



GUIDANCE FOR VIRGINIA FISHERY RESOURCE GRANT PROGRAM PARTNERS

A core element of the FRG Program is that project ideas come from Virginia's commercial fishing industry and the commercial fisher serves as the Principal Investigator (PI). As in any grant program, collaborative partnerships with subject matter experts are encouraged to provide the most impactful and rigorous study results. FRG Program projects can be used to inform resource management actions and partners are often state agencies (VMRC, VDACS), academic researchers (VIMS, VT Seafood AREC, etc.), other commercial fishers, and public programs (E.G., Sensible Seafood). This document will answer some of the frequently asked questions regarding the role of partners in FRG funded projects.

How to become a partner?

Being open to collaboration and being familiar with the FRG program are great first steps. Partnership comes naturally for those working with VA's fishing industry and as new ideas come up, let the industry know about the program, encourage them to apply, and offer to help. Otherwise, FRGP coordinators will make partner suggestions to industry based on the study topics.

What roles are appropriate for partners?

Partners can be involved at any level - application development, data collection, and data analysis – however, the industry PI must be fully engaged in the study and have a deliverable beyond simply providing the sample access. The FRGP is not a funding stream for academic research questions unless these align with industry questions. No matter the partner role, it must be clearly defined, and partners must provide a letter of support to the industry PI for inclusion in the application.

What specifically should researchers know about partnering?

While the FRGP is not intended to fund academic research questions, if these align with industry questions it can be a win-win opportunity for researchers. It is acceptable for researchers partnering with industry PIs to carve out specific data/samples for further analysis beyond the FRG study. It can be an opportunity to gather preliminary data to pursue larger-scale grant proposal funding aimed at the industry need/question. FRG Program projects should be robust enough to evaluate success, but the expectation is not for projects to meet the caliber for peer-reviewed publication.

Can partner costs be covered with VFRGP funds?

Partner costs appropriate for an application budget include supplies for sample processing and data analysis, and travel. FRG funds cannot cover personnel costs for state employees or tuition for graduate students. Researchers providing sample analysis should establish a per-sample cost, which integrates the cost of supplies and analysis. Universities may require administrative approval for the creation of these service center costs. VIMS is a prime example as service center costs require approval from the Chief Financial Officer.

How are partners reimbursed for their work?

As with other grants, reimbursements are made for work accomplished based on reporting. Additional funds for work not proposed or properly budgeted cannot be received. FRGP payments are made to the industry PI quarterly. The industry PI is required to submit quarterly progress reports which include data collected to date (data sheets, etc.), receipts for supplies, and a separate report from the partner(s) detailing work accomplished. After reports are reviewed, a request for reimbursement is prepared by FRGP administrators, is reviewed and signed by the PI, and submitted for payment. The industry PI is responsible for reimbursing partners except for VIMS partners. Since VIMS manages the program via W&M, VIMS partners are set up with a separate index at the start of the project and payments are JV transferred quarterly based on the VIMS partner reports.