Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Request for Proposals:
Clean Water Initiative Program SFY 2018: Multi-Sector Clean Water Block Grant
Administration Request for Proposals (RFP)

Questions and Answers

1. **Can you clarify the discrepancy in match requirements between the Block Grant and ERP. The Block Grant indicates a required match for 20% for municipal stormwater projects, and ERP does not indicate it as required, but will be part of the criteria by which the project is ranked. This has the potential to make ERP a more desirable source for construction since there is flexibility. Can you clarify this?**

   ANSWER: The Ecosystem Restoration Grants do not require match, however, additional points are awarded based on level of match included. The Block Grant requires a 50% match for projects located within a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) and 20% match for projects not located within an MS4 community.

2. **What role does DEC expect to have in the review and/or approval of the individual projects and the project budgets under the Block Grant?**

   ANSWER:

3. **Will there be flexibility in the budget/grant amount of the Block Grant once the final budgets for projects are generated.**

   ANSWER: The State expects that applicants will assume responsibility for ensuring that the projects are done within the approved awarded budget.

4. **Can project oversight expenses, as engineering oversight expenses, be considered part of the cost of the project, or must they be included separately as admin?**

   ANSWER: Project oversight is considered grant administration and is not a capital expense. Engineering work is considered part of the cost of the individual projects.

5. **It states in the RFP that "The applicant will be responsible for selecting projects from the State-provided list and coordinating with municipalities and partners…"**
   o   **Can a Municipality be the "applicant"?**
   o   **Can Home Owner Associations be "partners"?**
   o   **Is a regional aspect to the grant process a requirement?.**

   ANSWER: The State requests proposals for clean water improvement projects statewide and an applicant must be able to meet the goals of the RFP. The RFP does

not list types of applicants, but will prioritize applicants that can provide statewide implementation, can demonstrate capacity and experience in managing multiple projects in a timely manner, and who minimize administrative costs and maximizes cost-effective construction of projects with high phosphorus reduction potential.

How is the phosphorus reduction potential being calculated? Is an increase in the CPV treatment, which results in less erosion to surface water bodies, a factor in Phosphorous reduction?

ANSWER: Phosphorus reduction potential is being calculated by the estimated phosphorus reduction efficiency of the BMP being implemented.

6. **Is the anticipated $1,500,000 in available funds for the Block Grant have a cap/applicant or the total funds available for all applicants applying for grants?**

   ANSWER: There is no cap/applicant. The total $1.5M of funds available is for one or more applicants.

7. **Could you please expand upon the Selection Criteria item "Program Delivery Costs?**

   ANSWER: Program delivery costs, as indicated on p. 3 of the RFP are costs such as personnel, indirect and travel. These are the costs necessary to administer the awarded grant. These do not included engineering or construction costs.

8. **Are the requirements under the Ecosystem Restoration Standard grant process and the Block Grant the same (e.g., Operations and Maintenance commitments, match, signage, communications via press release, performance measures)?**

   ANSWER: Any projects completed via the block grant will need milestones and deliverables, operations and maintenance agreements, performance measures, etc. that are comparable to the standard grant process

9. **What are the advantages of the Block Grant over the standard grant?**

   ANSWER: The Block Grant allows the State to target funds to complete construction projects identified on the "Go List." It also allows the State to minimize its administrative costs by reducing the number of grant agreements it would need to manage.

10. **The NRCC has consolidated the grants it is managing with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets under one grant agreement. That agreement includes funds to support a grants administrator at the NRCC. Could NRCC propose the same arrangement in the Block Grant?**

    ANSWER: The Block Grant RFP leaves it up to the applicant to describe how they would administer a block grant.

11. How should applicants pursue funds for projects that go beyond the scope of the Block Grant?

ANSWER: Applicants should adhere to the scope of work described in the Block Grant and Ecosystem Restoration Standard Grants RFPs.

12. The NRCC would be interested in using one grant agreement to cover work under the Block Grant and Ecosystem Restoration Standard Grants.

ANSWER: These grants have different scopes and timeframes. We anticipate managing the grant awards separately.

13. Should we receive an award under the Block Grant program, how should we secure approval from the State Treasurer that the projects we would anticipate implementing under the Block Grant process will be deemed capital fund-eligible

ANSWER: The State anticipates developing a process that accommodates this approval process.

14. What is the deadline for filing proposals under the Block Grant program?

ANSWER: See page 3 of the RFP. All proposals must be submitted electronically via email to David Pasco, david.pasco@vermont.gov, by June 5, 2017, 4:00 pm using the subject line "Multi-Sector Clean Water Block Grant RFP."

15. VTrans requires that we hire an engineer to supervise the construction project on any project over 100K. Will that also be a requirement of this program?

ANSWER: Eligible projects under the Block Grant will be construction-ready (Step 3 projects on the Go List), engineering 'design-build" projects (projects that encompass both Step 2 and 3 together), and final engineering projects (Step 2) that will prepare projects for construction. Each of these categories would require engineering either to have been previously completed or as part of the project.

16. Can individual water quality projects be combined in a single construction bid? In some communities there are several projects that appear to be similar and related. This could create efficiencies.

ANSWER: The Block Grant RFP leaves it up to the applicant to describe how they would administer a block grant.

17. The RFP specifically references the existing "Go list", however there has been a lot of discussion about new or different projects being allowed on the list and in the mix, what would be the process for that?

ANSWER: The Go List is a dynamic document and projects will be continually added to it as they are identified and prioritized. The RFP asks that successful applicants be responsible for selecting projects from the list, using information available at that time.

18. **Most projects have not yet been graded relative to phosphorus and nutrient loading. What is the timeline for that process?**

    ANSWER: The State is working on determining phosphorus reduction values for projects on the Go List and will have this information available to the successful applicant.

19. **What is the overall process for deciding a project will be funded and construction will proceed. Will DEC play a role or is that up to the block grant manager? The contract seems to delegate that to the contractor.**

    ANSWER: The RFP requests that an applicant describe their process for implementing projects. This includes projects selection and construction.

20. **Who is the contracting entity for individual projects? Is it the municipality? The RPC? If the municipality, what is the process for obtaining subcontractor approval?**

    ANSWER: A successful applicant will be responsible for all aspects of project selection, coordination with municipalities and partners and permitting to ensure successful implementation of selected projects.

21. **Likewise, it looks like if procurement is done by a town, the RPC is required to ensure the muni follows the RPC procurement policy? And it is unclear if we can contract directly with a town without going through a bid process.**

    ANSWER:

22. **Many projects have not yet been permitted. What party will be responsible for the permitting process? The RPC, the municipality? The contractor?**

    ANSWER: A successful applicant will be responsible for all aspects of project selection, coordination with municipalities and partners and permitting to ensure successful implementation of selected projects.

23. **What is the source of the 50% and 20% match requirements? Most towns have already set their budgets.**

    ANSWER: The RFP (p. 2) indicates options for eligible match.

24. **Most construction ready projects on the "go list" are located in Chittenden County. Is there any expectation of geographic diversity from the DEC?**

ANSWER: The Go List is a dynamic document and projects will be continually added to it as they are identified and prioritized. The RFP requests proposals for administering a program to support construction statewide. The State has no pre-determined regional equity requirements.

25. **Title 29 161 requires prevailing wage for certain capital funded construction projects. There is an exclusion for Forest and Parks but not DEC. If not this requirement should probably be in contract with DEC.**

    ANSWER:

26. **Will there be a public bid opening?**

    ANSWER: for what?

27. **What is the source of the cost estimates for the projects?**

    ANSWER: The cost estimates in the Go List are based on prior engineering designs developed for the projects.

28. **Is the Block Grant manager responsible for moving money around in that event, or is DEC part of that process? Is that considered a Change order? Will the state need to approve change orders?**

    ANSWER:

29. **Is there are template or specific requirements regarding the ten-year Operations and Maintenance plan required by the state?**

    ANSWER: There is no template for an operations and maintenance agreement as these can vary based on BMP. Operation and maintenance agreements must be approved by the State as they are developed.

30. **Are the Go List and the projects listed in the Watershed Database the same pool of projects?**

    ANSWER: The Go List is a subset of projects from the Watershed Projects Database as described on p. 1 of the RFP.

31. **Are project development or planning projects eligible for funding under the Block Grant?**

    ANSWER: Projects eligible under the Block Grant are Step 2 and Step 3 projects as described on p. 1 of the RFP.

32. What is the difference between projects identified as "roads" versus "Stormwater final design"?

ANSWER: