

Multi-Project Structure in ASSIST Transcript

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Welcome to this video tutorial on understanding the structure of NIH multi-project applications when using eRA's ASSIST.

A multi-project application is a single grant application submission with multiple, interrelated components with defined work, personnel, sites and budgets that share a common focus or objective.

Every multi-project application consists of a single Overall component, some number of additional components, and automatically prepared data summaries based on information provided in those components.

Application Structure

Here is a sample application layout of a multi-project application to better understand the structure.

It is important to think through the structure of your application, including the organization and people responsible for each component. This ensures the entire team is on the same page and saves you time in the end.

Overall Component

The Overall component provides an overview of the entire application.

It is here that you identify the Project Directors/Principal Investigators, referred to as PD/PIs or PIs, for the entire application by assigning them the PD/PI role on the Senior/Key Person Profile form.

You also describe how all the other components work together to achieve the goals of your proposal.

Component Types

In this example, the remaining components fall under three component types – Admin Core, Core, and Project.

Section IV of each multi-project opportunity indicates the types of components expected in a responsive application.

Project Components

The application includes a number of individual components within each component type.

In this example, there are three components under the Project component type - Project-001, Project-002, and Project-003.

Components typically include general organization and project information, performance sites, personnel, description of work to be done, and a budget.

The notice of funding opportunity announcement indicates the required minimum and/or maximum number of components expected.

The required components in a complete application are defined by the opportunity, so they vary from one opportunity to another.

In this example, in addition to the Overall component which is always required, the Administrative Core is required, Cores are optional, and at least 3 projects are required though there isn't an upper limit for the number of projects that can be included.

Component Forms

The Overall component, as well as, each Component Type have a defined set of required and optional forms.

The Overall includes Optional forms like the PHS Assignment Request Form which would only be included once for the application.

Also notice in the example that the Overall component does not have a budget form. The budget for the application is automatically generated based on budget information provided in the other components where the actual work is being done.

All components within a component type use the same set of forms, but the forms associated with each component type may vary. For example, in an opportunity that includes both Project and Career Development Component Types, the Projects may require the Research Plan form while the Career Development components may require the Career Development Award Supplemental form.

PD/PIs

Individuals can (and often do) serve as both a PD/PI for the Overall component and the Project Lead for one or more of the other components.

In the example, Drs. Cher D. Money and Ben A. Round are PD/PIs for the entire application and each is also the Project Lead of another component.

Within the Overall component, they must have the role as PD/PI and within the other components they must have the role of Project Lead unless requested in the opportunity to use a different role.

Money

Note that Organization A is the applicant organization, but Organization B is identified as leading Core-002.

The structure of the application should match the flow of the work, NOT the flow of the money.

If Organization B is responsible for the majority of the work in Core-002, then it is appropriate to designate them as leading that component.

If the applicant organization also works on a component led by another organization, as is the case here in Core-002, their budget is reflected on a subaward budget form.

That doesn't mean the money flows through Core-002 back to Organization A or that Organization A is considered a subaward to itself. The subaward budget form is simply the form used to collect the needed data.

eRA systems use the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number provided on the budget forms, not the project versus subaward designation on the form to sort out which budget data belongs to the applicant organization and which data belongs to subawards.

Application Assembly

Now let's review how all the forms and attachments in your application are assembled into a single application image for funding consideration.

The Overall component is presented first and includes a series of data summaries based on information collected in the Other Components.

The additional component types are presented in alphabetical order grouping components of the same type together. In this example, the Overall would be followed by the Admin Core, then all the Cores, then all the Projects.

eRA systems automatically add headers, footers, a table of contents, and bookmarks to your assembled application image. These are the bookmarks for the application in our example with some of the sections expanded and others collapsed. It provides a good visual of how the Overall component, summaries, and other components are ordered in the application.

You see the SF424 R&R cover form for the Overall component provided first, followed by the Table of Contents.

Next are the system-generated summaries. The remaining forms and attachments for the Overall component follow the summaries.

The Component Types are next in alphabetical order. Each of the Component Types expands to show the individual components.

Section IV.7 of every multi-project opportunity links to a document which provides detailed information on how your application image is assembled, including information on what's included in each automatic summary.

Now that you understand how to structure your multi-project application and how your data is assembled, it's time to get started preparing that application.

Resources

There are several resources available to you should you need them to help you with the ASSIST submission process.

- ASSIST Online Help
<https://www.era.nih.gov/erahelp/ASSIST/default.htm>
- Overview of ASSIST
<https://www.era.nih.gov/help-tutorials/assist/overview.htm>
- ASSIST Training Materials
<https://www.era.nih.gov/help-tutorials/assist/era-training-assist.htm>

If you need additional help, please contact the eRA Service Desk

<https://www.era.nih.gov/need-help>

This concludes this video tutorial on understanding the structure of NIH multi-project applications when using eRA's ASSIST system. Thank You for watching.