

## Ecosystem Restoration Grants - External Training (8/3/18) Q&A

Please note: The formal question and answer period for inquiries related to the [FY2019 Ecosystem Restoration Grants RFP](#) is from 7/16/18 through 8/20/18. Questions must be submitted to [ANR.WSMDERP@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WSMDERP@vermont.gov). Questions received and responses to each of them will be posted on the [CWI Grants webpage](#) on 8/27/18. Please see the webpage for a full listing of questions and answers pertaining to the current RFP.

---

1. **Question:** *RPC's use an indirect rate that is above 10%, it has been approved by VTrans for work with their grants but is not an official NICRA. Is this sufficient for grant eligibility?*

**Answer:** No, it is not. If there are further questions regarding indirect and grant eligibility, please direct them to Shalini Suryanarayana with the DEC business office (contact information in the corresponding presentation slides).

2. **Question:** *If a stormwater project is located in an area that is being proposed by an MS4 community, but is on a private site and will support nutrient and/or sediment reduction from the public lands of the MS4 community, is it eligible?*

**Answer:** Yes, pending the following criteria are met:

Page 5, Table 4 of the Manual states,

*"Projects identified in a MS4 plan (e.g. FPR, PCP) on private land but [the] project is sponsored by the MS4 [are eligible]. Sponsored means the Municipality assumes full responsibility for the operation and maintenance, or they are a co-permittee and agreement identifies O&M responsibility.*

Page 8 of the Manual states,

*"Applications [from an eligible applicant] to construct clean water improvement projects on private land are eligible for Ecosystem Restoration grants. Some project types are typically sited on private land, such as floodplain restoration, woody buffer restoration, and agricultural controls on farmland. However, with respect to stormwater and road-related mitigation projects, DEC places municipal project proposals at a higher priority for funding than similar projects on private property.*

3. **Question:** *If a stormwater project is located on private land but is proposed by an MS4 community, does it require 50% match?*

**Answer:** Yes, 50% match is required for projects within MS4 communities. Match eligibility is addressed on pages 3, 5, 8 and 9 of the Manual.

4. **Question:** *Is there only one project allowed per application?*

**Answer:** Yes, only one project per application; however, within that one project it may contain multiple phases. For example, within the same project you could apply for preliminary design through final design.

5. **Question:** *For projects such as developing a stormwater master plan or LakeWise assessment, does that mean the grantee who developed the plan is responsible to securing funding for, and implementing, all the projects outlined in the plan?*

**Answer:** No, the grantee would only be responsible for the scope of the project that was awarded. For example, responsible only for the development of the assessment and not responsible for implementing the projects outlined in the assessment.

6. **Question:** *Is this an appropriate funding source when other funding sources are not the right fit, or they have used all of the funding available from other sources? For example, if a farmer has reached their Farm Bill Cap with USDA-NRCS and have an easement but want to plant buffers, could they apply to ERP for funding?*

**Answer:** In this scenario, yes. Every situation is unique, CWIP encourages applicants to reach out if they have questions of project eligibility and to work with their local basin planner in project development. Ecosystem Restoration grants are a great opportunity for niche funding when other funding sources are unavailable or only partially fund a project. In this agriculture example, this project would be directed to the CWI Woody Buffer Block Grant or potentially the River Corridor Easement Block Grant (if a conservation partner wanted to add a river corridor easement with planting onto the existing ALE easement). Additionally, for any projects relating to hazard mitigation, it is expected that the applicant has already worked with the Department of Public Safety and HMGP Grant Program.

7. **Question:** *If there is a property where multiple stormwater practices will be installed, should one application be completed for each practice?*

**Answer:** Applications must contain only one project location but can include multiple practices (also see question #4, above). One location, one application (excluding assessments which often cover multiple locations). For guidance on obtaining a database number, see page 9 of the Manual.

8. **Question:** *For a project on private land that is sponsored by an eligible applicant, does the eligible applicant have to take responsibility for the Operations & Maintenance Agreement (O&M)?*

**Answer:** No, any partner considered “eligible” (Table 3 of the Manual) may be the responsible party for the O&M. For example, the applicant may be a Regional Planning Commission but the responsible party for the O&M could be the Town. Attached to the application, please include a letter of support from the responsible party indicating they will be responsible for the O&M (for the life of the project, 10 years). Upon project award and grant agreement execution, the O&M must be developed and signed by the responsible party.

9. **Question:** *How are capitol funds used?*

**Answer:** Capital funds are used for implementation projects.

10. **Question:** *If a grantee receives clean water funding through Ecosystem Restoration Grants to fund preliminary designs for a project on private land, could the partner apply again for capital funding to implement the project?*

**Answer:** Yes, see answer to question 2 above and the Manual for guidance for applications on private land.

11. **Question:** *Can two related stormwater design projects that are cited near each other be in one application?*

**Answer:** No, one project (one location) is allowed per application.

12. **Question:** *Can an invoice be submitted without a deliverable?*

**Answer:** Yes, that is the benefit of cost-reimbursable awards, rather than performance-based awards. The grantee may submit an invoice at any time, as many times as needed. With that invoice, they should include supporting information documenting the expense requested in the invoice and provide narrative information as to the status of achieving the deliverables outlined in the grant agreement. Note that a minimum of 10% of the project cost will be reserved for final payment upon completion of all the milestones and deliverables included in the grant agreement.

13. **Question:** *Can I send a link with instructions on how to access large data, rather than sending a large file as the deliverable?*

**Answer:** Yes, that is an acceptable form of submitting deliverables; however, please only do so after you have exhausted every possible opportunity to compress the data into a more manageable amount (such as creating a zip file), so that we can add it to our database (no greater than 500 MBs).

14. **Question:** *If we have a project that we need to reapply for, do we use the same Watershed Projects Database ID number?*

**Answer:** Yes, the number associated with a project always remains the same.

15. **Question:** *Is the Grant File Checklist new?*

**Answer:** This is a new addition as of FY18 Q3. It is provided with the agreement finalization documentation during grant agreement execution. This resource is provided to assist grantees in appropriately filing documentation related to their grant agreement. Ecosystem Restoration Grants are supported with state funds and are subject to auditing. Grantees are encouraged to utilize the [Grant File Checklist for Grantees](#), as it is a helpful resource should an audit come up.

16. **Question:** *What constitutes match?*

**Answer:** Eligible and ineligible match is outlined on page 8 of the Ecosystem Restoration Grants Manual. State employee time for work that is already part of what they do for their job is not eligible as match.

17. **Question:** *For match documentation, what needs to be saved?*

**Answer:** Any documentation related to invoicing or match for Clean Water Initiative Grants should be filed (in a way that they are readily accessible), should they be requested during an audit. For example, match provided may include volunteer hours and the corresponding log of volunteer time should be saved specific to the grant agreement and match documentation. See question 15 above.

18. **Question:** *For the block grants, will providing a certificate of insurance be required by the partner facilitating the block grant?*

**Answer:** Within the block grant format, the partner who is the recipient of the block grant is responsible for overseeing the prioritization, implementation, disbursement and documentation of funds. To receive State funds, the partner(s) selected will need to provide the State with an up-to-date Certificate of Insurance. In addition, the selected partner(s) will have developed their own procedures in accordance with our guidelines, to disperse funds to others. The Design & Implementation Block Grant RFP will be released Fall 2018.

[Example: Municipal Certificate of Insurance](#)

[Example: Organization/Business Certificate of Insurance](#)

19. **Question:** *For stormwater master planning projects, can the town or a subcontractor assist in the project?*

**Answer:** Yes, the grantee may utilize a subcontractor. A [subcontractor approval form](#) is required if you wish to use any award dollars to pay said contractor. Please send it to the GMS assigned to the grant agreement before committing funds to the subcontractor and expect 1-5 days for request processing. It is imperative that the development of stormwater master planning projects adhere to DEC guidance. Please see below:

**Municipal Stormwater Management:**

<http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/cwi/solutions/municipal-stormwater>

**Vermont Stormwater Master Planning Guidelines:**

<http://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/erp/docs/SWMP%20Final%20Guidelinesrev1-18.pdf>