Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Preparing the Preliminary Scopes of Work (Scope) for Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) Grants from The Division of Water Infrastructure (Division)

What is a Scope of Work for an AIA project?

- The Division of Water Infrastructure (Division) requires an approved Preliminary Scope of Work (Scope) prior to transmitting the formal Grant Offer to recipients of approved AIA grants (grantees).

- Scopes for AIA projects provide the Division with an overview of the project tasks, costs, timeline, and deliverables/recommendations used to direct disbursements.

- The Scope should be consistent with the activities or services described in the application that will address the challenges experienced by the utility. The scope should be consistent with the scope of work to which the grantee will agree to in an engineering contract.

How do I submit my AIA Scope?

- Scopes should be submitted by the grantee (not the consultant) via the Division's online portal to the Division's project manager identified in the project's Letter of Intent to Fund (LOIF), by the date indicated in the milestone schedule. Reference the Division's Project Number provided in the LOIF.

  o Form to upload documents: https://edocs.deq.nc.gov/Forms/DW-Document-Upload-Form

- The grantee's Authorized Representative (not the consultant) may request a modest extension of the submittal date via an email or letter on appropriate letterhead, sent to the Division's project manager. The request must include a justification for the delay and propose a new date for submitting the Scope.

- Prior to submitting your scope, contact your Division project manager regarding any anticipated changes to the project as described in the application.

What does DWI require in an AIA Scope?

- Scopes must be consistent with the project described in the approved funding application, including the budget and challenges described in the application narrative.

- Scopes must contain the following:

  o Anticipated activities and/or services to be performed during the AIA project

  o A concise narrative describing how each project activity addresses the challenges in the approved AIA application

  o The budget for each project activity

  o A schedule for completing the project within 24 months of the Letter of Intent to Fund

  o The deliverables to be produced for the project, including GIS shape files as applicable to the project

What are eligible AIA project Activities?

- Project activities should adhere to the Division's "Water and Wastewater Utility Evaluation Guidance Document: Asset Inventory and Assessment, Capital Cost, and Operating Cost Analyses" document, which primarily serves to help guide engineers and consultants during an AIA project. The latest version is posted to the Division's website ([here](#)).

- Regardless of eligibility, if the project includes activities NOT covered by the AIA grant, the Scope budget must distinguish (a) the activities (or a portion thereof) that will be funded by the AIA grant from (b) the activities (or a portion thereof) that will be funded outside of the AIA grant.

  - For example, a $200,000 AIA project may receive $150,000 in Division AIA grant funding. The budget table in the Scope should show one column for the costs and activities covered by the AIA grant (totaling $150,000) and a separate column for the costs to be covered by the other funding source (totaling the remaining $50,000), and also provide the source of the non-Division funding (i.e., local cash, USDA grant, etc.).

- If equipment is an integral part of your project, contact your Division project manager prior to submitting the scope.

  - Eligible equipment costs (tablets, computers, and asset management equipment) must comprise no more than 10 percent of the grant AND must be justified in the scope.

- If access to software is an integral part of your project, the initial purchase and/or subscription is eligible, but the renewal of software subscription is not eligible.

What is required for the Scope narrative?

- The Scope narrative should consist of a succinct discussion of each task. The description should explain how the tasks relate to the challenges and benefits identified in the application.

- Reference any applicable historic asset management work and describe how the proposed project Scope builds upon those past asset management efforts.

- Specify that any GIS data delivered to the grantee will be provided in a format they can easily and readily update with current resources, and clearly identify the owner of the data.

- Remember, the application was funded based on the specific needs of the system and proposed benefits of the AIA project.

What is required for the project schedule?

- The project schedule must show the anticipated start and end dates for each project activity.

- The final project completion date must be within 24 months of the date the Letter of Intent to Fund is sent to the applicant (this language is in the Letter of Intent to Fund). Typically, the Grant Offer will be issued within one month of scope approval.

- Specify that DWI will be copied on draft and final deliverables, including the appropriate GIS data

layers that show a complete service area boundary, including gaps within those boundaries.

- Provide regular (no less frequent than every other month unless otherwise directed by the Division) updates, preferably with the submittal of disbursement requests.

What makes up the Deliverable?

- The deliverable consists of the documents produced by the planning project. The documents may include, but are not limited to:
  - o photos
  - o maps
  - o outputs and summaries of models and/or flow monitoring
  - o copies of physical CCTV inspections
  - o GIS data layers if applicable
  - o Findings, recommendations, and/or conculsions

- Scopes must specify that both the draft and final deliverables will be submitted to the Division for review and approval prior to processing the final disbursement request.

What deliverables must be submitted to the Division?

- At the end of the AIA project, the grantee must submit to the Division a copy of the deliverable/report, an executive summary, and either:

  - o A copy of the board meeting minutes where the report/recommendations were presented and the minutes of the subsequent board meeting showing adoption of the previous meeting's minutes, or

  - o A resolution passed by the governing board adopting the findings/recommendations/conclusions presented in the report, including Capital Improvement Plans and adjoining rate studies as appropriate.

- The final report must be approved by the Division prior to final disbursement of the grant funds.

- For projects that develop a new or update an existing GIS database, GIS shapefiles and databases must be submitted to Division staff upon completion of the project. The shapefile should include the appropriate GIS data layers that show a complete service area boundary, including gaps within those boundaries, most commonly in the following file formats: .shp, .shx, and .dbf.

- Note that the data gathered during the Division-funded project is the property of the grantee; exceptions to grantee ownership of project deliverables, including incorporation of data into proprietary software, must be clarified in the scope.

What if my Local Government Unit (Unit) has been designated Distressed?

- Distressed Units are required to complete the activities established in NCGS §159G-45(b), and an AIA grant provides funding to fulfill some of those requirements.

- Remember, project activities should adhere to the Division's guidance document.

- Distressed Units are required to complete short-term and long-term plans for infrastructure

repair, maintenance, and management, of which a complete AMP and 10-year CIP are integral parts. AIA projects for distressed units must either:

- o Result in a complete Asset Management Plan (AMP) including at least a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), or

- o Establish the basis of an AMP and a timeline for fulfilling all the activities required of distressed units.

- In general, a complete AMP consists of:
  - o List of assets/asset registry
  - o Spatial database/GIS map
  - o A risk-based condition assessment of all water and/or wastewater assets
  - o Minimum 10-year Capital Improvement Plan
  - o Recommended schedule and plan for Operation, Maintenance and Rehabilitation/Replacement, including time/cost estimates for annual budgeting
  - o Staffing plan to implement AMP/CIP, as needed
  - o Rate study (minimum 5-year rate programming to address CIP)

- As stated in the LOIF for the AIA project, contact your Division project manager prior to creating the Scope to discuss how this project helps the Distressed Unit fulfill the statutory requirements in §159G-45(b) and make progress toward de-designation.

- For Distressed Units with an approved or draft Short-Term Action Plan as a result of meeting with Division staff, reference the action items identified in the plan in the project Scope.

Suggested Scope Format (Adobe PDF or other non-editable format)

Section 1 – Reference: Contact information for the grantee, contact information for the consultant, project name as listed in the application and the LOIF, funding cycle, etc.

Section 2 – Narrative: A concise narrative description of the Scope, referencing any applicable historic asset management efforts, describing how the proposed Scope builds on past efforts, and connecting the challenges described in the application with the main project activities.

Section 3 – Itemized Tasks: A description, cost, and schedule/timeline of each main project activity, detailed enough that the Division can determine the tasks that will be accomplished during the project, the resulting deliverable, and what is/is not eligible for disbursement.

Section 4 – Deliverables: A summary of the anticipated documents and plans to be created during the project with milestones, including a timeline for the Division to approve the draft and final deliverables, detailed enough that the Division can determine that the grantee will meet the funding requirements.