

# Project Narrative Overview, Outline, Tips, and Optional Template

## **PROJECT NARRATIVE OVERVIEW:**

Applicants must include a project narrative or work plan which describes their proposed project in detail and clearly addresses each grant scoring criterion as outlined in Section V-A Evaluation Criteria of the FY20 EN Solicitation Notice (SN). Grant review panels will score applications based on how well they meet these criteria.

Please note **the project narrative cannot exceed ten single-spaced pages in length**. Number each page of your workplan and note EPA grant reviewers will not review any work plan elements appearing after the tenth page.

---

## **PROJECT NARRATIVE OUTLINE**

The Project Narrative **must** include the following sections, in this order:

### **1. Project Description**

The purpose of this section is to help reviewers better understand what is being proposed. Applicants should include a brief description of the applicant's organization and scope of work, the EN priorit(ies) and opportunit(ies) that the applicant is applying under, an overview of the major outputs and outcomes to be accomplished in the project, and a brief description of how the project would meet the applicant's business and/or administrative need(s).

### **2. Project Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes**

The purpose of this section is to state the project's support of EPA Strategic Goal 3, Objective 3.4 'Streamline and Modernize' (see SN Page 6) and to establish the project's alignment with language found under this objective. Applicants should also detail how their project supports other EPA strategic goals (as applicable) and note any anticipated environmental results.

Applicants should also provide a detailed project plan in this section, with affiliated costs and deadlines, so that applicants can track and report on their project's progress. This project plan should be broken down by **each** project goal, its cost, and all output(s), output cost(s), output deadline(s), and outcome(s) affiliated with that goal.

Applicants are encouraged to provide their detailed project plan using the table template found on Page 7 of this document.

### **3. Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Key Personnel & Any Project Partners**

The purpose of this section is to list the key personnel who are going to work on the project, their qualifications for the role, and their project responsibilities. Applicants should include any key personnel for formal partners, technology vendors, and/or contractors.

In the case of staff not yet hired, applicants should note the role title, the qualifications/experience they will need, and their future project responsibilities.

### **4. Programmatic Involvement and Mentor Support**

Any EN grant projects that are not solely IT-focused must have substantive environmental program participation. The purpose of this section is for the applicant to describe that contribution, including programmatic collaboration, involvement, and management of the project. This should also include a list of programmatic participants, positions, and roles in the project.

If an applicant's project does not include programmatic involvement, the applicant should explain in detail why this was not deemed applicable and/or necessary for the proposed grant project.

Applicants should also note in this section whether they are choosing to utilize a mentor for their project and, if applicable, identify the mentoring organization and the nature of their guidance.

### **5. Commitment to Reuse**

Applicants should not spend grant funds on tools already developed and available for EN partner use. The purpose of this section is for the applicant to clearly identify which existing project-appropriate tools and shared services will be incorporated into the project, including foundational shared services (as applicable).

Applicants must also explicitly commit to register the reuse of these tools, as well as register any new tools developed in the project. If no products have been identified for reuse in this project, applicants should explain **in detail** why this is the case.

### **6. Technical Understanding**

The purpose of this section is for the applicant to demonstrate that they and/or their partners have the technical understanding to perform the proposed work and that the data and/or IT management solutions as identified are appropriate for the project.

Applicants should identify and provide a brief description for each data/IT management/technological solution they will be utilizing in their project. For each solution identified, applicants should also detail why this technology is appropriate for the project, which business/administrative need(s) it helps to meet, and why the applicant feels confident in their ability to successfully implement and maintain the solution.

If specific solutions and/or technological aspects of the project are not yet known (e.g. if the applicant is using a contractor), please describe in detail why this is the case and how future technical choices will be made.

## **7. Overview of Project Budget**

Applicants should have identified budget amounts for each goal and each output within the Project Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes section (Section 2). The purpose of this section is for applicants to explain why the proposed budget is appropriate and how it relates to the budget estimates provided in this Solicitation Notice. For applicants applying under opportunities that do not include cost estimates or for projects that include costs that exceed EPA estimates, a detailed cost rationale explaining how these estimates were calculated should be included.

Applicants should also list and explain pertinent budgetary information, including (as applicable):

- Direct grants funding vs. in-kind support
- Breakdown of funds for primary grantee vs. funds for project partners
- Contractual costs and the associated contract vehicle/acquisition method
- Indirect costs with the associated ICR rate and expiration date
- Amount requested in equipment and supplies
- Travel costs and each travel destination, traveler name, and cost per participant

## **8. Past Performance**

Applicants should clearly indicate in this section whether they have received a prior Exchange Network grant or if they have never received an EN grant. Applicants should identify these prior EN grant awards and also note any EPA assistance agreements performed in the last 3 years.

Additionally, applicants should identify any tools, resources, services and/or dataflows they have registered in *RCS/ENDS/SSRC*, produced by EN grant funds since 2011.

---

## **TIPS FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT NARRATIVE:**

➤ Strive for clear and succinct language-

Applicants should address each section of the project narrative in detail. The use of clear and concise language is highly recommended to ensure the best comprehension and scoring by EPA program staff and grant reviewers.

➤ Include headers for each of the eight project narrative sections-

To allow for easy review panel navigation throughout the project narrative, applicants are requested to include the section header in bold font above the section text in size 11 or 12 font (serif or sans serif).

➤ Use standard margins and fonts-

Applications should use 11-point fonts (serif or sans serif), with the exception of section headers (see above) and the proposal title, which may be increased to size 12. Please use 1-inch margins and single line spacing.

➤ Limit the Terminology to “Goals, Outputs and Outcomes”-

For improved clarity and consistency, applicants are requested to use the terms “goals”, “outputs”, and “outcomes” in their project narratives. The use of synonyms such as “objectives”, “targets”, “tasks” or “milestones” is often confusing for reviewers and makes it more difficult to properly score applications.

---

**Please see the optional project narrative template below (on page 5):**

### **A Note to Applicants Regarding Our Provided Templates**

Optional templates have been provided as applicant tools for the Cover Letter Project Narrative and Budget Narrative Attachment Form.

Though applicants are not required to follow these templates, **their use is recommended** to help ensure that all required information is appropriately captured within each of these documents. This will improve a reviewer’s ability to locate critical information and award points appropriately. Improved ease-of-use will likewise help EPA program staff and the grants office to process grant awards more quickly.

Please note that the **blue text enclosed in brackets** within the templates signifies an area the applicant should edit and/or expand upon, while the **black italicized text** provides helpful notes/context for the applicant to reference while drafting their application. All blue text should be changed to black once edited (or removed if not relevant) and the italicized notes deleted in the final submitted documents.

When utilizing the optional templates, applicants should feel free to expand upon and alter the suggested text as deemed necessary for their application.

**OPTIONAL PROJECT NARRATIVE TEMPLATE (Maximum of 10 Pages)**

---

*\*Note: Blue text enclosed in brackets signifies sections of text that should be edited/expanded upon*

*\*Note: Do NOT include any of the italicized text marked with 'note' in your final project narrative*

*\*Note: Applicants using this template should feel free to expand and edit the suggested text as desired*

*\*Note: This template has additional spacing between sections for improved readability/ usability; applicants should feel free to reduce the spacing as desired*

*\*\*Remember: Submit the project narrative using the Project Narrative Attachment Form*

---

**[Project Title]  
[State, Tribe or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency]**

FY 2020 Exchange Network Grant Program  
Project Narrative  
[Month][Day], 2020

**1) Project Description**

The [State, Tribe or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency]'s [program] submits this application under the opportunity [Name of Opportunity in EN Solicitation Notice]. If successful, this application will allow the [Department/Agency name or abbreviation] to [brief description of work to be accomplished].

[Include brief history on Department/Agency and scope of work].

[Include a brief overview of department/agency need and/or the reason for requesting the grant].

Funding from this exchange network grant will enable [department/agency name or abbreviation] to achieve the following major outputs or outcomes:

- [List major output/outcome]  
Provide short description of output/outcome and benefits to agency/department and/or public
- [List major output/outcome]  
Provide short description of output/outcome and benefits to agency/department and/or public

*-Note: Expand the number of major outputs/ outcomes as needed-*

## 2) Project Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes

This project's goals, outputs, schedule, and outcomes are provided below in **Table 1. Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes**. More detailed descriptions of the outputs and outcomes for each goal, and how these outputs align with EPA priorities and [State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency]'s business and administrative needs, are described below. The goals and outputs of this project support EPA's FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan **Goal 3: Greater Certainty, Compliance, and Effectiveness, Objective 3.4: Streamline and Modernize**, as well as [list any additional supported EPA Strategic Plan goals, as applicable]. [Describe the nature of this project's support of EPA Strategic Goal 3.4 (see FY2020 SN Page 6) and its support of any additional EPA strategic goals, as applicable]. Furthermore, the following environmental results are also supported by this project: [list and describe any expected environmental results].

### **Goal One: [Enter Goal Name]**

This Goal, along with its associated outputs and outcomes, is consistent with **EPA EN Grant Priority [Number] [Name of EN Grant Priority]**.

#### Goal 1 Outputs and Outcomes

- 1.1 [Enter Output Name] - [Enter Scheduled Completion Date]
  - [Include bulleted description of outputs and supported business/administrative needs]
  - [Include brief rationale of why scheduled completion date was selected/deemed appropriate]
- 1.2 [Enter Output Name] - [Enter Scheduled Completion Date]
  - [Include bulleted description of outputs and supported business/administrative needs]
  - [Include brief rationale of why scheduled completion date was selected/deemed appropriate]
- 1.3 [Enter Output Name] - [Enter Scheduled Completion Date]
  - [Include bulleted description of outputs and supported business/administrative needs]
  - [Include brief rationale of why scheduled completion date was selected/deemed appropriate]

### **Goal Two: [Enter Goal Name] [Enter Total Goal Budget]**

This Goal, along with its associated outputs and outcomes, is consistent with **EPA EN Grant Priority [Number] [Name of EN Grant Priority]**.

#### Goal 2 Outputs and Outcomes

- 2.1 [Enter Output Name] - [Enter Scheduled Completion Date]
  - [Include bulleted description of outputs and supported business/administrative needs]
  - [Include brief rationale of why scheduled completion date was selected/deemed appropriate]
- 2.2 [Enter Output Name] - [Enter Scheduled Completion Date]
  - [Include bulleted description of outputs and supported business/administrative needs]
  - [Include brief rationale of why scheduled completion date was selected/deemed appropriate]

*-Note: Expand the number of goals and outputs as needed-*

Table 1. Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes				
Goal	Output	Output Budget	Scheduled Completion Date	Outcome(s)
Goal 1: [Name the Goal]	1.1 [Enter Output]	\$ [Enter Budget for Specific Output]	[Enter Date]	[Enter outcome(s) from this goal/the outputs listed]
Total Goal Budget: \$[XX,XXX]	1.2	\$		
	1.3	\$		
Goal 1: [Name the Goal]	1.1 [Enter Output]	\$ [Enter Budget for Specific Output]	[Enter Date]	[Enter outcome(s) from this goal/the outputs listed]
Total Goal Budget: \$[XX,XXX]	2.2	\$		

*-Note: Please ensure that the sum of the output budgets is equal to the total budget for that goal*

### 3) Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Key Personnel & Any Project Partner(s)

**Project Manager:** [Name] [Current Job Title] [Affiliated Organization/Department/Agency] [Name] will serve as the project manager for the duration of this grant project. [He/She] was selected for the role based on [include a detailed summary of relevant experience and qualifications].

[His/Her] project responsibilities include:

- [Enter bulleted list of job responsibilities]

**[Enter Project Role]:** [Name] [Current Job Title] [Affiliated Organization/ Department/ Agency]

[Name] will serve as the [project role] for the duration of this grant project. [He/She] was selected for the role based on [include a detailed summary of relevant experience and qualifications].

[His/Her] project responsibilities include:

- [Enter bulleted list of job responsibilities]

*-Note: Expand section as needed to include all relevant key personnel/ partner personnel/ contractors/ technology vendors, as applicable-*

#### 4) Programmatic Involvement and Mentor Support

*-Note: Include the proposed text under either (A) or (B), as applies to your proposal  
- Note: All proposals should include the text which addresses mentors (last section of this page)*

*--(A) Include the following text if programmatic involvement applies to your grant proposal--*

This project will include substantive programmatic involvement from [name of involved programmatic program(s)]. [Briefly describe the program office/department mentioned and their relation to the primary applicant]. The contribution will include [describe programmatic involvement and management of the project] to address [applicable business need or knowledge gap helped by programmatic participation].

Key Programmatic Participants:

**[Name] [Current Job Title] [Affiliated Organization/Department/Agency]**

[Name] will be providing programmatic guidance in the role of [project role]. [He/She] was selected for this role based on [brief summary of relevant experience and qualifications].

[His/Her] [‘project’ and/or ‘oversight’] responsibilities include:

- [Enter bulleted list of responsibilities]

*-Note: Expand section as needed to include all relevant programmatic participants-*

*--(B) Include the following text if programmatic involvement does not apply to your grant proposal--*

The project will not include substantive programmatic involvement. This is not necessary because [provide a *detailed* rationale why this was not deemed applicable and/or necessary for this grant project].

*-Note: Include the following text in all proposals-*

This project [will/will not] utilize a mentor. The mentoring organization identified for this project is [State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [organization/department/agency], who was awarded a successfully completed EN grant in [award year]. This mentor is anticipated to provide valuable project guidance on [insert oversight responsibilities] based on their experience in [brief summary of relevant experience of mentor].

Primary Contact from Mentoring Organization:

**[Name] [Current Job Title] [Affiliated Organization/Department/Agency]**



## 5) Commitment to Reuse

The [State, Tribe or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency] is committed to reusing existing tools developed and available for Exchange Network partner use.

Specifically, the program will reuse the following products currently registered in the SSRC/EECIP:

- [Include bulleted list of products registered in SSRC that will be reused during this project (see Appendix D of the FY2020 SN for more information)]

*-Note: If no products have been identified for reuse in this project, applicants should explain in detail why this is the case. Additionally, applicants should note the reuse of any project-appropriate tools and shared services not registered in SSRC/EECIP and explain where this schema/code/product was located-*

This project [also includes/does not include] the [use/development] of a shared service: [list foundational shared service(s) and/or the name(s) of the service(s) to be developed]. [If developing a new service and/or utilizing a shared service not found in Appendix B, explain in detail how each is nationally scalable to meet the needs of Exchange Network Partners (see Evaluation Criterion G under Section V-A on Page 26 of the FY2020 SN)].

*-Note: Foundational shared services are those listed in Appendix B of the FY2020 EN Solicitation Notice-*

The [State, Tribe or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency] also commits to register any reuse of existing EN tools, as well as register any new tools as developed during the execution of this grant project.

## 6) Technical Understanding

In order to accomplish the goals and outputs as outlined in this project, [State, Tribe or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency] will be utilizing the following [data [and/or] IT management [and/or] technological solutions]:

- [Provide a bulleted list of data/IT management solutions and/or technology to be implemented/ expanded upon through this grant project]
  - [Provide a short description of the purpose for each]

The solutions as identified above are appropriate for the project because [identify what the technology will accomplish and how this meets business/administrative needs as identified in Section 1: Project Description]. [Department/Agency name or abbreviation] is confident in its ability to implement and maintain this technology because [explain in detail, referencing key personnel and/or partner and/or contractor qualifications and experience, as applicable].

*-Note: If specific solutions and/or technological aspects of the project are not yet known (e.g. if using a contractor), please describe in detail why this is the case and how future technical choices will be made-*

*-Additionally, please expand the paragraph above (as needed) to fully address which business/ administrative needs the technology will need to meet to ensure successful completion of the project-*

## 7) Overview of Project Budget

The total budget for this project is [dollar amount], with [dollar amount] in direct grants funding and [dollar amount] in in-kind support. This project [is/is not] a partnership project. [Dollar amount] of the [total budget] are funds for project partners, [of which [dollar amount] are funds for subawardees].

The proposed project budget also includes [dollar amount] for in-house costs and [dollar amount] budgeted for contractual costs. [Contractor services have been/will be procured through: [explain contractor acquisition method/system and name the contracting vehicle if known]]

This project [is/is not] charging indirect costs [at a rate of [%]]. [This ICR is active until [insert date]]. This project is requesting a total of [dollar amount] in equipment and a total of [dollar amount] in supplies.

This project is requesting a total of [dollar amount] in travel costs. [These costs were determined by: [include explanation of how travel costs were determined] and include the following:

- [Bulleted list with **each** travel destination/conference, traveler name, and their total cost]]

### Goal One:

The budget provided for **Goal 1: [Enter Goal Name]** is appropriate for the project because [it aligns with the cost estimates provided by EPA in Appendices A & B' and/or include a **detailed** cost rationale explaining how costs were estimated].

Goal 1: Output 1.1: [Dollar Amount]  
Output 1.2: [Dollar Amount]  
Output 1.3: [Dollar Amount]  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Total: [Dollar Amount]**

### Goal Two:

The budget provided for **Goal 2: [Enter Goal Name]** is appropriate for the project because [it aligns with the cost estimates provided by EPA in Appendices A & B' and/or include a **detailed** cost rationale explaining how costs were estimated].

Goal 2: Output 2.1: [Dollar Amount]  
Output 2.2: [Dollar Amount]  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Total: [Dollar Amount]**

*-Note: Expand the number of goals and outputs as needed-*

## 8) Past Performance

The [State, Tribe or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency] has been awarded [‘no’ or number] Exchange Network assistance agreements since 2002, resulting in [‘no’ or number] products registered in RCS/ENDS/SSRC since 2011.

[[State, Tribe or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency] prior EN grants include:

- [Include brief overview of prior grant(s), including name, date, grant ID, project description, and relation to current grant proposal, if any]]

[The products registered in RCS/ENDS/SSRC since 2011 include:

- [Include list of products registered in RCS/ENDS/SSRC, including the affiliated grant ID]]

[[State, Tribe or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency] has been awarded [‘no’ or number] non-EN EPA assistance agreements since 2017.

- [Include brief overview of these assistance agreements, including the EPA grant program, project name, date, grant ID, and project description]