

## **GUIDELINES FOR JOINT REPORTS: WHEN MULTIPLE PARTIES COLLABORATE ON A BROADER EFFORT**

### **CONTRACT- VS. PROJECT- VS. PROGRAM-LEVEL REPORTING**

Progress reporting requirements are defined and imposed through work elements in the Statements of Work for contracts. However, in many cases we are most interested in reports at the project level, or sometimes program level, which could encompass work being performed by several contracts. The Fish and Wildlife Program works at the project level: the proposals and funding decisions are for projects (not contracts), which creates some need to report results and to document performance at the project level. In these situations several contracts ostensibly are complementary components of a larger whole. Therefore, the need for a project-level progress report may become pre-eminent and diminish the need for, and utility of progress reports for each of the several contracts within one project.

A similar situation may arise at the Program level for cases in which several complementary projects compose a single effort. There often is some need for periodic evaluation and reporting at this level, although the period is likely to be every several years, not annually.

So, which of the following is required for a multiple-contract project?

- Each contractor submits a separate progress report to BPA to document completion of its Statement of Work (SOW) responsibilities,
- Each contractor simply submits its results to the project sponsor for inclusion in a joint project-level report, or
- Both of the above.

### ***Options and Conditions***

The default option is both. For multiple-contract projects, progress reporting is usually required by each contractor both to BPA and to the project sponsor (perhaps simply in the form of data). This option enables each contractor to publicly document completion of their work while providing information needed by the sponsor for project-level reporting. However, the default is not the ideal. We prefer to receive just a single project-level progress report when the following conditions are met (decreasing priority order):

- The project sponsor is able to submit complete and timely progress reports for the entire project. This usually requires that...
- All contractors are able/willing to faithfully submit requisite information to the project sponsor for inclusion in the project-level progress report.
- Pisces status reports are adequate to document performance of the contractors relative to their Statements of Work (SOWs), including submittal of their contribution to the sponsor's project-level report.
- The joint project-level progress report includes an overview/synthesis relative to the objectives of the overall project. That is, the joint report is substantively more than just a stapled-together collection of the contributions from the individual contracts.
- The time required to compile a joint project-level report does not significantly delay (e.g., more than about a month) the uploading of the report in Pisces<sup>1</sup> and subsequent posting

<sup>1</sup> Pisces is BPA's project management software tool for fish and wildlife projects.

## BPA FISH AND WILDLIFE GUIDELINES FOR PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

of the report for public access on [BPA's website](#). A bit more time may be allowed for a very thorough, important synthesis.

- The SOWs (e.g., WE for annual progress reporting) and other parts of Pisces are used well to clearly communicate the specific progress reporting requirements of each contractor (e.g., that progress reports to BPA are waived in favor of a joint project-level report).
- The contract components of the project are relatively cohesive, complementary, and not simply a collection of unrelated activities administratively huddled together under one project umbrella.

When these conditions are met, the individual contractors may save some progress-reporting effort and BPA may save some time that would otherwise be spent receiving and publishing several partial and disjoint contract-level reports. If these conditions are not met, then each contractor should submit separate progress reports to BPA. These conditions acknowledge the interdependency of the contractors within a project, and they protect the ability of conscientious contractors to document successful completion of their work and to record their results through separate contract-level progress reports submitted directly to BPA for public posting. The contractor, COTR and BPA manager will work together to determine what reporting scenario is most appropriate, given the particular circumstances.

Joint project-level progress reports will virtually always be published.

### ORGANIZATIONAL STYLE OF JOINT REPORTS

There are two basic organizational styles for joint reports, and they can be varied and mixed:

- A single cohesive synthesis report that appears to be the work of a single entity; the results of the separate contracts are seamlessly melded together.
- A collection of individual reports from the contractors, with a unifying summary/synthesis that relates the contract-level work to the project -level objectives. Reports from the individual contractors could be separate chapters or appendices, either in SOW-based or technical formats.

The preferred organizational style depends primarily on how inter-related the contract-level components are. The more inter-related and complementary, the better a single cohesive synthesis report would work. Conversely, if one or more contracts are for relatively discrete activities, then a collection of separate reports could work better. Eventually, though, the results of the project as a whole should be brought together.

Time also is a factor when choosing the organizational style. The longer it would take to generate a cohesive synthesis report, the less useful that style would be in most years. Similarly, if separate lines of work will not come to fruition or converge for a few years (e.g., some major RM&E projects), then a collection style might work best for most years during the interim, with synthesis-heavy reports every few years and/or when the work is completed (see [Reporting RM&E Results](#)).