

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Financial Assistance Business Process
Setting Project Period Dates for Grant and Cooperative Agreement Awards

Term	Definition
Project Period	The period of Federal sponsorship. Also referred to as the period of performance.
Funding Period	The period of time when Federal funding is available for obligation by the recipient. Also referred to as the budget period. Specifying a funding period is required only when the project will be funded incrementally over time. When a funding period is specified, a recipient may charge only the allowable costs resulting from obligations incurred during that period plus any pre-award costs we have authorized.
Real property maintenance and/or retention period	The period during which a recipient must maintain and/or retain real property that was restored or purchased with Federal funds during the award period. The real property maintenance/retention period begins on the day AFTER the project period ends, and must not be identified in a notice of award as being part of the project period.

1. What are the standards for establishing a project period start date?

Unless otherwise legally prescribed, the standards for establishing a project period start date are as follows:

- If the program completes review, approval and obligation of funds for a project *before* the start date requested by the applicant on their SF 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*, the project period start date should be the requested start date.
- If the program is unable to complete review, approval and obligation of funds for a project until *after* the start date requested by the applicant, the project period start date should be back-dated to start on either the date the program received a complete application package or the start date requested by the applicant, whichever is later (i.e., whichever event occurred closest to today's date).
- If the applicant does not request a specific start date in their application, the project period start date will typically be either the same date as the date funds are obligated or the date the notice of award is signed by the authorized Service official. Some programs specify in their Notice of Funding Availability that applicants should not request a specific start date on their application.
- In the event we must obligate funds before all legal compliance reviews are complete (i.e., National Environmental Policy Act, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act reviews), programs have the option to set the project period start date for a date in the future to allow time for all required compliance reviews to be completed before the recipient begins any activities under the award.

2. What should the project period start date be if we are authorizing pre-award costs?

Follow the standards in the response to Question 1. The start date should not be back-dated to incorporate pre-award costs. Pre-award costs, by definition, are incurred as a result of activities performed BEFORE the start of the project period. Pre-award costs must

be specifically authorized in the notice of award. See the [Issuing a New Financial Assistance Award Guidance](#) posted on the Intranet at <https://inside.fws.gov/go/post/FAPO-NewAwards> for more information.

3. On incrementally funded projects, what are the standards for establishing funding periods?

Unless otherwise legally prescribed, each funding period start and end date should reflect the start and end dates of each complete and independent segment (see NOTE below) of the project. Funding periods should not overlap. The last funding period must end on the same date as the project period end date. When a funding period is specified, a recipient may charge only the allowable costs resulting from obligations incurred during that period plus any pre-award costs we have authorized.

NOTE: Not all projects qualify to be funded incrementally. To qualify for incremental funding, each segment of a project must be complete and independent from the other segments in regards to financial obligations, goals, objectives, scope of work and expected outcomes.

4. What are the standards for establishing a project period end date?

The project period end date should be set no later than the date when we expect the recipient to complete all project activities. The project period end date must not be extended to incorporate any required post-award reporting period or real property maintenance/retention period. The end of the project period and subsequent award closeout do NOT affect the recipient's continued responsibilities for real property maintenance, retention and/or disposition.