

### **Attachment H: What is Project Development?**

For the purposes of this RFP and associated funding initiative, Project Development is understood as a two-fold process that may include *general project scoping* to select identified projects for development as well as *specific project development* to gather the information and commitments needed to bring an identified project successfully into the launch of initial design as well as between funded design and implementation phases. These project development activities are critical to readying priority water quality projects for implementation and honoring the previous financial investments made to identify these opportunities.

*General project scoping* activities are those that, initially, cannot be linked to a specific project but result in subgrantees realizing the most appropriate projects to develop. It may also be any tasks necessary to confirm potential Project Eligibility, Project Equity and Inclusion, Project Importance, and Project Efficiency (see *Attachment I: Required Prioritization Criteria* for definitions of these terms). Please note that *general project scoping* support should be considered an add-on rather than standalone subgrant. Recipients of this support are expected to submit applications to develop specific projects with *specific project development* funding as a required deliverable. Allowable activities are those that clearly lead to the expected sub-grantee deliverables listed for *general project scoping* funds and that are not otherwise ineligible in the CWIP SFY 21 Funding Policy ([https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/erp/docs/2021-02-04\\_FINAL\\_FY21\\_CWIPFundingPolicy\\_signed.pdf](https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/erp/docs/2021-02-04_FINAL_FY21_CWIPFundingPolicy_signed.pdf)).

#### **Example Allowable General Project Scoping Activities (not an exhaustive list)**

- Review the Watershed Projects Database or existing plans and prioritization documents (such as Stormwater Master Plans (SWMP), Flow Restoration Plans, Phosphorus Control Plans, Lake Wise Assessments, River Corridor Plans, Tactical Basin Plans, and the Watershed Projects Database) to find projects to develop,
- Discuss potential projects with Tactical Basin Planners to gauge priority,
- Respond as needed to landowner water quality questions and concerns and conduct landowner site visits to develop strategies for river restoration and protection opportunities that may turn into a project for development,
- Follow up regularly with potential project landowners to gauge interest,
- Educate and communicate with new municipal staff or town committee members on existing River Corridor or Stormwater Master Plans to gauge interest in selecting and pursuing top priority projects.

*Specific project development* activities are the research and communications necessary to advance a specifically identified project. Most of these activities would occur prior to 30% design, or prior to development of a planting plan (for buffer projects). Some projects may already have 30% or 100% designs, however, and need development activities to move the project forward (for example, if a 30% design plan was completed a few years back, and landowners or other situations have changed such that additional work is needed before the project is ready for 100% design funding). These communications and research activities between project phases may also be supported as Project Development. Allowable activities are those that clearly lead to the expected sub-grantee deliverables listed for *specific project development* funds and that are not otherwise ineligible in the CWIP SFY21 Funding Policy ([1](https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/erp/docs/2021-02-</a></u></p></div><div data-bbox=)

***Example Allowable Specific Project Development Activities (not an exhaustive list)***

- Work with DEC staff to refine project scope to ensure proposed project is the preferred cost-effective project/best management practice (BMP) solution for a given water quality concern.
- Identify and contact the appropriate landowner and secure landowner support.
- Identify and contact the operation and maintenance (O&M) responsible party and secure their support.
- Work with partners or available online tools to estimate potential water quality pollution benefits and project costs (if not already identified in prior-funded design/scoping work).
- Review potential natural resource concerns and permit needs for the project.
- Contact any other relevant stakeholders to review potential project barriers.
- Meet with town staff and select board (if a municipal project) to encourage implementation of specific high priority projects from a sector-based assessment and discuss potential grant funding.
- Develop very basic project concept drawings or preliminary designs for the purposes of communicating with stakeholders and landowners and securing support.

It is understood that project development services may not always result in projects moving forward for design or implementation. In some cases, project support may be pursued but cannot be secured, permitting may result in the recognition of insurmountable resource conflicts, or other scenarios. Sub-grantees will be expected to gather all possible information they can and then provide details on existing barriers to project advancement. Sub-grantees should strive to identify barriers as early as possible in the project advancement process to limit investments in infeasible projects.

Project Development is not assessment and planning work. Ineligible activities include performing Lake Wise assessments, road erosion inventories, stream geomorphic assessments, or developing prioritized plans like stormwater master plans or lake watershed action plans. These activities are supported under separate CWIP spending initiatives.

Project Development is not design work, nor is it the work supporting the design or implementation phase of a project. Project Completion tasks for design and implementation phases are supported under separate CWIP spending initiatives. Project Development funds may support tasks between design phases but not within or during a design phase. Some limited concept drawings or designs are allowable if they are needed to determine project viability or secure landowner support, but work cannot result in completion of 30%+ designs.

Project Development is not any activity otherwise supported through Tactical Basin Planning contracts to statutory partners pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1253(d)(3).

Project Development is not grant writing. Sub-grantees may use funds to gather all the necessary information that might be requested on a funding application but may not charge their time to

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation - Clean Water Initiative Program  
2022 Partnership Project Development Block Grant Guidance  
Updated August 18, 2021  
this grant for writing any applications.

Project Development is not general, untargeted outreach and education.

Project Development is not outreach and partnership formation to establish a stormwater regulatory public-private partnership as defined in the CWIP SFY21 Funding Policy ([https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/erp/docs/2021-02-04\\_FINAL\\_FY21\\_CWIPFundingPolicy\\_signed.pdf](https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/erp/docs/2021-02-04_FINAL_FY21_CWIPFundingPolicy_signed.pdf)).