We would like to draw your attention to an update that has been made to the 2016 Science Transfer Request for Proposals (RFP).

In response to reserve manager feedback, the wording has been revised for the third manager proposal assessment criterion, located in the “Reserve Engagement” section on page 7. This criterion now reads:

3) You agree with the proposed allocation of resources to the reserve, and/or proposed allocation of reserve staff time or other resources if not covered in the budget.

This criterion has been updated to encourage managers to assess their level of agreement with a proposal’s allocation of all identified reserve resources, in addition to staff time. The newly worded criterion, as stated above, will be in the 2016 NERRS Science Collaborative Manager Proposal Assessment guidance and form.

Eligibility

Q: If I was awarded a science transfer grant in 2015, am I eligible to apply in 2016?
A: Yes. Past grant recipients are eligible to apply. As with all proposals, it will be important to demonstrate that there are sufficient resources/staff time to support the proposed work.

Q: Is the transfer of social science equally eligible as the transfer of natural or physical science?
A: Yes. Science transfer grants are intended to support the transfer of existing information, approaches, and/or techniques to support NERRS activities and programs of direct relevance to Science Collaborative focus areas and reserve needs. The evaluation criteria do not focus on a particular type of science to be transferred.

Proposal Format

Q: Is it ok if the title page spills over into page 2 to accommodate all team members who should be listed under section 3 of the title page?
A: Yes, the title page may be up to 2 pages in length in order to accommodate all team members and contact info listed under section 3 of the title page.

Q: Should the Excel files (budget and timeline) be submitted as separate attachments or should they be joined together with the other application materials as a single file?
A: Please join all application materials into a single PDF. To submit, you will need to upload your application as a single PDF file.
Q: Can a budget with subcontracts be provided as a single Excel spreadsheet or must a master budget be provided with each subcontract broken out in a separate sheet?
A: You may use either approach— one sheet that includes all of the subcontract breakdowns and contact information OR multiple sheets with a master budget and a separate sheet for each subcontract. The multi-sheet approach is useful for proposals with complex subcontracts. In either approach, contact information should be provided for each subcontract.

Q: Can all budget narrative details be included as a single appendix or must budget narratives be broken out individually for subcontracts?
A: You may include all budget narrative details in a single appendix, including budget narratives for each subcontract. If including a budget narrative for one or multiple subcontracts, please make this clear. E.g., organize the budget narrative for each subcontract as a separate paragraph or subsection.

Q: Is there a maximum number of resumes that may be included in Appendix 7?
A: There is no set maximum number of resumes that may be included in Appendix 7 – Resumes. There should be a two-page resume for each team member listed on the proposal.

Q: Where should letters of support be included and is there a maximum number that may be included?
A: Letters of support should be included in Appendix 8 – Other Supporting Documents, and count towards the 5 page limit for this appendix. This page limit is set to keep the proposal length manageable for reviewers. If you have several letters of support that you wish to include, you may need to prioritize which letters of support are most important to keep within the page limit, and/or you might consider consolidating similar letters into one or a few with multiple signatures. Please keep in mind that the fiscal letter of commitment should be included in Appendix 5 – Fiscal Letters of Commitment. Additionally, reviewers will be expecting a “manager proposal assessment form” from each reserve listed on the proposal. Managers may but are not expected to also express support for a proposal through a letter of support.

Project Narrative

Q: Is there a certain length to aim for each section of the project narrative?
A: No. It is up to the applicant to determine the right content for each of the four sections of the project narrative. We only require that the project narrative include all four sections, is organized by the specified headers, and does not exceed five pages.

Q: Could you give an example of the level of effort/time span expected by the following? "Explain how the usability of the outputs will be sustained beyond the project period, e.g., who will be responsible for disseminating products and how informational products will be updated/maintained."

A: This will vary from project to project, depending on the approach and outputs. The proposal should describe what efforts, if any, will be made to maintain the longer-term usability of the transfer products.

**Budget**

Q: Can a budget with subcontracts be provided as a single Excel spreadsheet or must a master budget be provided with each subcontract broken out in a separate sheet?  
A: You may use either approach-- one sheet that includes all of the subcontract breakdowns and contact information OR multiple sheets with a master budget and a separate sheet for each subcontract. The multi-sheet approach is useful for proposals with complex subcontracts. In either approach, contact information should be provided for each subcontract.

Q: Can all budget narrative details be included as a single appendix or must budget narratives be broken out individually for subcontracts?  
A: You may include all budget narrative details in a single appendix, including budget narratives for each subcontract. If including a budget narrative for one or multiple subcontracts, please make this clear. E.g., organize the budget narrative for each subcontract as a separate paragraph or subsection.

**Appendices**

Q: The proposal requirements state that fiscal letters of commitment are required for all subcontracts. Is a letter required if a subcontractor is a consultant?  
A: Please include a letter of commitment from the fiscal agent’s home unit and institution and all subcontractors, including consultants, in Appendix 5 – Fiscal Letters of Commitment. These letters should demonstrate that the sub-contractor are in agreement with what is being proposed in their names.

Q: What should be included in the fiscal letters of commitment?  
A: Proposals must include a letter of commitment from the fiscal agent’s home unit and institution, demonstrating their support for the proposed budget and activities. Proposals must also include letters of commitment from each subcontractor. As described in the Request for Proposals:  

> Fiscal Letters of Commitment – The fiscal agent’s home unit and institution must provide a letter of commitment approving their proposal submission, including approval of any subcontracts included in the proposal. There is no standardized form for this letter. A letter of commitment is also required from each subcontractor’s institution.

Q: Can all budget narrative details be included as a single appendix or must budget narratives be broken out individually for subcontracts?
A: You may include all budget narrative details in a single appendix, including budget narratives for each subcontract. If including a budget narrative for one or multiple subcontracts, please make this clear. E.g., organize the budget narrative for each subcontract as a separate paragraph or subsection.

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Q: Should appendices adhere to the 12 point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins requirements?
A: Yes, all portions of the proposal should adhere to these requirements. Exceptions will be made for documents (e.g., letters of support) provided by project partners or others not on the project team.

Manager Proposal Assessments

Q: Where can managers find guidance and the form for Science Transfer Proposal Assessments?
A: Managers were emailed the guidance and form on December 23, 2015. These can also be accessed at the bottom of the page here: http://graham.umich.edu/water/nerrfs/funding/science-transfer.

Q: Should applicants coordinate getting the manager assessment form filled out and submitted with the proposal or is this done separately?
A: Managers have received guidance to submit their forms directly to the Science Collaborative, separate from proposals. Your job as the applicant is to ensure that the relevant managers are fully aware of and sufficiently engaged in your proposal as it is developed in order to provide a positive assessment, including making sure that they have a final copy of the proposal in hand. It is up to each manager to fill out the form and submit it to the Science Collaborative. We intentionally keep this form separate from the proposals to allow managers to be candid in their assessments. That being said, there is no harm in
reminding the managers you have engaged that they should include your proposal in their forms.

Review Process

Q: Are the panelists for the science transfer review process different from those for the research and integrated assessment proposal review process?
A: Yes.

Q: Do the written reviews come from the same group of panelists who are convened in the final stage of the process?
A: Yes.

Q: Are the evaluation criteria evenly weighted?
A: Yes.

Evaluation Criteria

Q: The fourth evaluation criterion reads: “The team has the appropriate expertise ...to confirm the accuracy of the information translation and transfer.” Can you give an example of what the expertise for this may look like?
A: This will vary from project to project. The project team should have the appropriate experience and expertise, as demonstrated in their resumes and explained in the "Team" section of the project narrative, to ensure that the information being transferred is topically accurate.