

California Department of Food and Agriculture
2015 State Water Efficiency Enhancement Program (SWEEP)
Frequently Asked Questions
June 12, 2015

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Where can applicants access the 2015 State Water Efficiency Enhancement (SWEEP) Application Guidelines?
The SWEEP Application Guidelines are available on California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) SWEEP website, www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/SWEEP.
2. Where can applicants that were unable to attend the workshops find the materials from these presentations?
Materials from the 2015 SWEEP workshops are available on CDFA's SWEEP website at www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/SWEEP.
3. When are SWEEP Applications due?
Applications must be submitted through the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool (FAAST) by Monday, June 29, 2015 at 5 pm PDT. Late applications cannot be accepted.
4. What is the maximum duration for any proposed project?
The maximum project duration is seven months. Projects can have a duration of less than seven months, but cannot exceed this timeframe. Project activities cannot be conducted before October 1, 2015 or after April 30, 2016. Therefore, all projects must be completed and installed by April 30, 2016.
5. Is the maximum grant award \$150,000 per agriculture operation or per application?
The maximum grant award is \$150,000 per agriculture operation/Tax Identification (ID).
6. Can organizations submit a single application on behalf of a group of agriculture operations?
No, organizations cannot submit a single application on behalf of a group of agriculture operations. An agriculture operation can only submit one application using a unique Tax ID.
7. Can an agriculture operation submit more than one application?
No, agriculture operations can only submit one application using a unique Tax ID as outlined on page 2 of the Application Guidelines.
8. Can an organization apply on behalf of the agriculture operation?
Yes, organizations may submit an application on behalf of the agriculture operation. However, the application must include the agriculture operation's business name and Tax ID. If awarded, the grant agreement will be between the CDFA and the agriculture operation.
9. Do applicants need a DUNS number to submit a SWEEP application?
No, applicants do not need a DUNS number to submit a SWEEP application.
10. Can applicants request funds for project management for organizations, such as a Resource Conservation District (RCD)?
No, funds must be utilized by the agriculture operation for project implementation cost only.

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11. Can application information submitted in FFAST be accessed by the SWRCB for regulatory purposes?
No, only SWRCB staff assisting with the FFAST system during the solicitation process will have access to application information. Therefore, collected information will not be used for regulatory purposes.
12. Is the information provided in the SWEEP application available to the public?
Information provided in the SWEEP application may be subject to a Public Records Act (PRA) request. Under the PRA, CDFA must make available public records upon request by the public. However, certain personal identifying information is generally exempt from disclosure.
13. When the agriculture operation is leasing land, does the land owner need to apply on behalf of the agriculture operation?
No, the agriculture operation can submit an application. It is the responsibility of the agriculture operation to comply with the terms of their lease agreement. CDFA encourages all applicants to notify the land owner of the proposed project. If awarded, CDFA will enter into a grant agreement with the agriculture operation.
14. Can funds be used to make improvements to distribution systems outside the boundaries of the property impacted by the proposed project (i.e. irrigation district pump)?
No, the project must be implemented on the agricultural operation. An agricultural operation is defined as “row, vineyard, field and tree crops, commercial nurseries, nursery stock production and greenhouse operations” as outlined on page 1 of the Application Guidelines.
15. If multiple agriculture operations partner with a water district to implement a single project, can each agriculture operation and the water district submit separate applications for a portion of that project?
Each agriculture operation must submit a separate application using a unique Tax ID. The contribution from the water districts to implement each project can be considered matching funds. Water districts are not eligible entities for SWEEP funding. Additionally, projects must be installed within the boundaries of an agriculture operation.
16. What is the definition of “expanding” an agriculture operation?
Expanding an agriculture operation is defined as converting additional or new acreage that has not previously been farmed to farmland.
17. How do applicants determine if a property impacted by a project is in a disadvantaged community?
CDFA will determine whether a project is within a disadvantaged community based on the information applicants provide on the Disadvantaged Community Census Tract attachment. Applicants can find the census tract of their project by using the online tool at: <http://maps.gis.ca.gov/cdfa/tractfinder.html>.

The CalEPA Office of Environmental Health and Hazard Assessment determines if communities are disadvantaged by using multiple environmental criteria. Applicants can find out if their location is within a disadvantaged community by using the CalEnviroScreen 2.0 tool at <http://oehha.ca.gov/ej/ces2.html>.

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18. The Application Guidelines state, "SWEEP funding cannot be combined with USDA, NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)." Can applicants apply to both SWEEP and EQIP, and if awarded EQIP funding, withdraw their SWEEP application?
Yes, applicants may apply to both programs. However, if awarded EQIP funding, applicants would not be eligible to receive SWEEP funding.
19. Can agriculture operations request funds for the cost of the project design?
No, funding can only be requested and utilized for project implementation. The agriculture operation is responsible for any costs associated with the project design.
20. Are service charges, such as a company providing soil moisture information on a monthly or annual basis, allowable expenses under SWEEP?
No, service and maintenance costs are not allowable expenses.
21. If a project's costs exceed the USDA, NRCS payment schedules provided in Appendix D of the Application Guidelines, are the excess costs matching funds to the project?
CDFA will rely on the expertise of third-party technical reviewers to determine if the cost estimates provided by the applicant are within the NRCS payment schedules or are considered reasonable.
22. Can applicants use additional USDA, NRCS practice standards that are not listed in Appendix D of the Application Guidelines?
Yes, applicants may use additional USDA, NRCS practice standards as long as those practices result in both water savings and greenhouse gas reductions. If applicants use practice standards not listed in Appendix D, then a detailed explanation of those practices and unit costs should be provided in the application.
23. Who should be listed as Cooperating entities?
Cooperating entities are organizations an applicant will be working with to plan and/or implement the proposed project. Cooperating entities can include individuals/companies who provide Matching Funds or In-Kind Contributions.
24. What attachments are required to be submitted with the application?
The Project Design, Budget Worksheet, Baseline water use supporting documentation, Baseline GHG emissions supporting documentation and Disadvantaged Community Census Tract are required attachments.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Are recipients who were awarded previous 2014 SWEEP Round 1 and/or Round 2 funding eligible to apply for 2015 SWEEP?
Yes, recipients awarded previous SWEEP funding from Round 1 or 2 are eligible, as long as the new application is **not** for the same property location(s) Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs). Agriculture operations awarded a previously funded SWEEP project are encouraged to apply for a new project that impacts different APNs.

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2. Are water supplier entities eligible for SWEEP funding?
No, water suppliers are not eligible for SWEEP funding. An agricultural operation is defined as “row, vineyard, field and tree crops, commercial nurseries, nursery stock production and greenhouse operations” as outlined on page 1 of the Application Guidelines.
3. Are non-profit organizations growing fruits and vegetables for the community, operating garden based educational programs, selling produce, etc. considered agriculture operations as defined in the Application Guidelines? If yes, are non-profit organizations eligible to receive funding?
Yes, a non-profit organization involved in the production of “a row, vineyard, field and tree crop,” is eligible.
4. If elements of an irrigation system are already installed, is an application for reimbursement of that system eligible?
No. Funding can only be used to implement projects after a grant agreement is executed between CDFA and an agriculture operation. Funding cannot be utilized as reimbursement for a previous installation or to cover maintenance and operation costs of any existing system.
5. Is converting one crop to a lower water-use crop an eligible project?
Yes. Converting one crop to a lower watering crop is eligible for funding as long as water savings and greenhouse gas reductions can be calculated and quantified.
6. Is lining or preparing an existing pond to capture water eligible for funding?
Yes. Lining or preparing an existing pond to capture water is eligible for funding as long as water savings and greenhouse gas reductions can be quantified and supported.
7. Is a project converting from groundwater use to recycled water use eligible for funding?
A project converting groundwater use to recycled water use may be eligible for funding as long as water savings and greenhouse gas emission reductions can be quantified. If the project demonstrates the agriculture operation is simply switching water supplies, the project is not eligible for funding.
8. If a project will be installed on an orchard that will be replanted (i.e. new tree plantings), is that project eligible for funding?
Yes. Applicants may apply for funding if the project property location will be replanted as long as the land was previously used as farmland. Applicants must be able to calculate water savings and greenhouse gas reductions for their project.
9. Are sand media filters eligible for funding, if the applicant can demonstrate efficiency improvements?
Yes, sand media filters may be eligible for SWEEP funding. Applicants must explain the need for the filters in their application under the “Proposed Water Use System” and explain the water-savings benefits of the filters to their system. The project must also accomplish greenhouse gas emission reductions in order to be eligible for funding.

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10. Is the installation of infrastructure on public land or right-of-ways eligible for funding?
No, SWEEP funds cannot be used for installation of infrastructure on public land or right-of-ways.
11. Are products that are not irrigation-related (i.e. sprayers, wind machines, etc.) that reduce water use and greenhouse gas emissions eligible for funding?
No, SWEEP funds cannot be used for products that are not irrigation-related. SWEEP can only fund elements of a project that are directly related to irrigation on farms.

FAAST APPLICATION

1. Does the "Applicant Information" requested in FAAST, need to be the agriculture operation's information?
Yes, the "Applicant Information" must include information specific to the agriculture operation, such as the business name, Tax ID, and contact information. If awarded, CDFA will need this information to enter into a grant agreement with that agriculture operation.
2. Who should be listed as the Project Director or Project Manager in the "Project Management" tab?
The agriculture operation's primary contact must be listed as either the Project Director or Project Manager in the "Project Management" tab. If an organization is applying on behalf of an agriculture operation, that organization may also include a contact person(s). Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide two different contacts for the Project Director and Project Manager as this is the only contact information CDFA will have for applications.
3. The Application Guidelines, Section III question 5(b) requests applicants indicate projected greenhouse gas emission reductions (tonnes of CO₂e/year/acre). If the value of the projected greenhouse gas emission reduction is less than "1", how do applicants provide that value in FAAST?
For questions in FAAST requesting to provide a numerical value for calculations, such as projected water savings and greenhouse gas emission reductions, applicants may indicate a value less than "1" by indicating a "0" followed by a decimal point (.), and then the digits that fall behind the decimal point.

Example: Indicate "0.082" tonnes of CO₂e/year/acre or "0.002" tonnes of CO₂e/year/acre.
4. Should applicants attach the actual contractor estimates with the project design in FAAST?
Contractor estimates are not required with the project design. However, applicants are required to provide the actual contractor estimates when completing the Budget Worksheet under "Contractor" budget category. Applicants are required to download, complete and attach the Budget Worksheet in FAAST question #21. Refer to Appendix B of the Application Guidelines for a preview of the Budget Worksheet.

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5. Can a bid from an irrigation company be attached in lieu of the budget worksheet?
No, the Budget Worksheet is a required attachment. Applicants must download, complete and attach the Budget Worksheet in FFAST. Refer to question 21 in FFAST and Appendix B of the Application Guidelines.

RANKING & CRITERIA

1. Does a project need to result in water savings and greenhouse gas emission reductions?
Yes, projects must result in water savings **and** greenhouse gas emissions reductions to be considered for funding.
2. Is there a minimum threshold for water savings and greenhouse gas reductions?
No, there is not a minimum threshold for water savings and greenhouse gas emissions reductions as long as both some water savings and greenhouse gas reductions are accomplished
3. What supporting documentation is required for water savings and greenhouse gas emissions reductions?
For baseline water use calculations applicants should use on-farm data from the previous growing season and attach documentation which may include flow meter data/readings or water bills or other actual water use documentation. For baseline greenhouse gas emission reduction calculations applicants should use previous growing season data and attach utility bills, fuel receipts/invoices, or operational logs. At minimum, applicants must submit at least five months of supporting documentation related to the previous growing season, preferably during peak irrigation.
4. For baseline water use and greenhouse gas emissions supporting documentation, should applicants submit 12 months of data from the previous growing season? Yes. If applicants have the past 12 months of data available, it is beneficial to attach all documents relating to the previous growing season. At minimum, applicants must submit at least five months of supporting documentation relating to the previous growing season.
5. Is converting an irrigation pump from fossil fuel to electricity the only consideration for greenhouse gas reduction calculations?
No, a project does not have to include conversion to electric pumps or renewable energy. Projects can include other elements that will result in greenhouse gas emission reductions such as improved pump efficiency or reduced pumping.
6. Are the Greenhouse Gas Calculator Tools provided in Appendix D of the Application Guidelines sufficient supporting documentation for baseline greenhouse gas emissions?
No. Applicants must provide some other form of supporting documentation (i.e. fuel receipts or electricity bills) because the Greenhouse Gas Calculator Tools do not provide evidence of actual on-farm energy use.
7. Are applicants required to provide supporting documentation for water savings and greenhouse gas reductions **after** project installation?
No. Applicants are only required to provide supporting documentation for **baseline** water use and greenhouse gas emissions. The verification component after projects are installed will confirm water savings and greenhouse gas reductions.

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8. What is the time period applicants should use to determine water savings calculations?
Applicants should compare the previous growing season to the next year growing season after project implementation to determine their estimated water savings.
9. For required supporting documentation, can an applicant attach supporting documentation covering multiple growing seasons, which is more representative of the baseline water use and greenhouse gas emission of the agriculture operation's current practice? Further, how would those agriculture operations practicing crop rotation on an annual basis (i.e., the crop grown is different from year to year) complete the USDA NRCS Irrigation Water Savings Calculator?
Only those agriculture operations practicing crop rotation may submit supporting documentation for multiple growing seasons to better represent their baseline water use and greenhouse gas emissions. Detailed explanation describing the current practices must be included in the application under the "Current Water Use System" section on the Questionnaire tab.
- Specifically for baseline water use supporting documentation, agriculture operations practicing crop rotation may complete and attach the USDA NRCS Irrigation Water Savings Calculator for each crop grown.

PROJECT DESIGN

1. Is there a specific format required for the project design?
No, there is not a specific format required for the project design. However, in general, a project design should include a schematic detailing the irrigation distribution system layout (e.g., pipelines, valves, filter stations, distribution uniformity values), including agronomic information (e.g., water application rate, crop water demand).
Refer to page 5 of the Application Guidelines for additional information regarding the project design.

BUDGET WORKSHEET

1. Does CDFA adjust project budgets, or are the amounts granted at the requested value?
CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.
2. Where can applicants download the Budget Worksheet?
A link to the Budget Worksheet (attachment) is located in the Questionnaire tab under question 21 "Budget Worksheet" in FAAST.

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IRRIGATION WATER SAVINGS CALCULATOR

1. When using the USDA NRCS Irrigation Water Savings Calculator, what should the applicant indicate as the level of Irrigation Water Management (IWM)?

An applicant can use the following broad definitions of IWM levels in order to determine the input for the calculator:

No IWM Plan – The operator irrigates without adjusting water based on crop need. For example, the operator irrigates every 10 days, or based on what he/she has historically done.

IWM Level 1 – The operator maintains logs of how much water he/she applies to the field.

IWM Level 2 – The operator maintains logs of how much water is applied and uses soil moisture sensors on another technology to assess soil moisture and adjusts irrigation timing based on crop water demand.

IWM Level 3 – The operator maintains logs of how much water is applied and uses a weather-based irrigation scheduling program along with in-field monitoring, such as soil moisture sensors, to adjust irrigation timing based on crop water demand.

MATCHING FUNDS

1. Are matching funds required?
No, matching funds are not required. However, CDFA strongly encourages applicants to provide matching funds as additional consideration will be given to those project during the review process.
2. Can applicants use funds received from other incentive programs as matching funds?
Yes, funds received from other incentive programs can be used as matching funds. Applicants must indicate in the budget worksheet the amount of the incentive that will be contributed to the project. However, SWEET funding cannot be combined with USDA, NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) financial assistance.
3. What information should an applicant include in the matching funds written documentation?
Supporting documentation, often written as a letter, should confirm the contribution source, type and amount of the contribution, as well as include activities that will be conducted in support of the project. Account statements or other financial documents relating to the matching contributions are not required.
4. If elements of an irrigation system are installed before the implementation period of the proposed project can those costs be considered matching funds?
No, elements of an irrigation system installed before the implementation period of the proposed project are not considered matching funds.