# NOTES ON THE FY25 OPTIONAL PROJECT NARRATIVE TEMPLATE

* *Note:* This is an optional template available to FY25 applicants to assist in the drafting of their submitted project narrative, which is a mandatory attachment for all submitted proposals (see SN Appendix E). However, the use of this template is not required.
* *Note:* The project narrative should be a **maximum of ten pages** **single-spaced**; review panels score applications based on how well the evaluation criteria are met within these ten pages.
	+ Any part of the project narrative that extends past 10 pages will not be reviewed/considered during application scoring.
* *Note:* Blue text enclosed in brackets signifies sections of text that should be edited and/or expanded upon by the applicant; change this text color to black and remove brackets before submitting the project narrative.

*For Example:* “**Table 4. Contractor/Individual Consultant/Vendor Key Contact(s)** explicitly identifies that this project [will/will not] utilize [[contractor(s)] and/or [individual consultant(s)] and/or [vendor(s)]].” 🡪 “**Table 4. Contractor/Individual Consultant/Vendor Key Contact(s)** explicitly identifies that this project will utilize a contractor.”

* *Note:* Applicants using this optional template should feel free to expand and edit the suggested text, as well as expanded bulleted lists and table row/sections as necessary for their proposed project.
* *Note:* Superscript numbers throughout this document link to endnotes (see document pages 8-10); to delete these, simply remove the associated superscript number (e.g., 1).
	+ *Note:* Delete this introductory page, all superscript, all endnotes, and all template notes (notes within this optional template) before submitting your project narrative. The final project narrative should only include the information listed on document pages 2-7.

 **THE OPTIONAL PROJECT NARRATIVE TEMPLATE BEGINS ON THE NEXT PAGE**

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# FY 2025 Exchange Network Grant Program: Project Narrative

[Month][Day], 2025

# [Project Title]

# [State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency]

## 1) Project Description

The [State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency]’s [program]submits this application in support of Exchange Network (EN) Funding Area[s] [‘1’, ‘2’, and/or ‘3’][[1]](#endnote-2) under the following EN project opportunities[[2]](#endnote-3) [insert EN specific project opportunity name(s) from SN Appendices A-C][[3]](#endnote-4).

[Provide a brief description (2-3 sentences) of Department/Agency and the organization’s general scope of work]. [‘Department/Agency Name’ or ‘abbreviation’] is requesting $[requested funding] under the EN Grant Program to address the following business [and/or administrative] [[4]](#endnote-5) needs:

* [Provided a bulleted list of general business and/or administrative needs (of the Department/Agency), which will be supported by the proposed project.]

This project supports the goals and objectives of the [**EPA’s FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan**](https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan)**[[5]](#endnote-6)** and the achievement of associated environmental results, as described in **Table 1**.

### Table 1. Supported EPA Strategic Goals and Objectives

| **Strategic Goal[[6]](#endnote-7)** | **Strategic Objective[[7]](#endnote-8)** | **Description of Project Support**  | **Associated Environmental Output(s) and/or Outcome(s)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Goal [#]: [Enter Full Title] | Objective [#]: [Enter Full Title] | [Briefly describe how this EPA strategic goal & objective is supported by the proposed project.]. | [List associated environmental output(s) and/or outcome(s)]. |
| Goal [#]: [Enter Full Title] | Objective [#]: [Enter Full Title] | [Briefly describe how this EPA strategic goal & objective is supported by the proposed project.]. | [List associated environmental output(s) and/or outcome(s)]. |

## 2) Project Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes

This project proposes [#] project goals to successfully accomplish the proposed work. These project goals and their cost, as well as associated outputs, output costs, and output schedule completion dates, are provided below in **Table 2**. A general rationale for how the listed output completion dates were selected and deemed appropriate is likewise provided. Additionally, **Table 2** describes the following for each project goal: anticipated outcome(s), supported business and/or administrative needs, and the one EPA Strategic Plan goal and objective[[8]](#endnote-9) that is most supported by the listed project goal.

### Table 2. Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes (Project Workplan)[[9]](#endnote-10)

| **Goal:** | **Output Cost:** | **Output(s):** | **Completion Date** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal 1:** [Enter Descriptive Title]**Goal 1 Cost:** $[Enter] | **$** [Enter] | **1.1:** [Enter Descriptive Title] | [mm/dd/yyyy] |
| **$** [Enter] | **1.2:** [Enter Descriptive Title] | [mm/dd/yyyy] |
| **$** [Enter] | **1.3:** [Enter Descriptive Title] | [mm/dd/yyyy] |
| **Anticipated Outcome(s):** | [Enter outcome(s) from this goal].  |
| **Admin./Business Need(s):** | [Enter admin. and/or business needs supported by this goal, as identified in project narrative section 1) Project Description]. |
| **EPA Strategic Goal & Objective:** | [Enter the one (1) EPA strategic goal & objective most supported by this goal].  |
| **Goal 2:** [Enter Descriptive Title]**Goal 2 Cost:** $[Enter] | **$** [Enter] | **2.1:** [Enter Descriptive Title] | [mm/dd/yyyy] |
| **$** [Enter] | **2.2:** [Enter Descriptive Title] | [mm/dd/yyyy] |
| **$** [Enter] | **2.3:** [Enter Descriptive Title] | [mm/dd/yyyy] |
| **Anticipated Outcome(s):** | [Enter outcome(s) from this goal].  |
| **Admin./Business Need(s):** | [Enter admin. and/or business needs supported by this goal, as identified in project narrative section 1) Project Description]. |
| **EPA Strategic Goal & Objective:** | [Enter the one (1) EPA strategic goal & objective most supported by this goal]. |
| **Goal 3:** [Enter Descriptive Title]**Goal 3 Cost:** $[Enter] | **$** [Enter] | **3.1:** [Enter Descriptive Title] | [mm/dd/yyyy] |
| **$** [Enter] | **3.2:** [Enter Descriptive Title] | [mm/dd/yyyy] |
| **$** [Enter] | **3.3:** [Enter Descriptive Title] | [mm/dd/yyyy] |
| **Anticipated Outcome(s):** | [Enter outcome(s) from this goal].  |
| **Admin./Business Need(s):** | [Enter admin. and/or business needs supported by this goal, as identified in project narrative section 1) Project Description]. |
| **EPA Strategic Goal & Objective:** | [Enter the one (1) EPA strategic goal & objective most supported by this goal]. |
|  |
| **Rationale for Selected Output Completion Dates:** | [Provide a general rationale for how the proposed completion dates were selected and deemed appropriate for the project]. |
|  |
| **a. Total Budget for (All) Goals:** | **$** [Enter Sum of Goal Costs] |
| **b. Personnel Costs not otherwise included in Goal Costs:**  | **$** [Enter, if applicable to the project and not already included in the costs for project goals] |
| **c. Fringe Costs not otherwise included in Goal Costs:**  | **$** [Enter, if applicable to the project and not already included in the costs for project goals] |
| **Total Direct Costs:[[10]](#endnote-11)** | **$** [Enter Total Direct Costs (Sum of A-C)] |
| **Total Indirect Costs:[[11]](#endnote-12)** | **$** [Enter Total Indirect Costs, if applicable to project] |
| **Total Project Budget:[[12]](#endnote-13)** | **$** [Add Total Direct Costs & Indirect Costs]  |

## 3) Identifying Key Personnel and Associated Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications

**Table 3. Applicable Key Contacts** below explicitly identifies which personnel roles are applicable to [State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency]’s proposed project. This table provides the full name, current job title, current organization, anticipated project roles and responsibilities, and other mandatory role-specific details for each applicable role.

### Table 3. Applicable Key Contacts[[13]](#endnote-14)

| **Personnel Role[[14]](#endnote-15)** | **Applicable (?)** | **Name** | **Current Job Title** | **Organization** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Project Manager | Y | [Enter Name] | [Enter Current Title] | [Enter Org. Name] |
| **Project Roles and Responsibilities:** | [Describe role’s proposed project roles and responsibilities]. |
| **Experience or Qualifications in Project and Financial Management:** | [Enter description of project manager’s experience in project management and financial management.] |
| Formal Partner[[15]](#endnote-16) | [Enter Y/N] | [Enter Name] | [Enter Current Title] | [Enter Org. Name] |
| **Project Role(s)/ Responsibilit(ies):** | [Describe role’s proposed project roles and responsibilities]. |
| **Partnering Organization’s Relation to the Lead Applicant:** | [Enter brief description of relationship between lead applicant and the partner contact’s organization]. |
| Formal Mentor[[16]](#endnote-17) | [Enter Y/N] | [Enter Name] | [Enter Current Title] | [Enter Org. Name] |
| **Project Role(s)/ Responsibilit(ies):** | [Describe role’s proposed project roles and responsibilities]. |
| **Mentoring Organization’s Prior Exchange Network Experience:** | [Enter brief summary of mentor organization’s EN experience/history].  |
| **Mentor’s Most Recent EN Grant:** | [List grant number and fiscal year of at least one prior EN grant]. |
| **Confirmation of Mentoring Data Reporting/Publishing Requirement:** | [This mentor currently [reports and/or publishes] data for [list one or more EPA environmental programs] using [EN Node, VES, or an API]. |

**Table 4. Contractor/Individual Consultant/Vendor** explicitly identifies that this project [will/will not] utilize [[contracting firm(s)] and/or [individual consultant(s)] and/or [vendor firm(s)]]. [Additionally, it provides the planned method of procurement, planned method of qualification vetting, and anticipated project roles and responsibilities for each entity.] [As the contractor procurement method is non-competitive, a detailed justification for why this is allowable per EPA’s strict guidelines is also provided, referencing the applicable rationale as defined under [2 CFR 200.320(c)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR45ddd4419ad436d/section-200.320).]

### Table 4. Contractor/Individual Consultant/Vendor[[17]](#endnote-18)

| **Contractor Role Type** | **Applicable(?)** | **Planned Procurement Method** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Contracting Firm/Individual Consultant/Vendor Firm] | [Enter Y/N] | [Enter ‘sealed bid’, ‘request for proposals’, or ‘non-competitive procurement’][[18]](#endnote-19)  |
| **Method of Qualification Vetting:** | [Describe method for how the applicant organization will vet the contractor to ensure they are qualified to complete assigned work]. |
| **Roles and Responsibilities:** | [Describe role’s proposed project roles and responsibilities]. |

## 4) Commitment to Reuse and Register Shared Tools and Services

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 product[s] as detailed below in **Table 5. Reused Components[[19]](#endnote-20).**

### Table 5. Reused Components[[20]](#endnote-21)

| **Name/Title** | **Type** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Enter Component Name or Title] | [Enter Component Type][[21]](#endnote-22)  | [Provide a brief description of the component and why it is appropriate for the proposed project]. |
| [Enter Component Name or Title] | [Enter Component Type] | [Provide a brief description of the component and why it is appropriate for the proposed project]. |

In accordance with the terms and conditions of the Exchange Network Grant Program[[22]](#endnote-23), the [State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency] commits to register **any new tools developed** during the execution of this grant project, at the time of grant close-out.

In accordance with the terms and conditions of the Exchange Network Grant Program22, the [State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency] likewise commits to register **any reuse of existing EN tools** during the execution of this grant project, at the time of grant close-out.

## 5) Technical Solutions and Data Availability

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[[23]](#endnote-24).

* **[‘Name of data, IT management, or technical solution’ or ‘descriptive title (if unnamed)’][[24]](#endnote-25)**
	+ **Necessity and Appropriateness:** This solution is a necessary and appropriate choice for the proposed project because [provide a detailed rationale, addressing this].
	+ **Meeting Business/Administrative Needs:** This solution helps [Department/Agency name or abbreviation] to address [list the business and/or administrative need(s) this solution helps to meet, as identified in the ‘Project Description’].
	+ **Ability to Implement and Maintain:** [Department/Agency name or abbreviation] is confident in its ability to implement and maintain this solution because [provide an explanation, referencing key personnel and/or partner qualifications or experience, project sustainability plans, training, etc., as applicable].

The [knowledge [and/or] data [and/or] technology] outputs developed during the proposed project will enhance data sharing and availability for immediate stakeholders[[25]](#endnote-26), including the [Department/Agency name or abbreviation] [and [name formal partner(s), if applicable]], by [provide a detailed explanation]. Additionally, this project will enhance data sharing and availability for organizations across the Exchange Network[[26]](#endnote-27) by [provide a detailed explanation].

## 6) Project Alignment with the E-Enterprise Digital Strategy (EEDS)

The technical solution(s) as detailed in **Section Five: Technical Understanding** align with the three principles of the EEDS[[27]](#endnote-28).

* 1st Principle: Build with an Information-Centric Approach:
	+ [Describe in detail how the project’s proposed technical solution(s) align with this principle].
* 2nd Principle: Adopt Shared Platforms:
	+ [Describe in detail how the project’s proposed technical solution(s) align with this principle].
* 3rd Principle: Adopt Customer-Centric Approaches:
	+ [Describe in detail how the project’s proposed technical solution(s) align with this principle].

## 7) Overview of Project Budget

Costs for each project goal and their associated output were provided in **Section Two:** **Project Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes.** The appropriateness of these estimated project costs is detailed in **Table 6. Project Output Budget Appropriateness**, as well as in the ‘summary of project costs’ below.

### Table 6. Project Output Budget Appropriateness[[28]](#endnote-29)

| Output Number | Project Output Title |
| --- | --- |
| [Goal #].[Output #] (e.g., 1.1) | [Enter project output title, as listed in Section 2 of the project narrative]. |
| How Were Costs Estimated: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
| Why Costs are Necessary: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
|  |
| Output Number | Project Output Title |
| [Goal #]. [Output #] (e.g., 1.2) | [Enter project output title, as listed in Section 2 of the project narrative]. |
| How Were Costs Estimated: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
| Why Costs are Necessary: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
|  |
| [Goal #]. [Output #] (e.g., 1.3) | [Enter project output title, as listed in Section 2 of the project narrative]. |
| How Were Costs Estimated: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
| Why Costs are Necessary: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
|  |
| Output Number | Project Output Title |
| [Goal #]. [Output #] (e.g., 2.1) | [Enter project output title, as listed in Section 2 of the project narrative]. |
| How Were Costs Estimated: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
| Why Costs are Necessary: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
|  |
| Output Number | Project Output Title |
| [Goal #]. [Output #] (e.g., 2.2) | [Enter project output title, as listed in Section 2 of the project narrative]. |
| How Were Costs Estimated: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
| Why Costs are Necessary: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
|  |
| Output Number | Project Output Title |
| [Goal #]. [Output #] (e.g., 2.3) | [Enter project output title, as listed in Section 2 of the project narrative]. |
| How Were Costs Estimated: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
| Why Costs are Necessary: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
|  |
| Output Number | Project Output Title |
| [Goal #]. [Output #] (e.g., 3.1) | [Enter project output title, as listed in Section 2 of the project narrative]. |
| How Were Costs Estimated: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
| Why Costs are Necessary: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
|  |
| Output Number | Project Output Title |
| [Goal #]. [Output #] (e.g., 3.2) | [Enter project output title, as listed in Section 2 of the project narrative]. |
| How Were Costs Estimated: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
| Why Costs are Necessary: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
|  |
| Output Number | Project Output Title |
| [Goal #]. [Output #] (e.g., 3.3) | [Enter project output title, as listed in Section 2 of the project narrative]. |
| How Were Costs Estimated: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
| Why Costs are Necessary: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
|  |
| Output Number | Project Output Title |
| [Goal #]. [Output #] (e.g., 3.4) | [Enter project output title, as listed in Section 2 of the project narrative]. |
| How Were Costs Estimated: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |
| Why Costs are Necessary: | [Enter a clear and detailed rationale, specific to this output]. |

#### Summary of Project Costs

* The total budget for this project is $[dollar amount]. This project [does/does not include] in-kind support[[29]](#endnote-30). [$[dollar amount] of funds are requested as direct grant funding and $[dollar amount] is requested as in-kind support].
* This project [‘is’ or ‘is not’] submitting a coalition application with [an] eligible EN partnering organization[s]. [$[‘Dollar amount’] of the $[total budget, dollar amount] are funds for [‘the’ or ‘these’] project partner[s]].
* This project [‘does’ or ‘does not’] include a formal mentor[[30]](#endnote-31). [$[‘Dollar amount’] of the $[total budget, dollar amount] are funds for the mentoring organization.]]
* The proposed project budget includes $[‘dollar amount’ or ‘0’] in contractual costs [for a ‘contracting firm’ or ‘individual consultant’ or ‘vendor firm’, who will procured through [enter procurement method[[31]](#endnote-32)]]. [(If the procurement method is ‘non-competitive’) A rationale for the use of non-competitive procurement has been provided under Project Narrative Section 3, Table 4, and is allowable per [2 CFR 200.320(c)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR45ddd4419ad436d/section-200.320).]
* This project [‘is’ or ‘is not’] charging $[‘dollar amount’ or ‘0’] in indirect costs [at a rate of [%]]. [The associated negotiated indirect cost rate agreement is active until [insert date: mm/dd/yyyy]].
* This project is requesting a total of $[‘dollar amount’ or ‘0’] in travel costs, [as detailed below in **Table 7. Project Travel**].

### Table 7. Project Travel[[32]](#endnote-33)

| **#** | **Destination and Travel Purpose** | **# of Travelers** | **Total Trip Cost** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | [Enter location and purpose of trip][[33]](#endnote-34) | [Enter #] | $[Enter amount] |
| 2 | [Enter location and purpose of trip] | [Enter #] | $[Enter amount] |
|  | **Total Travel Costs:** |  | $[Enter amount] |

## 8) Past Performance[[34]](#endnote-35)

[[State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency] has been awarded [‘#’] Exchange Network assistance agreements since 2002] or [State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency] has never been awarded a prior Exchange Network assistance agreement].

Optional Project Narrative Template: Endnotes
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1. See SN Section 3A. Please note that EN Funding Area 3 is only open to U.S. Territories, federally recognized Indian tribes and Alaska Native Villages, and inter-tribal consortia of federally recognized tribes (e.g., the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. The phrase ‘EN project opportunities’ in this context refers to specific project write-ups as available in Appendices A-C of the Solicitation Notice that provide potential applicants with the information needed to design a proposal for a particular data exchange, data service, or project type (e.g., ‘WQX’ or ‘Individual Capacity Building’). Please note that the three capacity building EN Project Opportunities, as listed in SN Appendix C, are only open to U.S. Territories, federally recognized Indian tribes and Alaska Native Villages, and inter-tribal consortia of federally recognized tribes (e.g., the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. In the context of the EN Grant Program, this phrase indicates statements that define organizational requirement(s) that must be met in order to get an organization from where they currently are to where that organization would like to be. This could be improvements to or the implementation of programmatic workflows, improved management, and policy decisions, improved public data access and/or usability, the implementation of strategic business processes, improvements to process and staff efficiencies, etc. When applicants are asked to identify business and administrative needs, they are essentially being asked ‘what are some weaknesses, dependencies, or risks of the organization that will be partially or fully addressed through the proposed EN project’. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. If an applicant is proposing a project which does not relate to a specific EN project opportunity, this should be clearly stated here. Be sure to still include which of the EN Funding Area(s) are supported by the proposed project. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. See Solicitation Notice Section 3B ‘Environmental Results Supported by Assistance Activities’ or read full text at<https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. E.g., ‘Goal 1:  Tackle the Climate Crisis’. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. E.g., ‘Objective 1.1 Reduce Emissions that Cause Climate Change’. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. Applicants should only list one strategic goal and objective per project goal; if there are multiple options, applicants should choose the best fit. The same EPA strategic goal and objective may be listed for multiple project goals. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. Add or remove rows to Table 2. Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes as needed to include all project goals and outputs. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
10. Must exactly match the sum total of all direct cost categories (personnel, fringe, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, and ‘other’), as listed in the budget narrative and SF-424a budget form. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
11. Must exactly match the total indirect costs as listed in the budget narrative and SF-424a budget form, if applicable to the proposed project. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
12. Must exactly match the total requested funds, as listed in all application attachments. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
13. Include one key contact per applicable role type; write ‘N/A’ in the fields for any non-applicable project roles; **if the role has not yet been hired:**

	1. Mark ‘Y’ for yes in the second column titled ‘applicable(?)’;
	2. Write ‘Not Yet Hired’ in the third column titled ‘Name’;
	3. Write ‘Not Yet Hired’ in the fourth column titled ‘Current Job Title’;
	4. Write ‘Not Yet Hired’ in the fifth column titled ‘Organization’;
	5. Fill out the ‘Project Role(s)/ Responsibilit(ies)’ row; and
	6. Add the following row in that role section below ‘Project Role(s)/Responsibilities’ and fill it out:

| **Required Skills, Knowledge, Abilities, and Qualifications:** | [Enter brief summary of necessary skills, knowledge, abilities, and qualifications as outlined in the position’s recruitment package].  |
| --- | --- |

 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
14. The role of project manager is applicable to all projects; use this column to indicate whether the other listed roles are applicable to your project. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
15. The formal partner role only applies to applicants submitting a coalition application with an eligible EN partner, as described in SN Section 4C. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
16. The mentor role only applies to applicants specifically applying under the ‘Individual Capacity Building with Mentorship’ EN project opportunity (see Solicitation Notice, Appendix C). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
17. Mark ‘no’ in the ‘applicable’ column if contractors/individual consultants/vendors are not applicable and write N/A in all other fields; also expand the table as needed to include one key contact from each contract that is applicable to the proposed project. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
18. Non-competitive procurement is not allowable without EPA approval, which is provided only in select cases (see [2 CFR 200.320(c)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR45ddd4419ad436d/section-200.320)). Applicants must provide a detailed justification when using this procurement method. An existing relationship or a history of prior work completed by a contractor or vendor does not justify the use of non-competitive procurement. Similarly, proximity of a contracting firm to an applicant’s organization is not sufficient reasoning. An example of a valid non-competitive procurement rationale is that software required for the proposed project is proprietary and developed by the contractor; therefore, the item is available only from a single source. See [2 CFR 200.320(c)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR45ddd4419ad436d/section-200.320) for more information.

If an applicant lists the method of procurement as ‘non-competitive’ or ‘sole source’, add and fill the following row:

| **‘Non-Competitive’ or ‘Sole-Source’ Procurement Method Justification:** | [This method is allowable per EPA guidelines because [provide a detailed justification of why this method is allowable/appropriate, citing [2 CFR 200.320(c)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR45ddd4419ad436d/section-200.320)]]. |
| --- | --- |

 [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
19. See Solicitation Notice, Appendix D ‘Identifying Items for Reuse - Exchange Network Partner Products’ for guidance on finding components for reuse. All applicants are expected to review available products/services/etc. to see if any existing technology is appropriate for reuse while planning their project and to address this within their project narrative. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
20. Include table only if applicable; if no products have been identified for reuse in this project, applicants should instead:

explicitly state this in this section; and

explain in detail why available products/services/technology is not appropriate for reuse in the proposed project. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
21. IT Component types include: Software; Web-Based Service(s); Cloud-Based Service(s); Shared Platform; API; XML Schema; Monitoring Tool/Service; Mobile Data Collection Tool; Remote Sensing Tool; GIS; Data Sharing Tool; Data Flow; Data Exchange Template; Data Service and/or Download; Data Standards; Training Tools and Resources; Flow Configuration [Document]; Standard Exchange Protocols; or Other. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
22. See Solicitation Notice, Section: 8A. Administration and National Policy Requirements. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
23. If specific solutions and/or technological aspects of the project are not yet known (e.g., if the applicant is utilizing a contractor who will implement the project’s technical solution(s)), the applicant should instead:

clearly state who will make the project’s technical decisions;

describe why they are the qualified/the appropriate party; and

identify which business/admin. needs the selected technology or solutions will need to address. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
24. Expand this list as needed to identify and describe each project solution/component, including the the three sub-bullets (‘necessity and appropriateness’, ‘meeting business/administrative needs’, and ‘ability to implement and maintain’) for each. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
25. Immediate stakeholders include the applicant organization and any formal EN partnering organizations (if applicable). [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
26. This excludes immediate stakeholders (see above); applicants should address how the proposed project benefits organizations across the Exchange Network who are not directly involved in the project’s implementation. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
27. See Solicitation Notice, Appendix D ‘Alignment with the E-Enterprise Digital Strategy (EEDS)’ or view the full EEDS text here: <https://e-enterprisefortheenvironment.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Final-E-Enterprise-Digital-Strategy-V-1.0.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
28. Add or remove sections to **Table 6. Project Output Budget Appropriateness** as needed to include all project outputs. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
29. In-kind support refers to funds that will be used to provide in-kind services to the recipient through an EPA contract vehicle (aka, a portion or all awarded grant funds will be added to an EPA contract (to complete project goals and outputs), as opposed to being distributed to the grantee). These services are managed by EPA. Applicants should only request in-kind if they have verified contract availability with an EPA POC (see SN Section 1E); however, EPA ultimately reserves the right to decide whether in-kind services will be provided when requested. See SN Section 3D for more information.

Note: The term ‘in-kind’ is commonly confused with voluntary cost share (in which, the applicant commits to providing their own organizational funding in support of the project, in addition to awarded federal funds). Cost shares are not applicable to EN Grants and, therefore, nonfederal funds should not be included anywhere in proposed projects. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
30. Only applicable to applicants applying specifically under the ‘Individual Capacity Building with Mentorship’ EN project opportunity (see Solicitation Notice, Appendix C). [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
31. Procurement methods include ‘sealed bid’, ‘request for proposals (RFPs)’, or ‘non-competitive procurement’. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
32. Include table only if charging travel in the proposed project; add or remove rows to Table 7. Project Travel as needed to include all project trips. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
33. E.g., ‘EN Regional Conference, Seattle’. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
34. Applicants should not list prior EN grants in this section; this information should instead be included in the separate attachment titled ‘Additional Attachment E: List of Prior Exchange Network Assistance Agreements’ (see SN Appendix E). [↑](#endnote-ref-35)