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Policies and Procedures

Title: Approving Funds to Non-Federal Organizations for Support of Scientific Meetings

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Budget and Fiscal Services Branch

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This Directive states policy and procedures for approving funds to non-Federal organizations in support of domestic and international scientific meetings.

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1. Reference

For information on per diem allowances, see DIRECTIVE 342.1.

2. Abbreviations

- ABFO - Area Budget and Fiscal Officer
- AD - Area Director
- BFSB - Budget and Fiscal Services Branch, FMD
- CAD - Contracting and Assistance Division
- FMD - Financial Management Division
- GAMS - Grants and Agreements Management Staff, PAB, CAD
- LAO/T - Location Administrative Officer/Technician
- NFC - National Finance Center
- NPS - National Program Staff
- OTT - Office of Technology Transfer
- PAB - Policy and Agreements Branch, CAD
- PAO - Procurement Assistance Officer
- RS#4 - Reporting Section, NFC
- U.S.C. - United States Code

3. Form

AD-700 - Procurement Request

4. Definitions

Meeting. A symposium, seminar, conference, or any other organized gathering where persons assemble for a common purpose, exchange information and views, and explore, clarify and discuss a defined subject, problem, or area of knowledge. A published report may or may not result from such meeting.

Domestic Meeting. A meeting held in the United States, Canada, or Mexico primarily for the common interest and participation of officials and representatives from those countries. This includes meetings with invited foreign speakers.

International Meeting. A meeting so designated by its sponsor or one for which invitations are issued to potential participants in two or more countries (not counting the United States, Canada, or Mexico). The meeting may be held in any country including the United States.

Grantee. The organization or other legally accountable entity that receives a grant and assumes legal and financial accountability for the awarded funds and for the performance of the grant-supported activity.

Non-Federal Organizations. Any organization, association, society, corporation, or governmental unit other than the Federal Government.

Liaison Scientist. An ARS scientist who serves as liaison between the grantee and ARS scientific personnel. One who monitors the proposed activity from a technical point of view from the initial request for funds through the approval stage to the actual completion of the activity.

5. Authorities

- 7 U.S.C. 3318
- 31 U.S.C. 628
- Public Law 9-370

6. Policy

It is ARS policy:

- To support mission oriented scientific meetings sponsored by organizations having prominence in the scientific community, as judged by the Administrator; Deputy Administrator, NPS; Assistant Administrator, OTT; or AD's. The scientific meetings and activities are designed to coordinate, exchange, and disseminate information that will contribute to accomplishing objectives within the ARS mission.
- To cooperate with other scientific organizations in providing financial support for appropriate meeting expenses, where practicable, rather than provide the sole support.
- To award grants which provide financial support of selected scientific meetings; and apply the policies governing the administration of research grants awarded to support scientific meetings.

7. Responsibilities

The Assistant Administrator, Office of Technology Transfer, will ensure that ARS Headquarters' resources are used to support scientific meetings in accordance with the ARS mission.

The Area Director, will ensure that Area resources are used to support scientific meetings within his/her jurisdiction in accordance with the ARS mission.

8. Criteria And Cost Guidelines For Approving And Funding Request

Purpose and Benefits of Supporting Scientific Meetings.

The purposes of the scientific meetings should coincide with priorities established in the ARS Program Plan. They should contribute directly or indirectly to the accomplishment of high-priority research projects. The anticipated benefits of supporting the meetings should be identified and evaluated based on the goals of the ARS Program Plan.

Relationship with Requesting Organization.

The ARS Program Plan calls for close coordination with other scientific organizations. The criteria used to select grantees must be based on scientific excellence and ARS' past experience with the requesting organization, if any.

Participation of ARS Scientists.

Consider the following when determining ARS support:

- The participation of ARS scientists in a meeting that assures direct access to information exchange for potential benefit to ARS research;
- The number of ARS participants who will attend and their related roles in the meeting (i.e., planning, organizing, chairing sessions, presenting a paper, etc.)

Cost Guidelines.

Funds approved to support scientific meetings must adhere to the cost guidelines contained in the "ARS Instructions and Cost Guidelines" (see Exhibit 1). Any other cost items not listed must be approved prior to awarding the grant.

Funding Level.

In determining the amount of funds ARS will approve to support a scientific meeting, consider the commitments made by other contributors or potential contributors to support the meeting.

9. Procedure

Headquarters Funding

OTT

- Send a copy of the "ARS Instructions and Cost Guidelines" (Exhibit 1) and Sample Budget Proposal (Exhibit 2) to non-Federal organizations requesting financial assistance from ARS for scientific meetings.
- In accordance with the goals of the ARS Program Plan and the potential benefits that will be derived from supporting the meeting, OTT will receive, evaluate, and approve requests of national interest.

NOTE: Funding requests for scientific meetings that are clearly related to local or Area interest can also be sent to OTT when the AD deems them worthy of support, but does not have sufficient funds to support the meeting. Also, requests submitted to OTT of local or Area interest will be forwarded to the appropriate AD.

- Consult NPS on all requests and make a decision to approve or disapprove requests according to the stated criteria.
- Consult FMD-BFSB to determine availability of funds, the funding level for approved meetings, and the accounting code(s) chargeable.
- Issue a letter to the non-Federal organization regarding ARS' decision to approve/disapprove the proposal.
- Forward the approved request, including a copy of the letter sent to the non-Federal organization to NPS, FMD-BFSB, and the liaison scientist.
- Prepare and forward an approved AD-700 with the applicant's grant proposal and budget to CAD-PAB, GAMS, requesting a grant award for the organization, and a copy to FMD-BFSB.

FMD-BFSB

- Advise OTT on the availability of funds to support the meeting.

CAD-PAB, GAMS

- Review the budget proposal to ensure compliance with the cost guidelines.

- Notify, discuss, and resolve any discrepancies noted in the cost guidelines with the proposed grantee.
- Prepare and issue a grant to the non-Federal organization according to ARS policy.
- Complete tasks to obligate funds and ensure that expenses are paid in accordance with cost guidelines.
- Forward the approved grant agreement to NFC-RS#4, with a copy to the grantee, FMD-BFSB, and liaison scientist.

Area Funding:

AD's

- Send a copy of the "ARS Instructions and Cost Guidelines" (Exhibit 1) and Budget Proposal for Support of Scientific Meetings (Exhibit 2) to the non-Federal organization requesting financial assistance from ARS for a scientific meeting.
- Receive and evaluate all requests for support of domestic meetings that are **clearly** within their geographical interest, based on the Area's specific mission and the benefits that will be derived from supporting the meeting.
- Approve or disapprove the request according to the stated criteria.
- Consult with the ABFO on the approved request to determine the availability of funds, funding level for approved meetings, and accounting code(s) chargeable.

NOTE: If sufficient funds are not available at the Area level, forward all worthy requests to the OTT with appropriate justification.

- Issue a letter to the non-Federal organization concerning ARS' decision to provide support with a copy to OTT, the ABFO, and the liaison scientist.
- Prepare and forward an approved AD-700 with the applicant's grant proposal and budget to the PAO requesting issuance of a grant award to the non-Federal organization with a copy to the ABFO.

ABFO

- Advise the AD on the availability of funds and the accounting code(s) to be charged.

PAO

- Review the budget proposal to ensure compliance with cost guidelines.
- Notify, discuss, and resolve any discrepancies noted in the cost guidelines with the proposed grantee.
- Prepare and issue a grant to the organization according to the ARS policy governing grants.
- Complete tasks to obligate funds and ensure that expenses are paid in accordance with approved cost guidelines.
- Forward the approved grant agreement to NFC-RS#4, with a copy to the grantee, ABFO, LAO/T, and liaison scientist.

JANE L. GILES
Deputy Administrator
Administrative Management

Exhibits

- 1 ARS Instructions and Cost Guidelines for Non-Federal Organizations Requesting Funds from ARS to Support Scientific Meetings
- 2 Budget Proposal for Support of Scientific Meetings

ARS INSTRUCTIONS AND COST GUIDELINES FOR NON-FEDERAL ORGANIZATIONS REQUESTING FUNDS FROM ARS TO SUPPORT SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

A ADVANCE NOTICE

Non-Federal organizations must inquire at least 3 months before the proposed scientific meeting date concerning ARS' interest in providing support for the meeting.

B RESPONSIBILITY

The organization receiving a grant assumes legal responsibility and financial accountability for the awarded funds, which include conducting and sponsoring the scientific meeting. The non-Federal organization must furnish ARS a brief synopsis of topics, issues, and accomplishments of the meeting, according to the terms of the grant agreement.

C REQUIRED INFORMATION

The applicant or organization seeking support for scientific meetings must submit a grant proposal, with the request on organization or society letterhead. The request must describe pertinent information about the conference, symposium, workshop, etc., including its purpose, proposed agenda, and a completed budget proposal in the format shown in Exhibit 2.

D COST GUIDELINES

NOTE: Grant funds may not be used to cover any payment to a full-time Federal employee, except when that employee is on leave without pay status from his/her normal duty station.

The expenditures **must** adhere to the following cost guidelines:

- 1 **Salaries and Fringe Benefits.** According to the policy of the non-Federal organization, grant funds may be used to pay salaries and fringe benefits (in whole or in part) of professional personnel, clerical assistants, editorial assistants, and other nonprofessional staff for their time or effort spent directly on the meeting. The salary levels **must** be consistent with those the non-Federal organization would pay when using its own funds.

Fringe Benefits include paid vacations, holidays and sick leave, health and life insurance, contributions to social security and unemployment insurance, pension plans, and the like.
- 2 **Equipment.** Grant funds may be used for rental of necessary equipment, but **not** for the purchase of equipment.
- 3 **Travel and Personal Expenses.** Grant funds may **not** be used for travel unless identified

in the budget proposal and approved by ARS. In exceptional cases when travel is approved, the expenditure should be in accordance with the non-Federal organization's policy. Irrespective of the organization's policy, allowances for airfare may not exceed economy class fares. Per diem or subsistence allowance will be limited to the days of attendance at the meeting plus the actual travel time to and from the conference location by the most direct route available. In all cases, United States flag carriers will be used when available.

When meals and/or lodging are furnished without charge or at a nominal cost (i.e., as part of the registration fee), an appropriate deduction must be made from the authorized per diem (see Directive 342.1).

Grant funds may **not** be used for visas, passport charges, entertainment, tips, alcoholic beverages or bar charges, personal telephone calls, or laundry charges of participants or guests.

Grant funds may **not** be used to pay per diem or subsistence travel expenses for local participants in the conference. Local mileage expenses of such participants may be paid.

- 4 **Supplies.** Grant funds may be used to purchase supplies for the meeting, provided the supplies are received for use during the project period.
- 5 **Conference Services.** Grant funds may be used for necessary recording of the proceedings, such as simultaneous translation, subsequent transcriptions, and rental of conference rooms.
- 6 **Publications Cost.** Grant funds may be used to cover the cost of publishing the proceedings of the scientific meeting and special papers presented.

When grant funds are awarded to pay for the entire or partial cost of publishing proceedings, a book, or a pamphlet, this cost can include special plates, charts, diagrams, printing, distributing, mailing, postage, and general handling, unless otherwise specified and approved at the time the grant is awarded.

- 7 **Registration Fees.** Registration fees for attendees designated by the non-Federal organization may be paid from grant funds, provided such fees cover only those costs otherwise properly chargeable to the grant (not to include costs of coffee breaks, luncheons, banquets, theater, or entertainment of any sort).
- 8 **Dues.** Dues to organizations, federations, or societies, exclusive of registration fees, are **not** allowed as a charge to the grant.
- 9 **Entertainment.** Grant funds may **not** be used to cover the costs of banquets, luncheons,

coffee breaks, theater, or entertainment of any sort.

- 10 **Gratuity.** A contribution or donation of money or other nonbinding payment given to confer distinction or symbolize respect, esteem, or admiration for an individual, may **not** be paid from grant funds. However, speakers' fees for services rendered specifically to support the scientific meeting are allowable.
- 11 The budget proposed for the meeting must be prepared on blank pages and attached to the letter requesting support from ARS. Itemize costs under the main budget categories according to the sample format in Exhibit 2.

E PUBLICATION AND COPYRIGHT

The following guidelines must be used when the recipient organization wishes to publish material and arrange for copyright of any publication resulting from grant funds awarded by ARS to support a meeting.

- 1 Published material may be distributed free of charge. If the organization wishes to charge for the material, a special agreement on the distribution of the material should be negotiated in advance with ARS. The terms of the grant award will govern the disposition of any income derived.
- 2 Three copies of any publication resulting from a meeting should be sent to ARS.
- 3 Acknowledgment of ARS' support must be given on the program of the meeting and on any publication resulting from the meeting. One of the following acknowledgments will suffice:
 - "The ARS participated in the support of this meeting under grant number _____
_____."
 - List ARS among the supporters.
- 4 Unless otherwise specified by ARS, the author is free to arrange for copyright of any publication resulting from work supported by ARS. Any such copyrighted publication, however, shall be subject to a nonexclusive, irrevocable, royalty-free license to the Government to reproduce, translate, publish, and dispose of such material and to authorize others to do so.

(Sample Format)
BUDGET PROPOSAL
(For Support of Scientific Meetings)

Scientific Meeting Title: _____

Cost Category	ARS Requested Contribution	Funds Contributed From Other Sources	Contributors Of Other Funds
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*PERSONNEL - Salaries prorated

TRAVEL - Domestic; Foreign

- (1) Staff, speakers, participants
- (2) Housing and subsistence expenses; per diem allowance or actual charges for staff and participants (specify number of persons and days allowed)

PUBLICATION COSTS - Printing or publication, distribution, and mailing.

SUPPLIES - Stationery, mailing, telegraph, postage, etc.

EQUIPMENT - Rental of equipment, projection, PA system, exhibits, telephone, etc., including maintenance costs

OTHER EXPENSES -

- (1) Printing programs, notices, badges, signs, etc.
- (2) Registration fees (excluding dues)
- (3) Rental of conference rooms, office space for staff, and accessory space
- (4) Recording services, stenography, tape, photography, etc.
- (5) Editorial service and translations, including simultaneous translations

TOTALS

* Estimate the percent of direct time, effort, or hours per week for professional personnel; estimate hours per week for nonprofessional personnel.

Prepared By:

Date:

Telephone: