INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

Conservation Project Support

2006 Field Reviewer Handbook

For information, call
IMLS: (202) 653-4789
or e-mail:
sshwartzman@imls.gov
mfeitl@imls.gov

Please turn to page 6 to access the online review instructions.
Remember, to access the online review system your e-mail address must be the same as we have on file.

Conservation Project Support Reviewer Preparation

Thank you for offering to serve as a Conservation Project Support field reviewer. We selected you to review this year's applications because of your expertise in conservation and collections care issues.

The staff at IMLS prepared this handbook specifically for field reviewers. It will provide you with the procedural information you need. Please use it in tandem with this year's *Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines*. Even if you are an experienced reviewer, you may need to refresh your memory and note any changes.

Before reading the handbook, please do the following:

- Read the Reviewer Checklist included in your review package.
- Fax your CPS Box Receipt form to IMLS at (202) 653-4608 or e-mail us at either sshwartzman@imls.gov or mfeitl@imls.gov to let us know you have received your box of applications.

GETTING STARTED

Before you start reviewing, read this year's *Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines*. It is vital that you understand the goals and priorities of IMLS. Even if you are very familiar with the CPS program, remember that we revise the application guidelines each year; they may have changed in ways that will affect your evaluation.

After reading the guidelines, study this handbook carefully, making sure that you understand your role and the tasks that lay ahead. As you review, try to follow the timeline in the back; these steps are based on suggestions of previous CPS field reviewers. Reviewers tell us that it takes a minimum of two hours to evaluate each application, so it is important to stay on schedule. Periodically throughout the review period, scan the list of helpful reminders on the inside back cover of this handbook.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

You have a conflict if:

- You, your spouse, or minor child are involved with the applicant institution, or in the project described in the application, as a paid consultant or through other financial involvement.
- The application is presented on behalf of an institution with which you, your spouse or minor child are negotiating future employment.
- Through prior association as an employee or officer, you have gained knowledge of the applicant that could preclude objective review of its application. (Past employment does not by itself disqualify you, as long as you can review objectively.)

Other conflicts may arise if you have served as a consultant or member of an accreditation team for an applicant institution or have recently applied for a position at an applicant institution. We rely on you to determine if you can objectively review an application.

Once you have reviewed an application, you should never represent the applicant (concerning the application, or any grant that may result from it) in dealings with the Institute of Museum and Library Services or another federal agency.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will not release your name to the institutions you evaluate. In turn, we ask that you not discuss your assigned applications with anyone else. If you have any questions about an application, please call IMLS at (202) 653-4789; **do not** contact the applicant.

PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

Field reviewers will be paid a flat rate of $200 for services rendered to IMLS. You must fax to us your signed contract and completed Automated Clearing House (ACH) form to receive payment. The ACH form must be submitted each time you review. Your financial institution is no longer required to sign this form, however, you must make sure that your account number is correct and clearly identifiable. You may attach a copy of a cancelled check if you wish to ensure clarity. Please fax the ACH form back to IMLS at (202) 653-4608.

Step-by-Step Application Review Instructions

This section of the handbook contains detailed information on how to review a CPS application. If you think that you may not be able to review every proposal you received, do not begin the review process. Instead, contact an IMLS staff person:

Steve Shwartzman
(202) 653-4641
sshwartzman@imls.gov

Mark Feitl
(202) 653-4635
mfeitl@imls.gov

BOX RECEIPT

As soon as you open your box of applications please fax the Box Receipt form located in your reviewer folder back to IMLS. Please fax to: 202-653-4608. If you are unable to fax the form then please e-mail either Steve Shwartzman (sshwartzman@imls.gov) or Mark Feitl (mfeitl@imls.gov) and indicate that you have received your materials.

CHECK SHIPPING BOX

If you have not already done so, refer to the contents on the Reviewer Checklist in your box. Contact IMLS immediately if any of the items listed are missing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Read your list of applications to see if there are any potential conflicts of interest. Contact IMLS immediately if you have a conflict, or what may appear to be a conflict.

APPLICATION COMPLETENESS

Check your applications to make sure that all required information is included. Use the application checklist as a cross-reference. We only check the original copy for completeness. If any application appears to be incomplete do not score the applicant down, rather, contact IMLS immediately at (202) 653-4789.

READ APPLICATIONS

Read your applications to develop a feel for the range of responses. Before reading your applications, reread the narrative questions and guidelines on pages 4.2–4.5 of the Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines. The listed items represent the types of information you should look for in the applicant's responses and should serve as guideposts for your review.

EVALUATE APPLICATIONS

Read your applications again. Take notes as you read. Draft your comments for each of the eight narrative responses.

- Use your professional knowledge and experience to assess the information objectively.
- You MAY NOT base your evaluation on any prior knowledge of an institution.
- If you question the accuracy of any information, call IMLS to discuss it; DO NOT question the applicant's honesty or integrity in your written comments.
- Consider whether this project meets one of the applicant's highest priorities for collections care.
- Address the applicant's *entire* response to each narrative question.
- Consider a project's strengths *and* weaknesses.

- Acknowledge and compliment strengths.
- Offer practical suggestions for improving weaknesses.
- Judge the application on its own merits.
- Consider whether or not the proposed project involves any construction activities that IMLS is being asked to pay for. IMLS does not pay construction costs.
- Consider whether the applicant has the resources to successfully complete the project.
- Remember that the panelists and the IMLS staff use your comments to help unsuccessful applicants improve their collections care and future applications.
- Comments should be easy to read and understand.
- Comments should be specific to the individual applicant; vague, general statements are not helpful.
- Comments should *analyze* the narrative section of the application; summarizing or paraphrasing the applicant's own words will not help the applicant.
- Comments should address both positive aspects as well as areas for improvement.

ADDRESSING CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

IMLS is looking for projects that support one of the institution's highest conservation priorities as documented in the applicant's CAP, general survey, or long-range conservation plan. As a reviewer, you are evaluating how well designed the project is, and how well the application will address its stated goals.

PROVIDE DETAILED COMMENTS AND ASSIGN SCORES

IMLS asks you to express your professional judgment of each proposal in the following four ways:

- Assess if the proposal addresses the stated narrative questions;
- Write comments for each question;
- Write summary comments about the project's strengths and weakness, your funding recommendation, and whether or not you support full or partial funding; and
- Assign a numerical score to each question. Note that comments that support your scores are required.

Type your final comments and scores (for narrative sections 1-8 plus summary) on your online review sheets. For each application, you need to complete an online review.

Note: make use of all the space provided on the online review sheets

ASSIGN SCORES

After you write your comments, select an appropriate score from 1 to 7 (1=lowest; 7=highest) for each of the eight narrative responses using the IMLS scoring definitions that follow. Enter the scores on your online review sheets. Your typed comments and corresponding scores should always support each other. Assign preliminary scores to each narrative section.

- Use whole numbers only.
- Do not use fractions, decimals, zeros, or more than one number.

SCORING DEFINITIONS

The definitions of the numerical scores are:

SCORE	DEFINITION
1.	Applicant's response provides insufficient information for evaluation.
2.	Applicant's response provides inadequate support for the proposed project activities.
3.	Applicant's response provides minimal support for the proposed project.
4.	Applicant's response provides adequate support for the proposed project activities.
5.	Applicant's response provides good support for the proposed project activities.
6.	Applicant's response provides superior support for the proposed project activities.
7.	Applicant's response provides exceptional support for the proposed project activities.

START WITH "4' METHOD

We suggest that you use the Start With 4 method to assign scores. If all field reviewers adopt this same approach, CPS panelists will see greater consistency in the use of our scoring definitions. If you have questions, please contact us at (202) 653-4789.

IMPORTANT! To help applicants understand and benefit from your reviews, make sure that your scores accurately reflect your written comments.

To Start With 4

- Finish drafting your narrative comments.
- Make sure that your comments accurately reflect your opinions.
- **4 = adequate (provides adequate support for project activities).**
- Consider a score of 4 to represent an adequate range of project feasibility— think of 4 as your starting point.
- Adjust up or down from 4 according to your written comments. If the project seems adequate or average (i.e., neither particularly strong nor particularly weak, but somewhere in the middle), retain the 4;
  - A little better than average, assign a 5;
  - Much better than average, assign a 6;
  - Minimally acceptable, drop down from a 4 to a 3;
  - Inadequate, choose a 2.

Reserve a score of 1 for what appear to be overall *extremely* poor projects and a score of 7 for *exceptionally* good projects.

- Finish drafting your narrative comments.
- Be fair and objective.
- Applications are not ranked by the raw scores you assign but by the relative performance of each application compared to all others. Awarding only high scores will not benefit those applicants; awarding only low scores will not penalize those applicants.

As you review, please keep the following two technical issues in mind: typeface and application format. DO NOT consider them when determining your scores. IMLS will assign penalties as needed.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Your project summary should begin by indicating whether you recommend funding or do not recommend funding. If you support funding, indicate whether you recommend full or partial funding. Then, you should address the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal and highlight specific recommendations that will help unfunded applicants improve future applications. Finally, you should address the following points:

- Is this project one of the institution's highest conservation priorities?
- Is this project conceptually, technically, or fiscally appropriate?

Note: If you do not want to support the project in its entirety but feel that a portion of the project can be financially and technically segmented out and accomplished without compromising the project goals, then clearly identify in your comments the project activities that you wish to support and the project activities that you do not wish to support.

ELIGIBILITY

We determine an institution's eligibility for CPS funds by reading the responses on the Grant Processing Information Sheet (see page 6.13 of the *Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines*). You may read about eligibility requirements on pages 2.2-2.3 of the Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines. If you feel that a particular project does not meet the IMLS CPS eligibility requirements, please contact the Office of Museum Services immediately at (202) 653-4789. DO NOT, under any circumstances, contact an applicant directly.

REVIEW YOUR WORK

Review your draft comments and preliminary scores.

When you are finished, proofread your reviews. *A review with even one missing score or comment cannot be accepted by the online review system.* Adjust your scores, if necessary, to more accurately reflect your written evaluation.

THE ONLINE REVIEW PROCESS

We ask that all reviewers use the online review process. It is easy to do. All you need is internet access. When completed, IMLS can print a copy to forward to the panelists. Just follow these steps:

Access this link: http://e-services.imls.gov/grantapps/reviewers.aspx
Your login is: your e-mail address that is on file with IMLS
Your password is: password
When you log in and create your user account, you will need to create a new password.

The instructions for creating and submitting your reviews will be at your fingertips. When you visit the site, there is a hotlink for technical questions. These questions will be sent directly to our computer technicians that are working with us to design this system. If you have other questions about reviewing, please contact IMLS staff at (202) 653-4789.

When you have completed assigning scores and giving comments for each application assigned to you, you will submit the entire review to IMLS. Then, please remember to print a copy of each completed review to keep for your files.

REMINDERS

The online review process is a wonderful tool; however, there are a few points regarding its use of which you should be aware:

- When accessing the system you can only use the e-mail address we have on file for you.
- We strongly recommend that you type your comments using Microsoft Word and then cut and paste them into the online review sheet. The online review program does not include spell check.
- The online review system limits you to 2,000 characters per comment and will not accept less than 30 characters.
- Once you submit your reviews, you cannot go back in and make revisions. To do so, you must contact IMLS and we will authorize your re-entry into the system so you can make changes. However, prior to submitting your reviews you can repeatedly enter and exit the system without losing your information.
- For PC users, the online review system seems to work best with either of these two web browsers – Netscape and Internet Explorer.
- For MAC users, the online review system seems to work best with either of these three web browsers – Firefox 1.0, Internet Explorer 5.2 and Safari 1.3.1.
- If you have any problems please contact the Help Desk at: 202-653-4747.

SIGN REVIEWER CONTRACT

Sign your reviewer contract and fax to IMLS along with your completed ACH form and reviewer questionnaire.

RETURN MATERIALS TO IMLS

You must fax back the enclosed Automated Clearing House (ACH) form and signed reviewer contract for your services. Honoraria are paid electronically and the ACH form must be completed in its entirety, even if submitted in a prior year with the identical banking information. The ACH form must be submitted each time you review.

Please fax to: 202/653-4608.

Should you decide to use a private carrier rather than fax your reviewer contract, ACH form, and questionnaire, please send them to the following address:

IMLS
Office of Museum Services
1800 M Street, NW
9th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
Attention: CPS Reviewer Information

Please do not send this material via the United States Postal Service (USPS) as we are still experiencing lengthy mail delays.

If you fax your materials then you DO NOT need to send us your originals.

- MEET THE IMLS REVIEW DEADLINE! December 12, 2005
- Do not forget to fill out your reviewer questionnaire (you may send it a few days later if you wish); it is your chance to let us know what you think about your review experience.

KEEP COPIES UNTIL APRIL 1, 2006

Keep your applications and a copy of your review sheets until April 1, 2006 (in case of questions from IMLS staff).

- Maintain confidentiality of all applications that you review.
- After April 1, 2006, destroy the applications (you may keep optional attachments such as catalogues or brochures).

Thank You for Serving as a CPS Field Reviewer!

Conservation Project Support

WHAT IS CONSERVATION PROJECT SUPPORT?

Conservation Project Support (CPS) is an annual, federal grant program that awards applicants up to $150,000 in matching funds. The program helps museums identify conservation needs and priorities and perform activities to ensure the safekeeping of their living and non-living collections.

Please remember that we usually support any type of conservation project if it meets one of the institution's most urgent conservation needs.

FUNDING POLICIES

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

You will find a full discussion of project eligibility on pages 2.2 and 2.3 of the *Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines*. Types of projects eligible for funding include

- General survey of collections and environmental conditions
- Detailed condition survey of collections
- Environmental survey
- Environmental improvements
- Research in conservation
- Treatment of collections
- Training in conservation

EXCEPTIONAL PROJECTS

IMLS supports exceptional projects whose results will have a considerable impact upon the museum field. Applicants may request up to $250,000 for exceptional projects. You should provide the same level of technical review for these applications as you do for all others; additionally, you must consider whether the project will have broad applicability for conservation care beyond the individual museum applicant.

If an applicant requests over $150,000 for a project that will not widely benefit conservation care in museums, evaluate the application as you would any other (i.e., do not consider it a proposal for an exceptional project). We will ask our panelists whether the project can be completed successfully with no more than $150,000 in IMLS funds.

EDUCATION COMPONENT

Applicants have the option to apply for up to an additional $10,000 to develop and implement educational activities that relate directly to the proposed conservation project (refer to page 2.4 of the *Guidelines* to see what IMLS will fund). Only applicants that submit a conservation project are eligible to submit an education component. Applicants that apply for the education component are required to complete a separate narrative and detailed budget as well as required supporting documentation in addition to meeting the requirements for Conservation Project Support. You, as a field reviewer, are NOT required to review or comment on the education component. However, we would appreciate any written general comments on any technical

aspects of the education component you feel should be communicated to the applicant. The education component will not be scored. After reviewing all conservation projects recommended for funding, IMLS staff will make recommendations to the Director on which education components should be funded. You may refer to page 4.5 in the *Guidelines* to see what questions applicants for the education component must address.

GROUP PROJECTS

A group of museums may collectively apply for a CPS grant as long as each museum individually meets all IMLS eligibility criteria.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Conservation Project Support grant funds will *not* support

- regular, ongoing operating costs of an institution
- projects whose goals are primarily aesthetic, educational, or exhibition-driven
- projects that are primarily collections management activities
- projects that are primarily international in scope or that involve the reintroduction of species into the wild
- projects involving construction including renovation or major building improvements, reconstruction and restoration
- installation of security or fire suppression systems
- installation or purchase of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems for an *entire* museum building.
- acquisition of objects or species for the collection

Please call the IMLS staff at (202) 653-4789 if you have any questions about a project's eligibility.

YOUR ROLE AS A FIELD REVIEWER

We selected you from our list of prospective reviewers because of your technical knowledge of conservation issues and practices. Your job is to provide the highly detailed, technical field review.

After looking at a select group of project proposals, you will write evaluations and assign corresponding scores. You must decide if a project seems feasible based on its design, methods, personnel and budget, and whether it meets one of the institution's highest conservation needs. Each proposal that you read will also be read by two other field reviewers.

The scores given by the three field reviewers will be entered into the IMLS database, standardized, and used to rank the applications. Only those top ranked applications will be sent to panel for review, discussion and a funding recommendation. The lowest ranked applications will not be sent to the panel, but applicants will receive the three field reviews to assist them in deciding whether to re-apply and how to improve their applications. Applications that are panel reviewed, both funded and unfunded, will receive both field reviews and panel reviews.

HOW DOES IMLS ASSIGN THE APPLICATIONS?

We organize applications for field review according to three items on the CPS Information Form:

- Type of Project
- Collections Category
- Types of Materials

We try to match you as closely as possible with applications corresponding to your area(s) of expertise.

Many combinations of project and material types are possible, so you may not receive your first choice of projects to review. We have assigned you applications that we believe you are qualified to review (see note below); if you are uneasy about any of our selections, please call us immediately at (202) 653-4789.

Note: Certain projects, such as general conservation surveys and environmental surveys or improvements, are likely to involve a variety of material types. We assign these projects to field review based on the dominant material; we do not expect you to have expertise with each type.

HOW ARE REVIEWS USED?

IMLS processes comments and scores. Reviewers' scores are mathematically standardized to mitigate the effect of those who always use low or high scores. A single standardized score is produced from each reviewer for each application. This score is then used to rank the applications.

Using a generally accepted mathematical formula – standard deviation – IMLS standardizes the field reviewer scores for all applications. The final standardized scores from the field reviewers for each application are averaged to produce one average standardized score. All applications are ranked based on the standardized average, from highest to lowest. This ranking will be used to determine which applications are sent to the peer review panel. The panel will make final recommendations based on the field review comments as well as their own expertise.

For those applications that go to panel review, your reviews will provide the basis for the panel review, guiding panelists to the strong and weak aspects of the application. If a panel reviewed application is not funded, your review comments, along with those of the panelists, will assist the applicant as they consider how to revise their application for resubmission. For those applications that are not ranked highly enough to go to panel, field review feedback will be their only guide. Successful applicants point to good scores and positive comments as a stamp of approval for their program proposals. Museum administrators report that receiving IMLS awards enhances fundraising success with private foundations or state and local sources. Unsuccessful applicants use reviewer comments to improve or change their applications for resubmission.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PANEL REVIEWER?

Three separate groups of CPS panel reviewers meet in Washington, DC about four months after the start of the field review process to conduct second-level evaluations of those top ranked applications. Our panelists are highly respected conservators and collections care professionals. In many cases, we select them because of their superior performance as CPS field reviewers in prior years.

Several weeks before the panel meeting, we send each panelist about 15 applications, each with its three corresponding field review sheets. Panelists use your technical reviews (and those of your fellow field reviewers) to help them in their decision-making process. **This makes it essential that you provide a thorough review with helpful detailed comments.**

Panelists are not asked to do detailed, technical reviews. IMLS staff and the CPS panelists are relying on you to point out specific strengths and weaknesses of each proposal you evaluate.

During each panel meeting, two panelists present their applications to the full panel, discussing each application and providing funding recommendations. Panelists may recommend funding an entire project or only part of a project; they may recommend against funding a project or propose funding a project with a specific contingency. When further questions arise, the panel may discuss a particular application in greater detail. The IMLS Director takes into account the advice provided by the review process and, by law, makes all final funding decisions.

WHEN WILL IMLS ANNOUNCE THE AWARDS?

The Director of IMLS makes the awards and announces them in late April. At that time, IMLS notifies all applicants by mail whether or not they have received an award. We also send a list of grantees to all participating reviewers and panelists. With their notification, all applicants receive the reviews that their field reviewers and panelists completed. Museum staff benefit tremendously from your thoughtful, constructive comments.

HOW CAN YOU GET FEEDBACK ON YOUR PERFORMANCE?

Field reviewers will receive information about their performance from IMLS. IMLS will mail you feedback on your performance regarding your strengths and weaknesses as a field reviewer. You will receive this information in May. Upon receiving your evaluation, we invite you to call the IMLS Office of Museum Services at (202) 653-4789 to discuss your evaluation.

We greatly appreciate the tremendous amount of time and effort you have committed to being a reviewer. By participating in the peer review process, you are making a significant contribution to the Conservation Project Support grant program and are providing an invaluable service to the entire museum community. Thanks!

Application Materials

Each application you receive will contain the following:

- face sheet with signed assurances
- information form
- application checklist
- statement of purpose/mission statement/history
- project narrative(s)
- schedule of completion
- project budget(s)
- federally negotiated indirect cost rate form (if applicable)
- budget justification
- proof of nonprofit status (if applicable)
- list of key project staff/consultants
- resumes
- letters of commitment (if applicable)
- attachments (if applicable)
- grants processing information sheet

Note: An application is complete only if it contains all of the elements listed above. If any item is missing, please call us immediately at (202) 653-4789.

We suggest that you read your applications twice: first, to get a general sense of their content and quality; and second, to evaluate and score them (see the field reviewer schedule of completion on page ?? for the timeframe we suggest). Following is a brief description of each item and what you should look for during your review.

FACE SHEET

These two pages provide you with information about the applicant institution and the key people responsible for the application. This form includes the signature of the Authorizing Official.

CPS INFORMATION FORM

Scan these pages to find out basic information about the proposal, e.g., the type of project, who the project consultants are, the types of materials involved. The project summary found under question 18 should give you a good sense of what the applicant intends to accomplish.

PROJECT BUDGET(S)

The CPS grant application includes three elements to describe the costs of a proposed project: a Summary Budget that describes costs for the entire project, a Detailed Budget Form for each year of the project, and a budget justification, which explains all components of the Detailed Budget Forms.

Using your knowledge of similar projects, look over individual items and total project costs. Applicants must justify all costs in their budget justification. Look particularly for justification of consultant fees, materials, equipment and supplies, and travel expenses. Note, however, that consultant fees may vary due to the individual's specialty, geographical location and cost of living.

Applications recommended for funding should have budgets that reflect no more and no less than the total amount necessary to complete the project successfully.

IMLS funds may be used to pay up to one-half the cost of the project. However, applicants occasionally request more than 50% of the total project costs. If you receive such an application, please provide a complete review of it and make a note of the situation in your comments. IMLS staff will resolve the problem.

Applicants submitting an education component are required to submit an additional detailed budget identifying proposed educational activities. You are NOT required to evaluate this education budget (See *Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines*, pages 6.10 to 6.11).

Note: See the Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines *for applicant instructions on developing the budget.*

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

This document should explain all elements of the Detailed Budget including the role that each person listed in the project budget will play. Also, the budget justification should provide support for all proposed equipment, supplies, travel services, and other expenses; specifications for all hardware and software for which IMLS funding is requested should be provided.

INDIRECT COSTS

Applicants with a current Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate agreement are permitted to claim that rate in their budget forms. IMLS cannot restrict the rate claimed. Applicants without an indirect cost rate are permitted to claim up to 15% indirect costs in the IMLS column and 15% indirect costs in the cost share column if they so choose. For more information on indirect costs, please refer to the *Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines*, page 3.6.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Use the statement of purpose to measure the museum's performance in carrying out its mission. Try to determine if the proposed conservation project is appropriate to the museum's larger purpose.

PROJECT NARRATIVE(S)

The narrative draws all of the elements of a proposal together in response to the eight questions in the *Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines* on pages 4.2 - 4.4. Applicants submitting an education component are required to submit additional narrative responses. You are NOT required to evaluate this education narrative. The narrative questions for the education component may be found in the Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines, page 4.5.

SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION

The schedule of completion (Page 6.12) should help you determine if the applicant has allowed enough time for the project and whether the project activities are logically ordered. The schedule may be in the form of a chart, paragraph, or outline, and should show when each major project activity will be completed; project activities must begin between May 1 and September 1, 2006, the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month.. Projects may run for a maximum of three years. Applicants submitting an education component should include education activities on this schedule.

ATTACHMENTS

We require all applicants to submit supplementary documents in support of their proposal. Depending on the type of project, applicants might submit:

- letters of commitment from project consultants
- general conservation survey report or CAP report
- long range conservation plan
- treatment plans or proposals (for treatment projects)
- training curricula (for training projects or projects that include a training component)
- sample survey forms (for general and detailed survey projects)
- photographs/slides/video/CD (required for treatment projects)

Other optional supporting material may include:

- brochures or catalogs
- collections policies
- detailed conservation surveys
- equipment specifications
- MAP assessments
- maps/diagrams
- photographs/slides/videos
- letters of support

Note: you can find descriptions of required and suggested supporting documentation for each project type on pages 2.12-2.13 of the Conservation Project Support Grant Application and Guidelines.

Applicants may support their conservation needs and priorities by means of a general conservation survey/CAP report, or long-range conservation plan. Most often, you will see a general conservation survey/CAP report. Since these reports can be very long, we allow applicants to excerpt the part(s) that relates directly to the proposed project.

Some applicants may send a long-range conservation plan along with their general conservation survey/CAP report. Applicants that do not have a general survey/CAP report may send only a long-range conservation plan. You must ask yourself if the report or plan justifies and fully supports the proposed activities.

We have already checked each *original* application to make sure all required supporting documentation is included. Your task is to consider whether the documentation is adequate, appropriate, and convincing. If you think that any documentation does not sufficiently support one or more of the eight narrative responses, then describe the problem in your review of that section. You should also discuss any general problems with the supporting documentation in the space for summary comments.

Sample Reviewer Comments

Good Comments:

- are presented in a constructive manner.
- are concise, specific, and easy to read and understand.
- are specific to the individual applicant.
- correlate with the score that is given.
- acknowledge the resources of the institution.
- reflect the application's strengths and identifies areas for improvement.
- are directed to applicants for their use.

Remember, both successful and unsuccessful applicants use your comments to improve their institutions as well as future applications. Each of the sample comments listed below is followed by an explanation of its good characteristics.

NON-LIVING COLLECTIONS

Below are examples of the types of comments that panelists find helpful. We have selected these comments because (1) they are detailed and specific; (2) many refer back to the applicant's narrative response; and (3) all have been assigned appropriate, corresponding scores. Please try to provide the same level of detail and specificity in your field review comments. You will have different issues to comment on for the various applications you review.

1 . Project Design

This is an exemplary application for a detailed condition survey. The project is well organized, clearly fits within the long-range conservation plan and priorities of the institution, and continues a methodological survey of the entire collection that was begun with an IMLS general survey. The project design demonstrates a clear understanding of what makes a successful survey project, informed by their recent experience with the same conservators used in the detailed survey, which examined half the collection. The narrative covers every important detail of logistics, describing the tasks, timing and responsibilities clearly.

2. (A) Conservation Methods

The strength of this project is the careful integration of the consultant conservators into the process during the early planning of the new museum addition. Even so, it is problematic that important details about the storage furniture and supplies to be purchased are lacking. Will the Steel Fixture cabinets be vented or not? What type of gasketing will be used with the Steel Fixture cabinets? Also, it would be very nice to have some description of the HVAC system to be installed in the new storage area. It would also be nice to hear something about how they plan to protect collections during the construction phase. There is also little justification or much of a description given for the myriad of supplies to be purchased for this project, although most appear to be appropriate. The addition of the training seminar on handling and storing framed paper artifacts is a nice touch and should integrate well into the rehousing aspect of this project.

2. (B) Proposed Training Curriculum

The Conservation Training Curriculum (including appendix) is well thought out and appropriate. It is not clear, however, if students would get training in methods for photographing specimens for archival purposes (especially digital photography) or in electronic database applications, both of which are indispensable tools for modern conservation. Perhaps these topics are included under "inventory and documentation," but they are not identified explicitly.

3. Importance of the Objects/Structures/Specimens

While the importance of their collection in general is nicely described and their value to a national and international audience made clear, a more detailed description of the actual artifacts involved in this rehousing project is lacking along with any kind of basic inventory of the collections affected. They imply that all the collections currently stored in the Academy Building and Maintenance Barn will be relocated into the new facility, but this is never actually stated outright, and one wonders just how much they can fit into a 1,000 square foot building. As they seem to actively collect, what provision do they make for the storage of future collections?

4. Relation to Ongoing Conservation Activities

The case is made that the conservation of these four high priority objects is appropriate now because "appropriate storage/exhibition space" is now available in the Carriage Room at the institution after what appears to have been years of waiting. While it seems clear that the new exhibition conditions will indeed be superior to those in the cave in which the objects have been previously stored, the actual environmental conditions in this new space are not actually described at all.

5. Anticipated Benefits of the Project

No case is made for short term immediate benefits beyond the inventory that will verify specimen locations in the computer data base. The proposal does not demonstrate immediate need. The use of the dry or wet marine invertebrate collection is not well documented in the proposal. Are the type specimens for 60 species collected in the offshore benthic survey studied by visitors? Is there a plan to hire a curator of marine invertebrates to allow for inhouse study of these collections? The use and availability of the dry collection to the scientific community should be documented in the proposal.

6. Ongoing Museum Functions

The question is not really answered. It is stated that conservation will take place off-site so that it does not interfere with museum functions. However, there is no discussion of how matting, framing, storage, photography, or paperwork (which museum staff will be responsible for) will impact museum functions.

7. Project Budget

The Museum requests 50% of the overall costs for the conservation of the four volumes as proposed by the Northeast Document Conservation Center. The overall cost estimates are reasonable and the project timetable is practical. The institution is dedicated to the conservation of its collections as exhibited through budgeted matching funds to see the completion of this project. I would have like to have seen an itemized breakdown between materials and labor, and how various staff bill based on levels of experience.

8. Qualifications of Project Personnel

The Museum staff seems appropriate, but reliance on an unspecified contractor for all the HVAC expertise is very unwise. While a contractor with a long time commitment to the institution would be one thing, reliance on an unspecified contractor without an architect or engineer, nor a formal design, will likely cause a problematic and ultimately ineffective project. Ms. Smith's credentials, as they specifically apply to this project, should have been mentioned.

SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The goal to provide a training program is an excellent one, and the location would provide opportunities not found in many locations. However, the responses to several questions do not provide enough detail and clarity to determine whether the priority of the program is training or getting fossils prepared. There does not appear to be enough substance to the training program to warrant funding.

The project would be strengthened substantially if there were clear objectives for the educational agenda of the program; if there was a more detailed indication of the concepts to be presented, discussed, and experienced in the lab setting; if there was an indication of how interns will be evaluated. There is so much content that could be covered, to the intern's benefit, that it is not clear why they are hired for only 16 hours/week. If they are to be involved in other activities on a scheduled basis, then that should be substantiated (both what they would be doing, why, and how much time). Fewer interns might make it a better training environment for them.

Below are examples of the types of comments that panelists find helpful. We have selected these comments because (1) they are detailed and specific; (2) many refer back to the applicant's narrative response; and (3) all have been assigned appropriate, corresponding scores. Please try to provide the same level of detail and specificity in your field review comments. You will have different issues to comment on for the various applications you review.

1. Project Design

The project designed is a systematic approach to complete a base map for the lower garden areas, complete the Plant Record Database, and map and label the specimens in the garden. The tools they propose to use include AutoCAD, Access, and label machine and Vision software. These will help the applicant to achieve their intended goals. However, Activity I is unclear. The land survey includes infrastructure, trees, boundaries, and markers. This map, with a 2' contour can be easily converted into AutoCAD format and is ready to merge with maps of other areas of the garden. The description presented here is not detailed enough to understand why it takes 80 hours to format the data.

2. (A) Conservation Methods

A key component to the success of this work lies in the use of positive reinforcement training to gain the cooperation of the subject animals. This renders the collection of cytological samples and even ultrasound records minimally invasive and virtually stress free for the bears. Thus, much higher sampling rates will be possible, increasing the reliability of the results. The video monitoring will provide easily col-

lected, standardized behavioral data. Scoring video data is difficult at best, but having all of the scoring performed by a single individual or small group trained by a single person should greatly increase the reliability of the video records. All of this increases the probability of the production of highly reliable new data that will be of tremendous benefit in the management of this seriously declining population.

2. (B) Proposed Training Curriculum

Both the American and the Asian training components offer essential and integrated, yet very different, tools that should assist the separate audiences to effectively implement their respective applied tasks. While experienced trainers are critically important, additional capacity building could be achieved through training in-country instructors to carry on future training workshops. Hence, a "train-the-trainer" concept built-in component.

3. Importance of Objects/Structures/Specimens

Cyclura pinguis is an extremely rare, endangered and important (both taxonomically and ecologically) iguana. It is under imminent threat of extinction. These facts are well explained in the narrative. It is a high priority species with the IUCN Iguana Specialist Group as well as the AZA Rock Iguana SSP. The only breeding group in captivity is at this Zoo.

4. Relation to Ongoing Conservation Activities

There is no indication that this project will enhance the ongoing activities other than as training for students during the project. The financial commitment to conservation activities has also not been demonstrated. While this may be the greatest collection's care need, it does not appear that the arboretum know what it will do with it on a day-to-day basis.

5. Anticipated Benefits of the Project

Although Addax are endangered there is no evidence that Assisted Reproduction Technologies (ART) are needed now or might be needed in the future. Addax breed well in captivity and there is no reason to believe that the captive population or a reintroduction could not be sustained through natural reproduction. It is unclear whether these results would ever have direct application to Addax management or conservation.

6. Ongoing Museum Functions

Re-covering all its indoor flooring will clearly disrupt the normal elephant-related operations, both from a husbandry and viewing public perspective. Having been through past major renovation projects, however, they appear confident that the disturbances can be kept to a minimum. They propose a complex system of cross coordination among the zoo staff, outside contractors, and volunteers. The complexity of the project would argue against the probability of success were it not for their reported past history of successful experience with this particular contractor.

7. Project Budget

Costs for the actual renovation of existing space are minimal as a percentage of total budget requested. While bid specifications were not detailed, projections of time

for construction appear realistic. One full-time aquarist per animal, however, in addition to 5 hours of a training consultant per week seems a generous allotment of time devoted to only 2 individual seals. In general, operant conditioning training sessions for pinnipeds comprise less than 1 full hour per day, and can be even less if simply maintaining behaviors rather than learning new activities.

8. Qualifications of Project Personnel

Some exceptionally well-qualified persons have been assembled for this project. Dr. Smith's responsibilities are not elucidated. It is unfortunate that some level of background work has not been established in the host countries. How are we to know that qualified persons are available and willing to participate in this project? It is not clear who will be ultimately responsible for collection of samples in the field.

SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

I find this proposal to be very strong. The design of the project itself, with its varying combinations of females with a familiar or unfamiliar male, or no male, etc. is very well thought out and contributes to the internal validity of the study as a whole. These investigators are highly qualified to conduct this work and the proposed collection of multiple measures of reproductive status concurrently should constitute a major contribution to the reproductive and assisted reproduction literatures. Since these animals are not reproducing on their own, the efforts to provide assisted reproduction may indeed be this sun bear species' last chance at survival.

POOR COMMENTS

Listed below are sample "poor" comments. Poor comments are vague, irrelevant, insensitive, or unclear. These comments actually hinder the evaluation process rather than help it. They are not helpful to either panelists or applicants.

To avoid making poor comments, DO NOT:

- penalize an applicant because you feel the institution does not need the money. Remember, any eligible institution may receive CPS funds, regardless of need.
- penalize an applicant because of missing materials. If you are missing required materials, please contact IMLS immediately at (202) 653-4789.
- make derogatory remarks. Instead, offer suggestions for improvement rather than harsh criticism.
- question an applicant's honesty or integrity. You may question the accuracy of information provided by the applicant, but if you are unsure how to raise your question, contact IMLS at (202) 653-4789.
- offer or ask for irrelevant or extraneous information. Your comments should concern only the information IMLS requests of applicants.

Each of the sample poor comments listed below is followed by an explanation of why it is a poor comment.

1. **What is the Design of the Project?**
   "Efficient breakdown of categories for the individual parts of the project." (Vague, irrelevant, not evaluative)

2. **What are the Proposed Conservation Methods and Why are they Conservationally Sound?**
   "Conservation methods and the time table are presented in exceptional detail and almost to the point of overkill." (Vague, not evaluative, insensitive)

3. **What is the Object(s), Historic Structure(s), or Specimen(s) That is the Focus of This Project?**
   "The animals to be moved to the pens are central to the mission of the facility." (Vague, not evaluative)

4. **How Does the Project Relate to Your Museum's Ongoing Conservation Activities?**
   "This project fits into the overall 'big picture' for the art museum and the university as a whole." (Vague, not evaluative)

5. **What are the Anticipated Benefits of this Project?**
   "The benefits stated are better can and monitoring of the collection, which is adequate." (Vague, insensitive, misspelled)

6. **How Will the Applicant Ensure that Ongoing Museum Functions are not Inhibited by these Project Activities?**
   "Ship on a day of the week when the museum is closed." (Vague, unclear)

7. **How Does the Project Budget Support the Project Goals and Objectives?**
   "The project budget is reasonable for this kind of project." (Vague, not evaluative)

8. **What are the Qualifications and Responsibilities of the Project Personnel?**
   "The personnel are clearly experienced and qualified." (Vague, not evaluative)

Project Summary :
"This is worthy of funding; however, I would ask the project contact person for some additional details if appropriate." (Vague, wrong audience)

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ

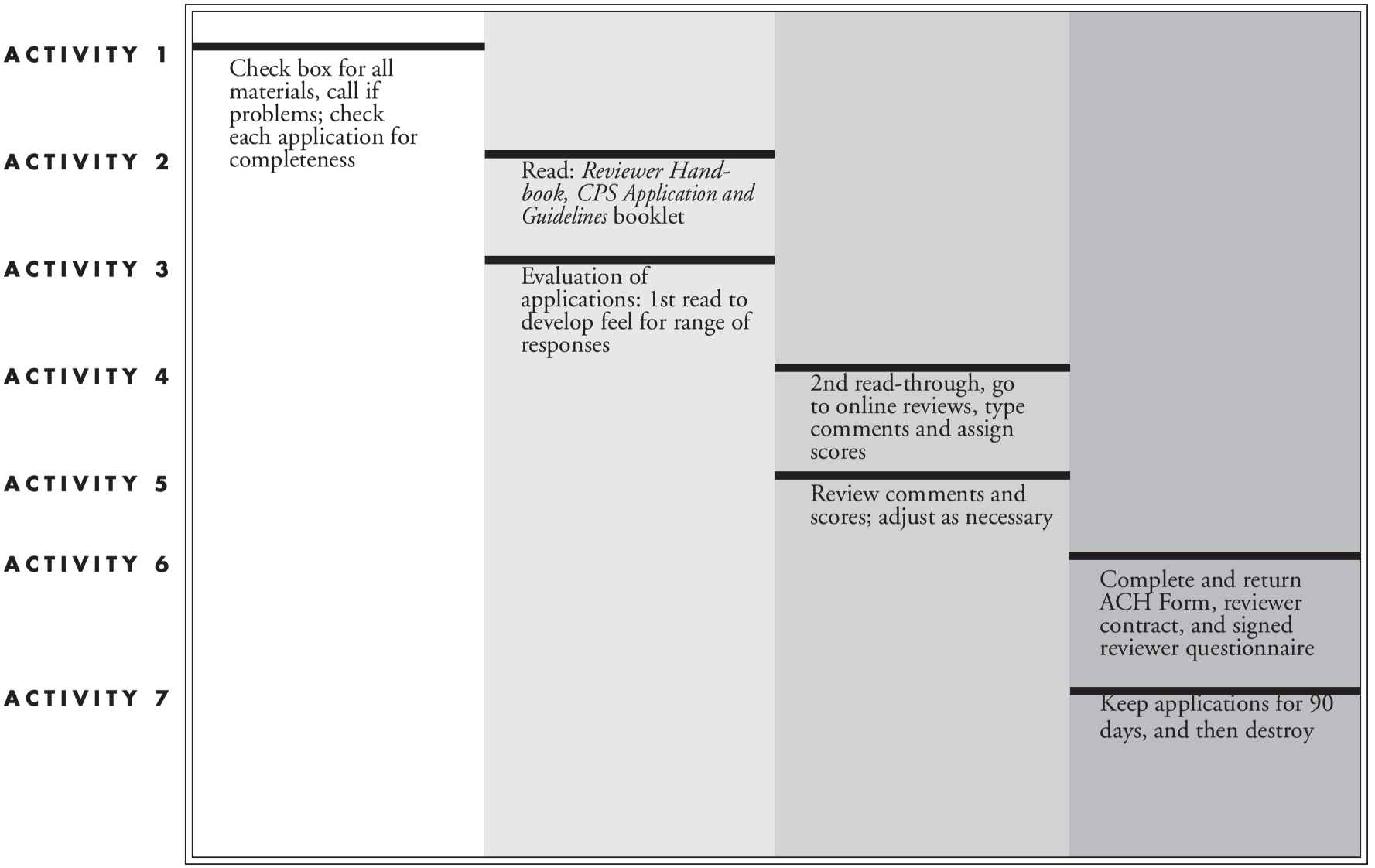
1. **How should I assign scores?**
   Scores should be assigned for all of the 8 narrative questions, based on the scale of 1-7, discussed on page ?? of this booklet.
2. **Should I consider new projects more competitive than resubmissions?**
   No, all projects whether new or resubmissions should be considered based on the current proposal. An applicant's funding history should not be a factor in your evaluation.
3. **What should I do if I discover something missing in the application? Or if the applicant did not complete all parts of the application?**
   Call IMLS immediately at (202) 653-4789! We only check the original copy of the application for completeness. We may be able to send you the missing materials.
4. **Should I consider need when evaluating an application?**
   No, need is not a review criterion. The institution should be evaluated based on, among other things, whether or not it makes a convincing case that the project is one of their highest conservation priorities as documented in their narrative and supporting documentation.
5. **To whom should the review comments be addressed?**
   Please address all comments to the applicant. While the IMLS panelists read the comments, it is important to write the comments to the applicant so they may use them constructively.
6. **What should I do if I find that I know someone mentioned in the application?**
   Call IMLS immediately and discuss the possibility of a conflict of interest. Not all cases are conflicts, but please call us to discuss your situation.
7. **Must I make comments for every question?**
   Yes, you must make a constructive and substantive comment for every question. This is the best way to help an applicant improve all aspects of their application.
8. **What are indirect costs rates, and why do some institutions have such a high rate?**
   Indirect cost rates are negotiated rates for institutions to charge overhead costs when completing a project. Some institutions, such as universities have very high rates because of the infrastructure involved in carrying out a project within that institution. Also, an institution may have a high rate if they are in a very isolated geographic area, making it more expensive to carry on daily activities such as an institution in Hawaii. Please do not allow these rates to bias your reviews.
9. **What should I do if the institution does not have a long-range conservation plan?**
   Applicants are not required to include a long-range conservation plan so do not penalize them, however, it is strongly recommended they include one if available; if not available encourage them to develop one.
10. **Can institutions create their own forms for the budget, face sheet, and information form?**
    Yes, this is acceptable. As long as an institution includes all the information that IMLS requires, the forms can be recreated.

11. How was I selected to review these applications?
You were selected to review your particular group of applications based on the conservation skills you indicated on your IMLS reviewer update and also based on your choice of project type and type of materials with which you have the most experience.

12. Is there any type of project that carries more weight than another?
No, all types of projects have equal weight. The project, however, must meet one of the applicant's highest conservation priorities.

13. What happens to my reviews once they are submitted?
We standardize (weight) your scores along with those of all field reviewers using a textbook standard deviation formula which is integrated into our online review system. The result is an average standardized score for each application which is ranked from highest to lowest. We then take, approximately, the top 75% to panel for consideration.

FOUR-WEEK SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION



Reminders—For Reviewing CPS Applications

WHEN STARTING

- FIRST—Let us know **immediately** via e-mail or by faxing the enclosed box receipt that you received your box of applications.
- Read the application guidelines and this handbook!
- Call or e-mail IMLS **immediately** if you have any questions or problems at **(202) 653-4789** or **sshwartzman@imls.gov** or **mfeitl@imls.gov**
- Look carefully for conflicts of interest with your assigned applications. Call us if you see even the potential for conflict.
- Budget your time. Each application takes at least 2 hours!

WHEN REVIEWING

When reviewing, ask yourself

- Does this project address one of the institution's documented highest conservation needs/ priorities?
- Is the project appropriate for this institution and these collections?
- Is the project feasible?

- Please call us if any required materials are missing.
- Write your detailed comments to help both applicants and panel reviewers—your peers.

WHEN COMPLETING YOUR ONLINE REVIEW

- Use the online review system to type your comments and scores. Access the system by following this link: http://e-services.imls.gov/grantapps/reviewers.aspx
- Online Reviews must include:
  1. narrative comments
  2. numerical scores
  3. an overall assessment of the application, including a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses, and a funding recommendation
- Complete your online reviews by December 12, 2005.
- Fax your ACH Form, questionnaire, and signed reviewer contract to (202) 653-4608.

Peer review works, thanks to you!