

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

- Subject:** Approval and Reporting for Conferences Hosted, Attended, or Co-Sponsored by Bureau of Reclamation Employees
- Purpose:** Describes the approval and reporting requirements for Reclamation employees to host, attend, or co-sponsor conferences in support of Reclamation's mission. The benefit of this Directive and Standard (D&S) is that it establishes procedures for requesting approval and reporting requirements for Reclamation- and externally-hosted conferences as well as Reclamation co-sponsored conferences. These requirements are intended to ensure efficient and timely compliance with Federal Government, Department of the Interior, and Reclamation-specific conference approval and reporting requirements, as well as mitigate the risk of inappropriate conference activities and spending.
- Authority:** Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, December 16, 2014 (Pub. L. 113-235, Division E, Title VII, Section 739); Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Pub. L. 113-76, Division E, Title VII, Section 742; 128 Stat. 242); 5 U.S.C. § 4101; 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 410.404, *Determining if a conference is a training activity*; Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) 41 CFR 300 and 301; Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 48 CFR 1 and 14; Executive Order [13589](#), *Promoting Efficient Spending*; Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memoranda [M-11-35](#) and [M-12-12](#); General Services Administration (GSA) [Bulletin FTR 14-02](#), *Clarification of Agency Reporting Requirements for Conferences*; [Financial Management Memoranda \(FMM\) 2015-010 \(Vol. VI.B\)](#), *Revised Authorization and Reporting Guidance on Conference-Related Activities and Spending*; [FMM 2014-011](#) (Vol. X.A.), *Issuance of Revised Temporary Duty Travel Policy*; Departmental Manual (DM) 205 DM 2, *Attendance at Meetings and Acceptance of Contributions*; 205 DM 15.6, *Travel and Transportation – Conference Travel*; 255 DM 2, *General Administrative Delegations*; and the Department's [Temporary Duty Travel Policy](#), dated March 2014.
- Approving Official:** Director, Policy and Administration (POLICY Director)
- Contact:** Business and Administrative Services Division, Program Services Office (84-52100)
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- 1. Introduction.** Reclamation hosts or co-sponsors conferences and its employees attend externally-hosted conferences each year to carry out Reclamation's mission to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public. To ensure resources are used

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efficiently, this D&S establishes the process and controls Reclamation will use to obtain Department and internal approval of conferences hosted or co-sponsored by Reclamation and externally-hosted conferences attended by Reclamation employees.

2. **Applicability.**

- A. This D&S applies to all Reclamation employees and supervisors of those employees who are involved in hosting, attending, and co-sponsoring conferences.
- B. This D&S **does not** apply to:
 - (1) conference calls;
 - (2) video conferences/webinars;
 - (3) training that meets the definition in Paragraph 3.Q.;¹ and
 - (4) consultation with Indian Tribes as these meetings are an organic requirement of the Department and Reclamation to seek input.²

3. **Definitions.** The following definitions will be used for the purposes of this D&S:

- A. **Attendee.** A person who is physically attending (i.e., not electronically) a conference, including Reclamation employees, Department employees, other governmental employees, Reclamation contractors, or other individuals.
- B. **Conference.**³ A meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel. The term “conference” also applies to training when **less than half** of the time is in a planned, prepared, and coordinated program, course, curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education⁴ (see also definition for training in Paragraph 3.Q.). For further clarification of what constitutes a conference for the purposes of this D&S, see Paragraphs 2.A. and B. and 3.F., K., N., and O.
- C. **Deputy Commissioners’ Group.** This group is comprised of the Senior Advisor to the Commissioner; Deputy Commissioner-Operations; Deputy Commissioner-Policy, Administration, and Budget; and Deputy Commissioner-External and Intergovernmental Affairs.

¹ Section 4.A.(5) of FMM 2015-010.

² Section 4.A.(6) of FMM 2015-010.

³Reclamation does not have the flexibility to change this definition which is established in FTR 300.3-1 and used by OMB (M-12-12) and the Department (Section 3.A. of FMM 2015-010) for the approval and reporting of conference-related activities.

⁴5 U.S.C. § 4101 and 5 CFR 410.404.

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- D. **External Conference Attendance Approving Official (ECAAO).** A Reclamation Leadership Team (RLT) member that directs the Reclamation office which has greatest proposed attendance costs of Reclamation employees at an externally-hosted conference.
- E. **External Conference Coordinator (ECC).** Appointed by the Deputy Commissioner– External and Intergovernmental Affairs, Reclamation’s principal point of contact for coordinating the approval of Reclamation co-sponsored conferences and externally-hosted conferences attended by Reclamation employees.
- F. **Externally-Hosted Conference.** A conference that is **not** hosted or co-sponsored by the Department or its bureaus.
- G. **Federal Attendee.** A Federal employee or invitational traveler (a person for which Reclamation is paying) who is physically attending (i.e., not electronically) a conference.
- H. **Gross Conference Expenses.** Gross conference expenses are defined as all direct and indirect conference costs paid by the Government, whether paid directly by agencies or reimbursed by agencies to travelers or others associated with the conference, but do not include funds paid under Federal grants to grantees.
- (1) Conference expenses include:
- (a) any associated authorized travel and per diem expenses;⁵
 - (b) rental of rooms for official business;
 - (c) audiovisual use;
 - (d) light refreshments;
 - (e) registration fees;
 - (f) ground transportation; and
 - (g) other expenses as defined by the FTR including, but not limited to:
 - (i) preparation and planning expenses,⁶

⁵ Effective October 31, 2013, the FTR Amendment 2013-01 removed the conference lodging allowance reimbursement option for employees on temporary duty travel. The conference lodging allowance reimbursement option allowed travelers to submit a justification to exceed the lodging rate of per diem by up to 25 percent when the conference was sponsored by a Federal agency.

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- (ii) sponsorships;
 - (iii) advertising;
 - (iv) conference set-up; and
 - (v) speaker fees (41 CFR 301-74.2).
- (2) For the purposes of this D&S, gross conference expenses **do not include** costs to ensure the safety of attending Government officials or the wage/labor expense of attending employees.⁷
- I. **Host.** An RLT member that directs the Reclamation office arranging and conducting (i.e., hosting) a conference. See Paragraph 3.N.
 - J. **Internal Conference Specialist (ICS).** Appointed by the POLICY Director, Reclamation's principal point of contact for coordinating the approval of Reclamation-hosted conferences requiring Deputy Secretary or Assistant Secretary-Policy, Management and Budget (AS-PMB) approval.
 - K. **Mission (Operational) Travel.** As defined in Appendix C of FTR 301, "Travel to a particular site in order to perform operational or managerial activities. Travel to attend a meeting to discuss general agency operations, review status reports, or discuss topics of general interest. *Examples:* Employee's day-to-day operational or managerial activities, as defined by the agency, to include but not be limited to: hearings, site visits, information meetings, inspections, audits, investigations, and examinations." Employees participating in such operational or managerial events record the travel purpose code as Mission (Operational) in the automated travel system.
 - L. **Net Conference Expenses.** Gross conference expenses less any fees received, if authorized, from non-Federal attendees. Reimbursements from other Federal entities will not be deducted from the total conference when deriving a net expense amount. In other words, the conference approval is to address all Federal funds under the control of Reclamation.
 - M. **Organizational Conference Coordinator (OCC).** Appointed by each organization's RLT member, the principal point of contact for the ICS and ECC to coordinate the reporting and approval of Reclamation-hosted, externally-hosted, and co-sponsored conferences within his/her organization.

⁶Footnote 5 of M-12-12. Do not include the Federal employee's time for conference preparation.

⁷Footnote 5 of M-12-12. Although conference planners need to consider these costs when planning a conference, these costs are not included in conference estimates for approval packages.

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- N. **Reclamation-Hosted Conferences.** A conference is considered “hosted” by Reclamation when an RLT member’s organization (see Paragraph 3.I.) is making the logistical preparations for the conference such as:
- (1) creating an agenda;
 - (2) scheduling presenters and/or panels; and
 - (3) reserving conference rooms, conference facilities, hotel room blocks, audiovisual equipment, etc.
- O. **Reclamation Co-Sponsored Conferences.** A conference is considered “co-sponsored” by Reclamation when Reclamation expends funds, excluding attendance fees, for sponsoring, advertising, corporate membership, and all other support to a hosting organization.⁸
- P. **RLT Member.** Reclamation RLT positions (i.e., Senior Advisor to the Commissioner; Deputy Commissioners; Regional Directors; Directors of Program and Budget; Information Resources; Management Services Office; POLICY; Security, Safety, and Law Enforcement; and Technical Service Center; plus the senior level positions of Science Advisor; Senior Advisor-Hydropower; and Senior Advisor-Design, Estimating and Construction/Dam Safety Officer).
- Q. **Training.**
- (1) The following is the definition of training that is **not** subject to the requirements in this D&S:
 - (a) formal classroom training;⁹ or
 - (b) if the announced purpose of the conference is educational or instructional; more than half of the time is scheduled for a planned, organized exchange of information between presenters and audience which meets the definition of training in section 5 U.S.C. § 4101 (4); the context of the conference is germane to improving individual and/or organizational performance; and development benefits will be derived through the employee’s attendance.¹⁰

⁸ Section 4.E. of FMM 2015-010.

⁹ Section 4.A.(5) of FMM 2015-010.

¹⁰ 5 CFR 410.404.

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- (2) Determining whether an event is a conference or training is the responsibility of the conference host or ECAAO and management must use the most conservative approach in determining the purpose of the event.

4. Responsibilities.

A. **Host.** The host (Reclamation-hosted conferences) is responsible for:

- (1) determining whether an event is a conference or training using the most conservative approach in determining the purpose of the event (for assistance in making this determination, contact your local learning officer);
- (2) ensuring employees are aware of the requirements in Paragraphs 4.M. and 7. of this D&S for Reclamation-hosted conferences;
- (3) ensuring compliance with the location and material requirements for attendees as provided in Reclamation Manual D&Ss, *Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Federally Conducted Programs, Activities, and Services (Accessibility Program)* (CRM 03-01) and *Reasonable Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities* (HRM 06-01);
- (4) ensuring employees approved to attend the externally-hosted conferences are aware of the requirements in this D&S that are applicable to them (see Paragraphs 4.M. and 8);
- (5) informing, in writing, employees attending the externally-hosted conference that they must identify attendance at the conference as “Conference Attendance” or “Mission (Operational)” in the automated travel system;
- (6) providing his/her OCC with actual post-conference cost data and attendance for each conference hosted by his/her organization as required by Paragraph 7 and justifying any deviations that increase the cost by 10 percent or more;
- (7) following the conference planning guide in [Appendix E](#) to Chapter 301 of the FTR;
- (8) planning conferences in a manner timely enough to take advantage of discounted room rates;
- (9) considering all available Federal or government-owned facilities and providing a justification if a non-government-owned facility is used (**failure to secure a**

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Federal or government owned facility due to a lack of planning is not sufficient justification);¹¹

- (10) performing research on at least three locations (city/state) to recommend a location for a conference in the request for Deputy Secretary or AS-PMB approval;¹²
- (11) ensuring an event that is determined to be training (see Paragraph 3.Q.):
 - (a) is listed in DOI Learn;
 - (b) requires participants to register in DOI Learn;
 - (c) is advertised as training;
 - (d) explicitly identifies learning objectives; and
 - (e) has a course outline or curriculum.
- (12) arranging for all logistical aspects of the conference including, but not limited to, coordinating with the ICS and the acquisitions, finance, training, and travel offices;
- (13) ensuring compliance with the Reclamation Acquisition Circular (RAC) on promotional items (see RAC 12-17, located on the Acquisitions Intranet Web site under the link entitled “RACs/ETs”); and
- (14) ensuring all Reclamation-hosted conference materials comply with visual identity requirements in Reclamation Manual D&S, *Application of Visual Identity in Corporate Materials* ([ADM 02-05](#)) and are procured appropriately in accordance with the FAR and the Reclamation Purchase Line Handbook (i.e., Purlbook).

B. ECAAO. The ECAAO (externally-hosted conferences) is responsible for:

- (1) determining whether an event is a conference or training using the most conservative approach in determining the purpose of the event (for assistance in making this determination, contact your local learning officer);

¹¹ Use the following Web site to access the catalog of Federal or government-owned facilities:
<https://fedmeetingspace.cfo.gov/>.

¹² If proposing to utilize a non-Government facility for a conference, the appropriate acquisitions office must be contacted for assistance with market research and estimate for conference space.

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- (2) ensuring employees are aware of, and adhere to, the requirements for obtaining approval as required in Paragraph 8 of this D&S;
- (3) ensuring compliance with the location and material requirements for Reclamation employees as provided in CRM 03-01 and HRM 06-01;
- (4) ensuring employees approved to attend the externally-hosted conferences are aware of the requirements in this D&S that are applicable to them (see Paragraphs 4.M. and 8);
- (5) informing, in writing, employees attending the externally-hosted conference that they must identify attendance at the conference as “Conference Attendance” or “Mission (Operational)” in the automated travel system; and
- (6) providing his/her OCC with actual post-conference cost data and attendance for each externally-hosted conference as required by Paragraph 8 and justifying any deviations that increase the cost by 10 percent or more.

C. Reclamation Co-Sponsors. Reclamation co-sponsors are responsible for:

- (1) requesting Deputy Secretary approval to co-sponsor a conference whose costs are \$10,000 or more;
- (2) requesting RLT member approval to co-sponsor a conference whose costs are less than \$10,000;
- (3) ensuring appropriate coordination with the local acquisitions office, ethics office, and regional solicitor (as needed) prior to submitting the request to co-sponsor a conference to the Deputy Secretary or a RLT member; and
- (4) ensuring the requirements of Paragraph 9, for obtaining approval for co-sponsoring a conference, are met.

D. Deputy Commissioner-External and Intergovernmental Affairs. The Deputy Commissioner-External and Intergovernmental Affairs is responsible for appointing an ECC who will serve as Reclamation’s conference liaison with the Department, the ICS, and with OCCs in Reclamation directorates/offices for attendance at externally-hosted and Reclamation co-sponsored conferences.

E. POLICY Director. The POLICY Director is responsible for:

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- (1) appointing an ICS who will serve as Reclamation's conference liaison with the ECC and OCCs in Reclamation directorates/offices for obtaining approval to host a conference;
- (2) ensuring this D&S is consistent with Federal Government and Department conference approval and attendance requirements; and
- (3) coordinating the approval of Reclamation-hosted conference requests identified in Paragraph 7, including review by the Manager, Acquisition and Assistance Management Division (AAMD), for confirmation of compliance with the FAR.

F. **RLT Members.** RLT members are responsible for:

- (1) serving as hosts, co-sponsors, or ECAAOs in the conference hosting, co-sponsoring, or attendance approval and recordkeeping processes as identified in this D&S;
- (2) appointing an OCC for his/her individual organization who will serve as a liaison to the ICS and ECC;
- (3) providing scrutiny to ensure that conference hosting, co-sponsorship, attendance, and expenses are directly and programmatically related to the purpose of the conference and limited only to the levels required to carry out those goals;
- (4) evaluating plans for, or attendance to, any conference involving travel, using the most conservative approach in determining the purpose of the event;
- (5) applying strict management and supervisory control to ensure reports and records are accurate, timely, and complete;
- (6) recommending for consideration by the Deputy Commissioners' Group conferences which they intend to host, co-sponsor, or send employees to in the case of externally-hosted conferences;
- (7) ensuring the requirements of this D&S are met;
- (8) establishing a process to review and approve conferences within his/her organization that do not require Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, Deputy Commissioners' Group approval; and
- (9) establishing recordkeeping protocols for his/her organization sufficient to address the items listed in Paragraph 10.

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- G. **Deputy Commissioners' Group.** The Deputy Commissioners' Group is responsible for:
- (1) reviewing all fiscal year (FY) annual plans and periodic updates for Reclamation-hosted (Paragraph 7.B.), externally-hosted (Paragraph 8.B.), and co-sponsored (Paragraph 9.B.) conferences;
 - (2) approving the FY annual plans and periodic updates submitted to the Department and the OIG by the ECC; and
 - (3) approving requests for Reclamation-hosted or external conferences submitted by RLT members that are more than \$20,000 but less than \$40,000 in cost. However, the Deputy Commissioner for which the hosting office comes under will surname in Data Tracking System (DTS) and will sign the memorandum approving the Reclamation-hosted or external conference.
- H. **ECC.** The ECC is responsible for:
- (1) collaborating with the ICS to ensure appropriate FY annual plans are developed, approvals are requested, and records are maintained for all conferences which Reclamation is involved;
 - (2) serving as the liaison with the Department for all Reclamation-hosted, externally-hosted, and co-sponsored conferences requiring Deputy Secretary or AS-PMB approval;
 - (3) serving as the principal point of contact for the OCC in each Reclamation directorate/office for externally-hosted and co-sponsored conferences;
 - (4) developing and maintaining an inventory of **all** externally-hosted conferences attended by Reclamation staff, regardless of estimated cost, and co-sponsored conferences costing \$10,000 or more;
 - (5) requesting OCCs submit FY annual plans and quarterly updates of Reclamation-hosted, externally-hosted, and Reclamation co-sponsored conferences;
 - (6) consolidating FY annual plans and quarterly updates of externally-hosted and Reclamation co-sponsored conference plans;
 - (7) providing the Deputy Commissioners' Group consolidated annual plans/update to the annual plans of proposed attendance at upcoming Reclamation-hosted, externally-hosted, and co-sponsored conferences nearing the thresholds requiring Department or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval; coordinating a quarterly

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review of the consolidated data; and communicating the Deputy Commissioners' Group decision to the OCCs;

- (8) submitting the FY annual plans and quarterly updates of Reclamation-hosted, externally-hosted, and Reclamation co-sponsored conferences to the Department and the OIG;
- (9) notifying the OCC that his/her organization has the most planned attendee costs for an externally-hosted conference and that it is his/her organization's responsibility to prepare the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval memorandum [see Paragraph 8.C.(2)], or notifying the OCC that the conference did not meet the thresholds requiring Department or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval and attendance at the externally-hosted conference must be approved in accordance with the requirements established by each RLT member;
- (10) ensuring conference approval packages for conferences meeting the criteria under Paragraphs 8 and 9 are properly prepared, reviewed, and approved;
- (11) reviewing and forwarding actual attendance and associated costs, submitted by the ICS for Reclamation-hosted conferences and OCCs for externally-hosted conferences that meet the criteria under Appendix A for Post-Conference Reporting, to the Department's Office of Financial Management and the OIG **no more than 15 calendar days** after conclusion of each conference;¹³ and
- (12) providing the RLT with a summary of Reclamation-hosted, externally-hosted, and Reclamation co-sponsored conferences held the previous FY and the FY annual plan proposed for the upcoming FY for the first meeting of the RLT after the beginning of a new FY and quarterly thereafter.

I. **ICS.** The ICS is responsible for:

- (1) collaborating with the ECC to ensure appropriate FY annual plans are developed, approvals are requested, and records are maintained for all conferences which Reclamation is hosting;
- (2) serving as the principal point of contact for the OCC in each directorate/office for Reclamation-hosted conferences requiring Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval and ensuring OCCs complete Secretarial waivers prior to completing the conference attendance packages for those conferences expected to cost more than \$500,000;

¹³ Section 7.A. of FMM 2025-010.

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- (3) serving as the ECC back up for all conference-related responsibilities;
- (4) developing and maintaining an inventory of all Reclamation-hosted conferences requiring Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval, and the related conference attendance and spending as reported by each OCC;
- (5) consolidating and submitting Reclamation-hosted FY conference annual plans and quarterly updates to the ECC for inclusion in periodic reports to the Department and the OIG;
- (6) ensuring conference approval packages for Reclamation-hosted conferences meeting the criteria under Paragraph 7 are properly prepared, reviewed, and approved;
- (7) reviewing and forwarding actual attendance and associated costs, submitted by the OCCs for Reclamation-hosted conferences that meet the criteria under Appendix A for Post-Conference Reporting, to the ECC for submittal to the Department's Office of Financial Management and OIG;¹⁴ and
- (8) providing the ECC with a summary of Reclamation-hosted conferences held the previous FY and the FY annual plan for the upcoming FY for the first meeting of the RLT after the beginning of a new FY and quarterly thereafter.

J. OCCs. OCCs at the RLT level are responsible for:

- (1) serving as liaison with the ICS and ECC;
- (2) serving as the principal point of contact for his/her directorate/office for all Reclamation-hosted, externally-hosted, and co-sponsored conferences;
- (3) collecting quarterly and annual Reclamation-hosted conferences, externally-hosted conference attendance, and Reclamation co-sponsorship information for his/her directorate/office and consolidating that information for submittal of the FY annual plan to the ICS and ECC as required in this D&S;
- (4) reviewing for accuracy and providing the ICS with actual attendance and associated costs for each employee that attended a conference hosted by the OCC's directorate/office and approved by the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or the

¹⁴ Section 7.A. of FMM 2015-010.

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Deputy Commissioners' Group using the form in Appendix G and justifying any deviations which increase the cost by 10 percent or more from estimated costs;

- (5) reviewing for accuracy and providing the ECC with actual attendance and associated costs for each externally-hosted conference approved by the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group using the form in Appendix G and justifying any deviations which increase the cost by 10 percent or more from estimated costs;
- (6) notifying and providing a copy of the Deputy Secretary approval of Reclamation co-sponsorship to the ECC, ICS, the co-sponsoring RLT member, and co-sponsoring office;
- (7) notifying and providing a copy of the approval to the ECC, ICS, other OCCs, and proposed conference attendees in his/her own directorates/offices that the Reclamation-hosted conference or external conference attendance has been approved by the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or the Deputy Commissioners' Group and that individual arrangements can now be made (e.g., payment of registration fees, working with the acquisition office to get contracts in place, etc.); and
- (8) ensuring appropriate records are maintained in accordance with Paragraph 10 for all Reclamation-hosted, externally-hosted, and co-sponsored conferences.

K. Reclamation Supervisors. Reclamation supervisors are responsible for:

- (1) ensuring employees comply with the requirements in this D&S;
- (2) identifying employees and recommending attendance at Reclamation-hosted or externally-hosted conferences;
- (3) recommending employees to attend externally-hosted conferences in a manner timely enough to take advantage of discounted registration fees;
- (4) confirming employee data entries are correct and conference attendance is designated properly and exercising supervisory approval in the automated travel system; and
- (5) ensuring employees only attend Reclamation-hosted or externally-hosted conferences for which they have been formally approved to attend by the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, Deputy Commissioners' Group, or directorate/office.

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- L. **Chief of the Contracting Office (CCO), Acquisition Offices.** The CCOs assigned to regional and the Washington/Denver directorates/offices are responsible for:
- (1) ensuring a complete purchase requisition package is received, including the proper approval of the conference (e.g., Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, directorate/office-level approval);
 - (2) after receiving the signed conference approval package, perform market research on the cost and availability of private conference facilities (e.g., hotels) and other procurement items on behalf of hosts and co-sponsors;
 - (3) negotiating and executing appropriate contracts for conference facilities; and
 - (4) ensuring Reclamation's liability is minimized for site cancellation fees in the event the conference is cancelled by having a properly executed hotel agreement that is signed by a warranted Contracting Officer and includes an appropriate cancellation clause in the agreement.
- M. **Employees.** All Reclamation employees are responsible for:
- (1) following the requirements in this D&S;
 - (2) working through his/her supervisor and OCC to obtain the appropriate Reclamation and/or Department approval for conferences they are planning to host, attend, or co-sponsor;
 - (3) ensuring the correct travel purpose code is used for conferences in the automated travel system by selecting "Conference Attendance" or "Mission (Operational)" as the purpose of his/her travel; and
 - (4) providing the OCC with his/her actual conference-related travel cost information as requested and justifying any discrepancies between actual and estimated attendance costs.
5. **Financial Commitments.** Financial/contractual commitments of any amount **shall not be made** until the approvals required by this D&S are received. All financial commitments for hosting, attending, or co-sponsoring conferences shall be coordinated with the local CCO. In addition, the following expenditure limits are in place:
- A. **\$500,000 or More.** Reclamation, together with other Department bureaus and offices, shall not incur net expenses (see Paragraph 3.L.) of \$500,000 or more from their own

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funds on a single conference they host, attend, or co-sponsor.¹⁵ The Secretary of the Department may provide a waiver from this limitation if he/she determines that exceptional circumstances exist whereby spending of \$500,000 or more on a single conference is the most cost-effective option to meet mission needs. The ICS must be consulted for guidance on preparing a Secretarial waiver prior to completing the conference attendance request package for Reclamation-hosted conferences expected to cost \$500,000 or more. The waiver to obtain Secretary approval of a conference in excess of \$500,000 or more must be received by the Secretary at least 90 calendar days prior to the intended date of the conference.¹⁶ The Secretary's approval/disapproval of the waiver will be included in the conference approval package. Obligation of funds for the conference (e.g., securing a facility, reserving room blocks, contracting with speakers, hotels, etc.) will not occur until the conference approval package is signed by the Deputy Secretary. The waiver request must include:

- (1) rationale for considering the conference in question as having exceptional circumstances or compelling purpose that justify the \$500,000 or more cost;
- (2) justification demonstrating the conference is the most cost-effective option to meet mission needs; and
- (3) signature of Reclamation's CCO who has validated the contracting actions for the conference are compliant with FAR.

- B. \$100,000 or More but Less Than \$500,000.** Conferences hosted or attended where Reclamation expects to incur net expenses (see Paragraph 3.L.) of \$100,000 or more, but less than \$500,000, shall be approved by the Deputy Secretary. For information on the approval process for Reclamation-hosted conferences, see Paragraph 7, and for externally-hosted conferences, see Paragraph 8.
- C. \$40,000 or More but Less Than \$100,000.** Conferences hosted or attended where Reclamation expects to incur net expenses (see Paragraph 3.L.) of \$40,000 or more but less than \$100,000 must be approved by the AS-PMB.
- D. \$20,000 or More but Less Than \$40,000.** Conferences hosted or attended where Reclamation expects to incur net expenses (see Paragraph 3.L.) of \$20,000 or more but less than \$40,000 must be approved by the Deputy Commissioner for which the hosting office comes under.
- E. Less Than \$20,000.** Conferences hosted or attended where Reclamation expects to incur net expenses (see Paragraph 3.L.) of less than \$20,000 must be approved by an

¹⁵ Section 6 of FMM 2015 010.

¹⁶ Section 6.A.(2) of FMM 2015-010.

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RLT member or re-delegated in accordance with Paragraph 6.B.(1) of RM *Delegations of Authority* and the requirements established by each RLT member.

- F. **Co-Sponsored Less Than \$10,000.** Reclamation co-sponsored conferences of less than \$10,000 are approved by an RLT member. In addition, the co-sponsorship must be approved by the ethics office, acquisitions office, and solicitor's office as needed.
 - G. **Co-Sponsored \$10,000 or More.** Reclamation co-sponsored conferences of \$10,000 or more must be approved by the Deputy Secretary (see Paragraph 9). In addition, the co-sponsorship must be approved by the ethics office, acquisitions office, and solicitor's office as needed.
 - H. **Hotel Agreements.** All hotel agreements, regardless of dollar amount (including those under the micro-purchase threshold), must be competed, negotiated, and signed by a warranted Contracting Officer.
6. **Meals and Refreshments.** Contact the acquisition office for information regarding the rules for providing meals and refreshments at conferences. In addition, refer to the Department's *Temporary Duty Travel Policy* which also addresses meals and refreshments, the necessary deductions from miscellaneous and incidental expenses, travel allowances related to meals, and the documentation that must be maintained by the hosting office if light refreshments are provided at a Reclamation-hosted conference.¹⁷
7. **Reclamation-Hosted Conferences.**
- A. **Criteria for Approval.** See the following paragraphs and Appendix A to assist in determining the appropriate level of approval required for a Reclamation-hosted conference. The required approval must be obtained before any contractual commitments are made to host or attend a Reclamation-hosted conference.
 - (1) **Deputy Secretary Approval.** A single conference where Reclamation and other Department bureaus and offices are expected to incur net conference expenses of \$100,000 or more but less than \$500,000 must be approved by the Deputy Secretary.
 - (2) **AS-PMB Approval.** A single conference where Reclamation and other Department bureaus and offices are expected to incur net conference expenses of \$40,000 or more but less than \$100,000 must be approved by the AS-PMB.
 - (3) **Deputy Commissioners' Group Approval.** A single conference where Reclamation and other Department bureaus and offices are expected to incur net

¹⁷ Section 6.1.2 of the Department's Temporary Duty Travel Policy.

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conference expenses of \$20,000 or more but less than \$40,000 must be approved by the Deputy Commissioner for which the organization comes under.

- (4) **Directorate/Office Approval.** Reclamation-hosted conferences that do not meet the criteria for Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval in Paragraphs 7.A.(1), (2), or (3) above, must be approved in accordance with the requirements established by each RLT member.

B. Annual Conference Plan and Periodic Updates. The Department requires Reclamation to submit a FY annual plan of conferences that it intends to host with estimated net conference expenses of \$20,000 or more by October 31 of each year.

- (1) By September 1 of each year, the ECC will request RLT members to identify Reclamation conferences they intend to host that they expect to require Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval. Each OCC will submit his/her annual plan in the Data Tracking System (DTS) using the annual plan template entitled *Annual Plan of Anticipated Reclamation-Hosted Conferences for Fiscal Year XXXX* (Appendix L), obtaining his/her RLT member surname before submitting to the ICS.
- (2) By December 1, March 1, and June 1 of each year, the ECC will request RLT members to update within 2 weeks of the request the FY annual plan of Reclamation-hosted conferences requiring Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval. Each OCC will submit the required information in DTS using the template entitled *Annual Plan of Anticipated Reclamation-Hosted Conferences for Fiscal Year XXXX* (Appendix L), obtaining his/her RLT member surname before submitting to the ICS. If specific circumstances warrant, an OCC will submit, with his/her RLT members' approval additional updates to the ICS.
- (3) Only those conferences that meet the criteria for obtaining Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval will be forwarded to the Department on the annual conference plan of Reclamation-hosted conferences. After each update, the ICS will compile the plan of those conferences Reclamation is planning to host that are expected to have a net conference expense of \$20,000 or more. The ICS will provide this plan to the ECC. The Deputy Commissioners' Group will review the plan prior to the ECC submitting it to the Department.

C. Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group Approval Requests and Process. Reclamation conference hosts must begin the process to obtain Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval, as described below, so all activities associated with hosting a conference (e.g., execute contracts, reserve

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conference facilities, reserve room blocks, make travel arrangements, etc.) can be accomplished after approval is received (i.e., 6-12 months prior to the conference).

- (1) **Conference Approval Request.** The host must prepare a conference approval request package for the Deputy Secretary's, AS-PMB's, or Deputy Commissioners' Group consideration. The following documents must be included in the package for Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval of Reclamation-hosted conferences (see requirements for co-sponsored conference approval in Paragraph 9):
 - (a) Memorandum addressed to the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB (through the Assistant Secretary-Water and Science, from the Commissioner for Deputy Secretary or AS-PMB approval) as appropriate, or addressed to the appropriate Deputy Commissioner (for the hosting office) for Deputy Commissioners' Group approval, with copies to the ECC; Reclamation Travel Lead; AAMD; POLICY Director; Supervisor, Program Services Office; and the ICS. The memorandum must include, at a minimum, the information identified in the template provided in Appendix B or C of this D&S.
 - (b) A draft conference agenda.
 - (c) A *Department of the Interior Multiple City Cost Analysis Worksheet*, Appendix D, comparing at least three locations and facilities for the conference showing how the estimates were calculated.
 - (d) A [*Department of the Interior Checklist for Evaluation of Proposed Conference*](#) (see Appendix E for instructions to complete this form).
 - (e) *Bureau of Reclamation Conference Attendee Cost Worksheet* (Appendix F).
 - (f) Waiver request for prohibited expenses, if applicable. See Paragraph 5.A.
 - (g) A statement that all available Federal or government-owned facilities were considered and a justification if a non-government-owned facility is selected (failure to secure a Federal or government-owned facility due to a lack of planning is not sufficient justification).
- (2) **Review and Surname Package.**
 - (a) **Hosting Office.** The originating office will input and surname the package through the hosting office's RLT member in DTS. At a minimum, the originating office must have at least the OCC, CCO, and hosting RLT

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member surname in DTS. After the hosting RLT member surnames in DTS, the package will continue in DTS to the ICS in the Program Services Office, using the DTS mail box of DO-PA-BASD-PSO.

- (b) **ICS.** Within 2 weeks of receiving the package in DTS, the ICS will review the package to ensure all required information is included and either surname the package or request additional information or changes before continuing the surnaming process. Once the ICS has surnamed the package in DTS, it will be forwarded in DTS to the Manager, AAMD.
- (c) **Management Services Office (MSO).** AAMD will review the package to ensure compliance with acquisition regulations and requirements, and forward the package in DTS to the MSO Director for surnaming. Any concerns with the package will be resolved by working with the ICS and the hosting office's OCC. The MSO Director will surname the approval request package in DTS and forward to the POLICY Director.
- (d) **POLICY Director.** The POLICY Director will review the request and either surname the package in DTS or request additional information or changes before continuing the surnaming process. If the POLICY Director cannot resolve his/her concerns with the hosting office, the POLICY Director will document the concerns and forward the package in DTS to the POLICY Liaison who in turn will forward to the Deputy Commissioners' Group for a final determination.
- (e) **Washington Office.** The POLICY Director will forward the package in DTS to the POLICY Liaison, who will keep track of the status of the approval package as it is routed through the ECC, the Deputy Commissioners' Group, and for conferences costing \$40,000 or more to the Commissioner, the Assistant Secretary–Water and Science, and forwarded to the Department's Office of Financial Management for review and approval by the Deputy Secretary or AS-PMB. For conferences costing \$20,000 or more but less than \$40,000, the Deputy Commissioner for which the hosting office comes under will surname in DTS and will sign the memorandum approving the conference.
- (f) **OCC.** Upon receipt of Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioner approval, the appropriate directorate/regional liaison in the Washington Office will forward the package in DTS to the OCC in accordance with Washington Office correspondence procedures. The OCC will provide a copy of the approval to the ICS and each RLT member and OCC who has an employee attending the Reclamation-hosted conference.

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(3) Actions Taken After Conference Approval.

- (a) **Hosting Office.** Upon conference approval, the hosting office will:
- (i) provide the local CCO a copy of the conference approval to move forward with acquisition related responsibilities; and
 - (ii) send written notification (memorandum, e-mail, etc.) to all attendees that:
 - (aa) conference is approved;
 - (bb) conference fees can be paid;
 - (cc) travel and lodging reservations can be made, indicating that lodging costs cannot exceed the GSA maximum lodging per diem rate or any special arrangements (e.g., hotel shuttle is provided and rental cars are not authorized, hotel room blocks have been reserved, etc.); and
 - (dd) they must identify the purpose of the conference in the automated travel system as either “Conference Attendance” or “Mission (Operational).”
- (b) **ICS.** At least 2 weeks prior to the start of the conference, the ICS will send the OCC of the hosting office the *Bureau of Reclamation Report of Actual Conference Costs* (Appendix G).
- (c) **OCC.** At least 10 calendar days prior to the start date of the conference, the OCC of the hosting office will send the *Bureau of Reclamation Report of Actual Conference Costs* (Appendix G) to each attendee and his/her organizational OCC and notify the attendees that his/her actual costs are due back to the hosting office OCC no later than 5 working days after the end date of the conference.

(4) Actual Conference Attendance and Expenses.

- (a) **OCC.** Immediately following the conclusion of each Reclamation-hosted conference, the OCC of the hosting office will remind each OCC with attendees from his/her organization to collect attendees’ actual conference expenses using the form in Appendix G. The OCC of the hosting office must review the information, resolve any issues, and submit a consolidated list, along with the other conference-related expenses (e.g., conference setup,

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preparation/planning expenses, etc.) to the ICS **within 8 working days** following the conclusion of the conference. The hosting office through his/her RLT member will include a justification for expenses that increase the cost by 10 percent or more than were approved by the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group.

- (b) **ICS.** The ICS must review the information, resolve any issues, and immediately forward the information to the ECC so the ECC can send the report to the Department's Office of Financial Management and the OIG **within 15 calendar days** following conclusion of the conference.
- (c) **Department and the OIG.** If the actual cost of a Reclamation-hosted conference is \$20,000 or more, and was not included on the FY annual plan or quarterly updates, the following information must be submitted by the ECC, via the OCC and ICS, to the Department's Office of Financial Management and the OIG **within 15 calendar days** following conclusion of the conference:¹⁸
 - (i) full name of conference;
 - (ii) date of conference;
 - (iii) location of conference;
 - (iv) actual net costs of individuals and other conference-related expenses; and
 - (v) list of conference attendees.

D. Changes to Conferences Approved by the Deputy Secretary or AS-PMB. If a host has received Deputy Secretary or AS-PMB approval for a Reclamation-hosted conference, and there are changes to what was approved (e.g., location, cost), the OCC of the hosting office must contact the ECC (via e-mail with a courtesy copy to the ICS) who will consult with the Department to determine if the changes require additional approval by the Department. The ECC will notify the OCC and ICS via e-mail of the final determination.

E. Changes to Conferences Approved by the Deputy Commissioners' Group. If a host has received Deputy Commissioner's Group approval for a Reclamation-hosted conference, and there are changes to what was approved (e.g., location, cost), the OCC of the hosting office must contact the ECC (via e-mail with a courtesy copy to the ICS)

¹⁸ Section 7.A. of FMM 2015-010.

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who will consult with the Deputy Commissioners' Group for approval/disapproval. The ECC will notify the OCC and ICS via e-mail of the final determination.

8. Externally-Hosted Conferences.

- A. **Criteria for Approval.** See the following paragraphs and Appendix A to assist in determining the appropriate level of approval required for attendance at an externally-hosted conference. The required approval must be obtained before any contractual commitments are made to attend an externally-hosted conference.
- (1) **Deputy Secretary Approval.** An externally-hosted conference where Reclamation expects to incur net conference expenses of \$100,000 or more, but less than \$500,000, must be approved by the Deputy Secretary. The ECC will notify the OCC of the RLT member who has the greatest proposed attendees costs (i.e., ECCAO) that he/she is responsible for preparing the conference approval package.
 - (2) **AS-PMB Approval.** An externally-hosted conference where Reclamation expects to incur net conference expenses of \$40,000 or more, but less than \$100,000, must be approved by AS-PMB. The ECC will notify the OCC of the RLT member who has the greatest proposed attendees costs (i.e., ECCAO) that he/she is responsible for preparing the conference approval package.
 - (3) **Deputy Commissioners' Group Approval.** An externally-hosted conference where Reclamation expects to incur net conference expenses of \$20,000 or more, but less than \$40,000, must be approved by the Deputy Commissioners' Group. The ECC will notify the OCC of the RLT member who has the greatest proposed attendees costs (i.e., ECCAO) that he/she is responsible for preparing the conference approval package.
 - (4) **Directorate/Office Approval.** Externally-hosted conferences that do not meet the criteria for Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval in Paragraphs 8.A.(1), (2), or (3) above, must be approved in accordance with the requirements established by each RLT member.
- B. **Annual Conference Plan and Periodic Updates.** The Department requires Reclamation to submit a FY annual plan of externally-hosted conferences by October 31 of each year.
- (1) By September 1 of each year, the ECC will request RLT members to identify the externally-hosted conferences his/her staff plans to attend. Each OCC will submit his/her annual plan in DTS using the annual plan template entitled *Annual Plan of External Conferences Sponsored by Other Entities and Attended by Reclamation*

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Personnel for Fiscal Year XXXX (Appendix M), obtaining his/her RLT member surname before submitting to the ECC. Each organization's plan must reflect **all** externally-hosted conference attendance regardless of costs so the ECC can determine if Reclamation-wide net conference expenses estimated to be: \$100,000 or more and will require Deputy Secretary approval; or \$40,000 or more but less than \$100,000 and will require AS-PMB approval; or \$20,000 or more but less than \$40,000 and will require Deputy Commissioners' Group approval.

- (2) By December 1, March 1, and June 1 of each year, the ECC will request RLT members to update within 2 weeks of the request the FY annual plan of attendance at externally-hosted conferences. Each OCC will submit the required information in DTS using the annual plan template entitled *Annual Plan of External Conferences Sponsored by Other Entities and Attended by Reclamation Personnel for Fiscal Year XXXX* (Appendix M), obtaining his/her RLT member surname before submitting to the ECC. If specific circumstances warrant, an OCC will submit, with his/her RLT member's approval, additional updates to the ECC.
- (3) After each update, the ECC will revise the plan of externally-hosted conferences Reclamation employees are planning to attend that are nearing the threshold requiring Department or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval. The ECC will provide the Deputy Commissioners' Group with the plan for review. The Deputy Commissioners' Group will consider proposed conference activity for the upcoming 3-month timeframe and communicate their decisions to the ECC. The ECC will also compile a list of those external conferences that do not require Department or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval and send the list to each OCC informing them that attendance for these conferences must be approved in accordance with the requirements established by each RLT member.
- (4) After receiving the Deputy Commissioners' Group decision, the ECC will revise the plan to include only those conferences that Reclamation staff plan to attend, the Deputy Commissioners' Group has reviewed, and will require Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval. The ECC will notify the OCCs of the Deputy Commissioners' determination and identify and notify the OCC with the greatest proposed attendees' costs (i.e., ECCAO) that he/she is responsible for preparing the conference approval package to be signed by the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB or Deputy Commissioners' Group. Only those conferences that meet the criteria for obtaining Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval will be forwarded to the Department on the annual conference plan of externally-hosted conferences.
- (5) Supervisors shall not approve attendance at, nor shall employees attend, any externally-hosted conference that is not identified on the annual conference plan

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submitted to the ECC, even if that conference does not require Department or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval.

- C. **Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group Approval Requests and Process.** The process to obtain Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval, as described below, must begin so all activities associated with attending the conference (e.g., registration, travel arrangements, etc.) can be accomplished prior to the date of the externally-hosted conference. Registration and lodging arrangements may be made prior to conference approval to take advantage of lower costs as long as no contractual commitments are made.
- (1) **Conference Approval Request.** The RLT member with the greatest proposed attendees costs (ECAAO) must prepare the package requesting Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval. The following documents must be included in the packages for Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval of attendance at an externally-hosted conference:
- (a) Memorandum addressed to the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB (through the Assistant Secretary-Water and Science, from the Commissioner for Deputy Secretary or AS-PMB approval), as appropriate, or addressed to the appropriate Deputy Commissioner (for the RLT member with the greatest proposed attendees' costs) for Deputy Commissioners' Group approval, with a copy to the ECC. The memorandum must include, at a minimum, the information identified in the template provided in Appendix H or I of this D&S.
 - (b) Conference agenda.
 - (c) A *Department of the Interior Multiple City Cost Analysis Worksheet* (Appendix D) with only Attendance, Estimated Travel Costs, and Registration fees under the Administrative Costs section of the worksheet completed. If the externally-hosted conference is co-sponsored by Reclamation, include co-sponsorship information under Administrative Costs - Sponsorships.
 - (d) A [*Department of the Interior Checklist for Evaluation of Proposed Conference*](#) (see Appendix E for instructions to complete this form).
 - (e) *Bureau of Reclamation Conference Attendee Cost Worksheet* (Appendix F).
 - (f) If Reclamation is co-sponsoring this externally-hosted conference, a copy of the Deputy Secretary's approval for Reclamation to co-sponsor the conference (see Paragraph 9).

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(2) Review and Surname Package.

- (a) **ECAAO.** The originating office will input and surname the package through the OCC and ECAAO in DTS and forward the package in DTS to the ECC in the Washington Office through his/her directorate/regional liaison in accordance with Washington Office correspondence procedures.
- (b) **ECC.** Within 2 weeks of receiving the package, the ECC will review the package to ensure all required information is included and either surname the package in DTS or request additional information or changes before continuing the surnaming process. Once the ECC has surnamed the package in DTS, it will be forwarded to the Deputy Commissioners' Group.
- (c) **Washington Office.** The Deputy Commissioners' Group will review the package for conferences costing \$40,000 or more and either surname in DTS or request additional information or changes before continuing the surnaming process. The approval package will then be routed through the Commissioner and the Assistant Secretary-Water and Science, and forwarded to the Department's Office of Financial Management for review and approval by the Deputy Secretary or AS-PMB. For conferences costing \$20,000 or more but less than \$40,000, the Deputy Commissioner of the ECAAO with the greatest proposed attendee's costs will approve or disapprove the conference in DTS and will sign the memorandum approving the conference.
- (d) **OCC.** Upon receipt of Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners' Group approval, the appropriate directorate/regional liaison in the Washington Office will forward the package in DTS to the OCC in accordance with Washington Office correspondence procedures. The OCC will provide a copy of the approval to the ECC and every RLT member and OCC who has an employee on the list for each conference, and each employee approved to attend the conference.

(3) Actions Taken After Conference Approval.

- (a) **ECAAO.** Upon conference approval the ECAAO will send written notification (memorandum, e-mail, etc.) to all attendees of the following:
 - (i) conference is approved;
 - (ii) conference fees can be paid;

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- (iii) travel and lodging reservations can be made (indicate that lodging costs cannot exceed the GSA maximum lodging per diem); and
 - (iv) identify the purpose of the conference in the automated travel system as either “Conference Attendance” or “Mission (Operational).”
- (b) **ECC (Only for External Conferences Costing \$100,000 or More).** At least 2 weeks prior to the start of the conference, the ECC will send the OCC of the office that prepared the conference approval package the *Bureau of Reclamation Report of Actual Conference Costs* (Appendix G).
- (c) **OCC (Only for External Conferences Costing \$100,000 or More).** At least 10 calendar days prior to the start date of the conference, the OCC will send the *Bureau of Reclamation Report of Actual Conference Costs* (Appendix G) to each attendee and each attendees OCC and notify them that their actual costs must be returned within 5 working days after the end date of the conference.
- (4) **Actual Conference Attendance and Expenses (Only for External Conferences Costing \$100,000 or More).**
- (a) **OCC.** Immediately following the conclusion of each externally-hosted conference costing \$100,000 or more, the OCC of the office that prepared the conference approval package will remind each OCC with attendees from his/her organization to collect attendees’ actual conference expenses using the form in Appendix G. The OCC of the office that prepared the conference approval package must review the information, resolve any issues, and submit a consolidated list to the ECC **within 8 working days** following the conclusion of the conference, and include a justification for expenses that increase the cost by 10 percent or more than were approved by the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, or Deputy Commissioners’ Group.
 - (b) **ECC.** The ECC must review the information, resolve any issues, and forward the information to the Department’s Office of Financial Management and the OIG **within 15 calendar days** following conclusion of the conference.
9. **Reclamation Co-Sponsored Conferences.** In general, Reclamation has inherent authority to enter into contracts to procure goods and services to meet Reclamation’s mission requirements. In contrast to the inherent authority to enter into procurement contracts, Reclamation employees cannot assume that Reclamation has the authority to donate Government funds to assist non-Government entities to accomplish its purposes. Reclamation may use procurement contracts to provide for its needs if there is authority to use appropriated funds for the intended purpose and there are appropriated funds available.

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Reclamation has no general statutory authority to provide funding to support costs associated with the sponsored activity. In limited situations, Reclamation may use financial assistance agreements to provide Federal funding to support costs associated with the sponsored activity. **Co-sponsors must engage their ethics office, acquisitions office, and regional solicitor (as needed) prior to committing to co-sponsor a conference.**

A. Criteria for Approval.

- (1) **Co-Sponsored Conferences Costing Less Than \$10,000.** The Department requires all co-sponsored conferences of less than \$10,000 to be reviewed by senior management. Senior management for Reclamation is an RLT member. Co-sponsored conferences that do not meet the criteria for Deputy Secretary approval must be approved in accordance with the requirements established by each RLT member.
- (2) **Deputy Secretary Approval.** Reclamation co-sponsored conferences costing \$10,000 or more must be approved by the Deputy Secretary. Deputy Secretary approval must be received prior to making any financial commitments to co-sponsor a conference.

B. Annual Conference Plan and Periodic Updates.

The Department requires Reclamation to submit a FY annual plan of co-sponsored conferences costing \$10,000 or more by October 31 of each year.

- (1) By September 1 of each year, the ECC will request RLT members to identify conferences their organizations plan to co-sponsor that cost \$10,000 or more. Each OCC will submit his/her annual plan in DTS using the annual plan template entitled *Annual Plan of Co-Sponsored Conferences for Fiscal Year XXXX* (Appendix J), obtaining his/her RLT member surname before submitting to the ECC.
- (2) By December 1, March 1, and June 1 of each year, the ECC will request RLT members to update within 2 weeks of the request the FY annual plan of co-sponsored conferences costing \$10,000 or more. Each OCC will submit the required information in DTS using the annual plan template entitled *Annual Plan of Co-Sponsored Conferences for Fiscal Year XXXX* (Appendix J), obtaining his/her RLT member surname before submitting to the ECC. If specific circumstances warrant, an OCC will submit, with their RLT member's approval, additional updates to the ECC.
- (3) After each update, the ECC will revise the plan of conferences Reclamation plans to co-sponsor costing \$10,000 or more. The ECC will provide the Deputy Commissioners' Group with the plan for review. The Deputy Commissioners'

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Group will consider proposed co-sponsorships for the upcoming 3-month timeframe and communicate their decisions to the ECC.

- (4) After receiving the Deputy Commissioners' Group decision, the ECC will revise the plan to include only those conferences the Deputy Commissioners' Group has reviewed, and will require Deputy Secretary approval.¹⁹ If the co-sponsored conference estimated cost is \$10,000 or more, the ECC will notify the OCC to prepare the conference approval package to be signed by the Deputy Secretary. Only those conferences that meet the criteria for obtaining Deputy Secretary approval will be forwarded to the Department on the annual conference plan of co-sponsored conferences.
- (5) Co-sponsorships of \$10,000 or more that are not identified on the annual conference co-sponsorship plan shall not be funded.

C. **Deputy Secretary Approval Requests and Process.** The process to obtain Deputy Secretary approval, as described below, must be completed prior to any funds being committed for co-sponsorship.

- (1) **Conference Approval Request.** The RLT member co-sponsoring the conference must prepare the conference approval package requesting the Deputy Secretary's approval. The following documents must be included in the conference approval package:
 - (a) Memorandum addressed to the Deputy Secretary (through the Assistant Secretary-Water and Science, from the Commissioner), with a copy to the ECC. The memorandum must include, at a minimum, the information identified in the template provided in Appendix K of this D&S.
 - (b) Conference agenda.
 - (c) A [*Department of the Interior Checklist for Evaluation of Proposed Conference*](#) (see Appendix E for instructions to complete this form).
 - (d) *Bureau of Reclamation Conference Attendee Cost Worksheet* (Appendix F).
- (2) **Review and Surname Package.**
 - (a) **Originating Office.** The originating office will input and surname the package through the OCC and RLT member in DTS and forward the package in DTS to the ECC in the Washington Office through his/her

¹⁹ Section 8. of FMM 2015-010.

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directorate/regional liaison in accordance with Washington Office correspondence procedures.

- (b) **ECC.** Within 2 weeks of receiving the package, the ECC will review the package to ensure all required information is included and either surname the package in DTS or request additional information or changes before continuing the surnaming process. Once the ECC has surnamed the package in DTS, it will be forwarded to the Deputy Commissioners' Group.
 - (c) **Washington Office.** The Deputy Commissioners' Group will review the package and either surname in DTS or request additional information or changes before continuing the surnaming process. The approval package will then be routed through the Commissioner and the Assistant Secretary-Water and Science, and forwarded to the Department's Office of Financial Management for review and approval by the Deputy Secretary.
 - (d) **OCC.** Upon receipt of Deputy Secretary approval, the appropriate directorate/regional liaison in the Washington Office will forward the package in DTS to the OCC in accordance with Washington Office correspondence procedures. The OCC will provide a copy of the approval to the ECC, the co-sponsoring RLT member, and the co-sponsoring office.
- (3) **Actions Taken After Conference Approval.** Upon approval of the co-sponsorship, the co-sponsoring office must send, if applicable, written notification (memorandum, e-mail, etc.) to all attendees that the conference is approved; conference fees can be paid; travel and lodging reservations can be made (indicating that lodging costs cannot exceed the GSA maximum lodging per diem); and to identify the purpose of the conference in the automated travel system is either "Conference Attendance" or "Mission (Operational)."

D. **Actual Conference Attendance and Expenses.** Does not apply to co-sponsorships.

10. **Records.** The recordkeeping protocol for all conferences, whether approved by an RLT member under requirements established in each directorate/office, the AS-PMB, or the Deputy Secretary, must be sufficient to answer possible future inquiries regarding Reclamation's role in the conference and cost and benefit to Reclamation. At a minimum, electronic/paper records must be kept by the OCC for 3 years from the last day of the conference and include:
- A. all conference approval packages sent to the Deputy Secretary, AS-PMB, and Deputy Commissioner's Group, including associated forms;

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- B. all Secretarial waiver requests and responses for conferences expected to exceed \$500,000 in cost;
- C. all approval documents for conferences/attendance approved in accordance with individual directorate/office conference attendance recordkeeping and reporting requirements;
- D. all contractual documents, payments, and purchase card records which support the actual costs related to the conference;
- E. all cost estimates and associated actual costs of conferences/attendance; and
- F. a list of actual conference attendees and expenses.

11. Appendices.

- A. *Conference Reporting Matrix.*
- B. *Template of Reclamation-Hosted Conference Memorandum Requesting Department Approval.*
- C. *Template of Reclamation-Hosted Conference Memorandum Requesting Deputy Commissioner Approval.*
- D. *Department of the Interior Multiple City Cost Analysis Worksheet.*
- E. Instructions to complete [Department of the Interior Checklist for Evaluation of Proposed Conference.](#)
- F. *Bureau of Reclamation Conference Attendee Cost Worksheet.*
- G. *Bureau of Reclamation Report of Actual Conference Costs.*
- H. *Template of Externally-Hosted Conference Memorandum Requesting Department Approval.*
- I. *Template of Externally-Hosted Conference Memorandum Requesting Deputy Commissioner Approval.*
- J. *Annual Plan of Co-Sponsored Conferences for Fiscal Year XXXX.*
- K. *Template of Co-sponsor Memorandum requesting Deputy Secretary approval.*

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- L. *Annual Plan of Anticipated Reclamation-Hosted Conferences for Fiscal Year XXXX.*
- M. *Annual Plan of External Conferences Sponsored by Other Entities and Attended by Reclamation Personnel for Fiscal Year XXXX.*

RECLAMATION MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Effective Date: _____

Release No. _____

Ensure all employees needing this information are provided a copy of this release.

Reclamation Manual Release Number and Subject

Summary of Changes

NOTE: This Reclamation Manual release applies to all Reclamation employees. When an exclusive bargaining unit exists, changes to this release may be subject to the provisions of collective bargaining agreements.

Filing instructions

Remove Sheets

Insert Sheets

All Reclamation Manual releases are available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>

Filed by: _____

Date: _____