: Information concerning business trade secrets or other confidential commercial or financial information is exempt.

Exemption 5: Information concerning communications within or between agencies and are protected by legal privileges, include but are not, limited to:

1. Attorney-Work Product Privilege
2. Attorney-Client Privilege
3. Deliberative Process Privilege
4. Presidential Communications Privilege

Exemption 6: Information that, if disclosed, would invade another individual's personal privacy, is exempt.

Exemption 7: Information compiled for law enforcement purposes if one of the following harms would occur is exempt. Law enforcement information is exempt if it: • 7(A). Could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings • 7(B). Would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication • 7(C). Could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy

- 7(D). Could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source •
- 7(E). Would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions
- 7(F). Could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual

Exemption 8: Information that concerns supervision of financial institutions is exempt.

Exemption 9: Geological information on wells is exempt.

OUTLINE FOR INTERIM AND FINAL RESEARCH PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORTS

This outline is an abridged version of the DOC PDF fillable-form template for the RPPR 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](#). Recipient PIs may use the outline that begins on the next page to write reports following these Instructions.

The numbered questions are from Grants Online, and responses can also be copied into the RPPR form in Grants Online. Sections 6 and 7 are specific to WPO reporting needs, and do not have corresponding Grants Online sections. These specific reporting needs are denoted by bullet points.

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):

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):

“The submitter understands that Final Reports and executive summaries of the research from semi-annual interim progress reports will be shared publicly. Personally/organizationally identifying information, confidential/proprietary technology, processes, and/or financial information are properly marked herein, and the submitter agrees that these markings are in compliance with *DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions* Section G.05.k.1.”

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

Section 1. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The purpose of this section is to concisely report on actual progress during the most recent performance period (e.g., semiannual) relative to the proposed work plan, schedule, milestones, and deliverables from the original proposal submitted to NOAA. The description of accomplishments must reflect the incremental progress of the research over the most recent performance period, but, if desired, accomplishments in this section may include cumulative progress since the start of the project only if the most recent performance period progress is clearly distinguished from prior progress. All progress reports must concisely provide this comparative actual versus proposed progress information, preferably using summary tables

(e.g., actual versus proposed tasks completed; actual versus proposed milestones achieved; actual versus proposed deliverables, etc.). Finally, this section must include an executive-level (one paragraph) summary of this most recent progress and any identified operational use(s), and if applicable, a representative figure or image. These materials will be used by WPO for reporting award activities to NOAA executive managers and for public outreach, so please use plain language and provide figures/images when possible.

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

These are the goals and objectives are for the entire project.

25. What was accomplished under these goals?

The accomplishments refer to those achieved during this reporting period.

A table of actual versus planned 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? A table of completed to proposed milestones with current status is recommended.

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

The opportunities for training and professional development refer to those provided during this reporting period.

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

The results disseminated to communities of interest refer to those occurring during this reporting period.

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

The plan refers to continuing to accomplish the project's goals and objectives.

Section 2. PRODUCTS

Report in this section any publications, conference papers, and presentations in the preceding performance period, along with any other products. Only report publications that have been either published or accepted for publication. 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 credit the appropriate NOAA/OAR organization and program (e.g., NOAA/OAR/WPO) for financially supporting your project and include the NOAA logo.¹ Suggested language follows: "This material is based upon work supported by the [XYZ] Program within the NOAA/OAR Weather

¹ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 2019. *What Is the Significance of the NOAA Logo?* <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/noaalogo.html>

Program Office under Award No. XXXXXXXX. Also list any websites or non-operational products/outputs that have been made publicly accessible as a part of your project.

29. Publications, conference papers, and presentations

During this reporting period, did you publish any journal articles, conference papers, and/or give any presentations? If so, please list them here.

During this reporting period, if any journal articles or NOAA series articles were published or submitted for publication, were the articles added to the NOAA Institutional Repository?

30. Technologies or techniques

During this reporting period, did you develop any technologies/techniques? If so, please list them here.

31. Inventions, patent applications, and/or licenses

During this reporting period, did you develop any inventions, patent applications, and/or licenses? If so, please list them here.

32. Other products

During this reporting period, did you develop any other products? If so, please list them here.

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

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.

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

This section will likely remain relatively stagnant over the course of the entire project reporting period. Information should only be added when participants/collaborating

organizations are added.

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

This section will likely become more relevant later in the project as work is completed. If it is too early in the project to list any impacts, say “none” or “not applicable at this time”.

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

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 WPO through a formal request in Grants Online. If there are no deviations, write that.

45. Changes in approach and reasons for the change.

46. Actual or anticipated problems or delays and actions or plans to resolve them.

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. If

there are no special reporting requirements, state that.

Special reporting requirements include project information required by your specific funding program, such as

- What was the project’s Readiness Level (RL) at the start of the project? For definitions of RLs, see Appendix A of the WPO instructions for completing RPPRs.
- What is the project’s current RL, and how was the RL determined?

If the project has increased in RL during the past 6 months, explain what occurred to justify the increase. If your project has sub-components at different RLs and are advancing at different speeds, report RLs for each component separately, but also include a best-estimate, project-total RL. If any part of your project has transitioned to National Weather Service or other operations (RL 9), then include information about its transition (including the specific operational entity). Partial transitions are also important.

- What are the starting, current, and ending Readiness Levels (RL) of the project (See Appendix B)? If the project has increased in RL during the past 6 months, explain what occurred to justify the increase. If your project has sub-components at different RLs and are advancing at different speeds, report RLs for each component separately, but also include a best-estimate, project-total RL.
- Use the table below to report your Readiness Levels.

Readiness Levels Table

Starting readiness level of your project:	RL
Current readiness level of your project:	RL
Justification for the current readiness level:	
Change in readiness levels since the last reporting period:	RL
Proposed ending readiness level of your project:	RL

- If any part of your project has transitioned to National Weather Service or other operations (RL 9), then include information about its transition below (including the specific operational entity). Partial transitions are also important.

The following questions are for research-to-operations-related projects only:

For any project intending to involve a NOAA testbed evaluation or otherwise utilize NOAA testbed resources:

- Include a Testbed Test Plan for testbed projects only (if new or if updated after the initial submission; your NOAA Federal Program Officer will provide separate instructions on required content). There is no need to include this plan if there have been no changes since the last time it was previously submitted.
- Report whether the project has been approved for testbed testing (only if it is a NOAA testbed project).
- Provide a summary of testbed-related collaborations, activities, and outcomes (if it is a testbed project and is not reported elsewhere).

For any project requiring a transition plan, as determined by your Program Manager:

- Report on activities related to transitions to NWS operations, or transitions to uses outside NOAA (commercial, etc.) in the preceding six months (if not reported elsewhere).
- Report the status of your transition plan. Is the transition plan complete, incomplete, or in revision?
- Report on any transitions to NOAA, if anything.

The following question pertains to all projects:

- How has the project addressed or promoted Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) during the most recent reporting period? Report on any D&I activities and initiatives.

Section 7. BUDGETARY INFORMATION

Describe any major budget anomalies or deviations from the original planned budget expenditure plan and the associated reasons.

- Is the project on budget?
- List the current fiscal year's award budget and the amount currently obligated or spent.

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?

Section 9. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTORS (VOLUNTARY)

Refer to the DOC Instructions for this information.