



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Office of the Chief Financial Officer  
Finance Office

October 2, 2014

MEMORANDUM TO: Line Office Assistant Administrators  
Staff Office Directors  
Chief Financial Officers

FROM: Kim Darling *Kim Darling*  
Acting Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Reminder on Conference Procedures

The purpose of this memorandum is to remind the line and staff offices of the deadlines and requirements for the conference procedures, as well as to notify of changes made to these procedures.

#### **Conferences Equal To or Over \$100,000**

NOAA Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) will be issuing a quarterly data call for proposed conferences for fiscal year (FY) 2015. All line and staff offices will be asked to provide the conference titles and dates for any proposed conference with estimated costs equal to or over \$100,000. (This is a new requirement.) This data will be compiled and submitted to the Department of Commerce (DOC), per DOC policy.

The pre-approval submission deadlines for conferences with estimated costs equal to or over \$100,000 are as follows:

- The conference title, start date, and end date must be submitted to [conferences\\_grouptravel@noaa.gov](mailto:conferences_grouptravel@noaa.gov) at least 90 days prior to the conference start date. The Conference Cost Workbook specific to the conference will be provided upon receipt of this information.
- The completed conference package along with Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA)/Staff Office (SO) Director approval must be submitted to [conferences\\_grouptravel@noaa.gov](mailto:conferences_grouptravel@noaa.gov) **at least 75 days in advance of travel.** (This is a new requirement.)

Please note that the conference approval process can take up to 75 days. If a conference package requires approval by a specific date, we recommend that the package be submitted 75 days ahead of the preferred approval date. In this situation, the point of

contact should indicate the desired approval date when submitting the package. A complete package must be submitted timely in order to avoid delays in approval.

A complete conference package consists of the following documents:

- Conference Transmittal Form (signed by DAA or SO Director)
- Conference Synopsis
- Conference Cost Workbook (provided by OCFO)
- NOAA Conference Costs Breakdown
- Group Travel Request (if applicable)

### **Conferences Under \$100,000**

The complete conference package for conferences with estimated costs under \$100,000 should be submitted to OCFO at least 30 days in advance of travel. For conferences which include group travel, the Deputy Under Secretary for Operations (DUSO) approval is also required.

A complete conference package consists of the following documents:

- Conference Transmittal Form (signed by DAA or SO Director)
- Conference Synopsis
- Conference Cost Workbook (Under \$100k)
- NOAA Conference Costs Breakdown
- Group Travel Request (if applicable)

### **Conference Validation**

All line and staff offices are responsible for compiling the actual costs for conferences on the NOAA Conference Costs Breakdown spreadsheet within 2 weeks of the end of the conference. This data must be provided to OCFO. Additional information may be subsequently requested by OCFO in order to complete the conference cost validation per DOC policy.

**Validation packages for conference under \$100,000 must be verified by the line and staff offices and must be signed by the Line Office Chief Financial Officer or Staff Office Director.** (This is a new requirement.)

Detailed guidance regarding conferences can be found in the following conference policy and procedure resources:

NOAA Conference and Group Travel Policy Website:

<http://corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/GROUP.html>

Conference Procedural Guidance for Conferences Equal to or Over \$100,000:

<http://corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/documents/ConferenceProceduralGuidanceforConferencesEqualtoorOver100k.docx>

Conference Procedural Guidance for Conferences Under \$100,000

<http://corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/documents/ConferenceCostWorkbookUnder100k.xlsx>

Department of Commerce Conference Policy:

[http://www.osec.doc.gov/ofm/OAP/TMD/Documents/DOC\\_Conference\\_Policy\\_FINAL\\_rev12Sept2014.pdf](http://www.osec.doc.gov/ofm/OAP/TMD/Documents/DOC_Conference_Policy_FINAL_rev12Sept2014.pdf)

If you have any questions on the policy or procedure for conferences, please e-mail [conferences\\_grouptravel@noaa.gov](mailto:conferences_grouptravel@noaa.gov).