

**2014 State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Monday, July 14, 2014

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. 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 Identification (ID). If awarded, the grant agreement will be between the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the agriculture operation.
2. 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 expenditures only.
3. Can application information submitted in Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST) be accessed by the State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) for regulatory purposes?
No, only SWRCB staff assisting with the FAAST system during the solicitation process will have access to application information. Therefore, collected information will not be used for regulatory purposes.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 "a row, vineyard, field and tree crops, commercial nurseries, nursery stock production and greenhouse operation" as outlined on page 1 of the [Application Guidelines](#).
7. Can funds be used for enhancements to an existing system, including lowering or drilling new wells?
Yes, funds can be used to enhance existing systems for water savings and greenhouse gas reductions. However, funds cannot be used to expand existing agriculture operations by converting additional acreage to farmland.

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8. Who is responsible for the verification component?
Once SWEEP projects are awarded, CDFA will work with the RCDs to complete the verification component. Refer to page 7 of the [Application Guidelines](#) for additional information regarding the verification component.
9. How will CDFA determine applicants (agriculture operations) “financial need”? Will agriculture operations be required to provide proof of income to justify their financial need?
CDFA obtained clarification that the drought has, in general, prompted a financial need. Therefore, CDFA will not require agricultural operations to provide information regarding income.
10. **Revised July 14, 2014.** Is the maximum grant award \$50,000 per agriculture operation or per application?
The maximum grant award is \$50,000 per agriculture operation. Only one application may be submitted by an agriculture operation using a unique Tax ID.
11. Can an agriculture operation submit more than one application?
No, agriculture operations can only submit one application using a unique Tax ID. Refer to page 2 of the [Application Guidelines](#).
12. 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. Refer to [FAQ #1](#) under the General Questions section.
13. 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. Refer to [FAQs # 1 – 7](#) under the Matching Funds section.
14. What is the definition of “expanding” an agriculture operation?
Expanding an agriculture operation is defined as converting additional or new acreage to farmland.
15. Is the webinar conducted on Tuesday, July 8 available online?
Yes, the PowerPoint presentation from the webinar is posted on the SWEEP website, www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/WEEP. The webinar presentation is posted in two links: (1) Information Presentation on SWEEP Requirements; and (2) Information Presentation on the FAAS Application.
16. Where is the Application Guidelines available?
The Application Guidelines is available on the SWEEP website, www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/WEEP. The link to the Application Guidelines is located under the “State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program” heading at the top of the page.

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17. How do applicants determine if a property impacted by a project is in a disadvantaged community?
A “disadvantaged community” is defined as a community with a median household income less than 80% of the statewide average. Appendix A of the [Application Guidelines](#) provides two resources that are recommended for determining if a community is a “disadvantaged community”. Applicants may use another resource; however, an explanation must be provided in FAAST question # 3 (a). Refer to page 6 of the [Application Guidelines](#) for additional information on disadvantaged communities.
18. When using the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment’s (OEHHA) CalEnviroScreen resource provided in Appendix A of the Application Guidelines, is there a preference between the lowest 5% or 10%?
No, there is no preference between the lowest 5% or 10% for CalEnviroScreen.
19. Appendix C: Tools for Determining Water Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions of the Application Guidelines under the “EPA Emissions Factors” states:
“For projects that save electricity, use a California average factor of 610.82 Lbs CO₂ equivalent/MWh, unless applicants have information specific to their utility. For Pacific Gas & Electric customers, use an average factor of 393 Lbs CO₂ equivalent/MWh.”
If applicants commonly use an average factor of 524 Lbs CO₂ equivalent/MWh for PG & E, what factor should be used to determine greenhouse gas emissions?
[Applicants are encouraged to use the factors provided in Appendix C of the Application Guidelines.](#)

ELIGIBILITY

1. Are water supplier entities eligible for SWEEP funding?
No, water suppliers are not eligible for SWEEP funding. An agricultural operation is defined as “a row, vineyard, field and tree crops, commercial nurseries, nursery stock production and greenhouse operation” as outlined on page 1 of the [Application Guidelines](#).
2. Are projects involving non-irrigation water use eligible?
No, projects must involve water irrigation and distribution systems on an agricultural operation. Refer to page 1 of the [Application Guidelines](#) for eligibility requirements.
3. Are applicants outside the D3 and D4 drought designated area as of April 29, 2014 eligible to receive funding?
No, applicants outside the D3 and D4 drought designated area as of April 29, 2014 are not eligible for funding.
4. 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 to receive funding.

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5. If an agriculture operation has existing soil moisture equipment in their field, but does not have any irrigation scheduling around those tools, would a project design implementing an irrigation management plan based on soil moisture monitoring and California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) based evapotranspiration (ET) data be eligible for funding?

Yes, implementing irrigation scheduling is eligible for funding.

6. If a soil moisture monitoring system is already installed, is an application for reimbursement of that system eligible for funding?

No, funding can only be used to implement projects after a grant agreement is executed between CDFA and an agriculture operation. Funding cannot cover maintenance and operation costs of any existing system.

7. Is converting one crop to a lower watering crop (i.e. sprinkler irrigated pasture to drip irrigated vineyard) an eligible project?

Yes. Converting one crop to a lower watering crop is eligible for funding as long as water savings can be calculated and quantified.

8. Is lining or preparing an existing pond to capture rainwater eligible for funding?

Yes. Lining or preparing an existing pond to capture rain water is eligible for funding as long as water savings can be calculated and quantified.

9. Is a project converting 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 can be calculated and quantified. If the project demonstrates the applicant is simply switching water supplies, the project is not eligible for funding.

New question: July 14, 2014

10. Is a landowner with an agriculture operation eligible to receive funding?

Yes, landowners with an agriculture operation are eligible for SWEEP funding.

FAAST APPLICATION

1. What property locations need to be provided in Section I of the FAAST Application Questions?

CDFA is requesting applicants provide the location of the property that will be impacted by the project. In addition, the applicant will need to provide the total acreage impacted by the project.

2. 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.

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3. Who should be listed as the Project Director or Project Manager in the “Project Management” tab?

The agriculture operation’s contact information 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 one contact person. 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.

New questions: July 14, 2014

4. In Section II: Ranking Criteria, question #2(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 FFAST?

For questions in FFAST requesting the applicant 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 actual value. For example, if the value for projected greenhouse gas emission reductions is less than “1”, the applicant would indicate “0.82” tonnes of CO₂e/year/acre.

5. Can applicants provide a Social Security Number in place of a Tax ID number?

A Tax ID must be provided in FFAST. In some instances, this may be a Social Security Number or Employer Identification Number (EIN).

6. Should applicants attach the actual contractor estimates with the project design in FFAST?

Contractor estimates are not required with the project design. However, applicants are required to provide the actual contractor estimates in the Budget Worksheet under “Contractor/Consultant” budget category. Applicants are required to download, complete and attach the Budget Worksheet in FFAST question #15. Refer to Appendix B of the [Application Guidelines](#) for a preview of the Budget Worksheet.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. The Application Guidelines under the Requirements and Application Procedures section states “grant recipients are expected to use and maintain their system for a minimum of 15 years.” Does the program allow for flexibility if a useful life of 15 years is not applicable to the project?

Applicants may follow the U.S. Department of Agriculture, [Natural Resource Conservation Service \(USDA, NRCS\) useful life practice guidelines](#) when a useful life of 15 years is not applicable to the project.

2. If parts of an existing irrigation system are upgraded, is it expected that the system be used and maintained for 15 years?

Yes, upgraded parts of an existing system are expected to be used and maintained for 15 years. Applicants may follow the [USDA, NRCS useful life practice guidelines](#) when a useful life of 15 years is not applicable to the project.

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3. Can an applicant request SWEEP funds that exceed the NRCS payment schedules provided in Appendix D of the Application Guidelines?
[CDFA will require applicants to follow the NRCS payment schedule to determine the maximum amount per unit. For instances when the NRCS payment schedule does not apply to a project, the Technical Reviewers will evaluate the reasonableness of the amount requested during the review process.](#)
4. The Application Guidelines state, "SWEEP funding cannot be combined with USDA, NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)." Since EQIP awards have not been announced, 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.](#)
5. Can agriculture operations located in a disadvantaged community use the USDS, NRCS disadvantaged community cost share schedule?
[No. Applicants must use the USDA, NRCS scheduled provided in Appendix D of the Application Guidelines.](#)

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, CDFA has noted that, 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 \(e.g., water application rate, crop water demand\).](#)

[In addition, CDFA strongly encourages applicants to use conservation resources in the application process \(i.e. an RCD, USDA, NRCS, or a private consultant\). Refer to page 3 and 4 of the Application Guidelines for additional information regarding the project design.](#)
2. Can agriculture operations use 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.](#)
3. Can one application have multiple project designs?
[Yes, one application can have multiple project designs. In FFAST, the applicant would need to attach the project designs and name each file: Project Design 1, Project Design 2, etc.](#)
4. Do applicants need to have their project design approved by an engineer, NRCS (Technical Service Provider), or other registered professional?
[No, applicants are not required to submit an approved project design. However, applicants are **strongly** encouraged to work with qualified irrigation professionals, including the USDA, NRCS, RCDs, or an irrigation company. Refer to page 3 – 4 of the Application Guidelines for contact information to available resources that may assist with a project design.](#)

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5. Are applicants required to provide the project designer's qualifications with their project design?
No, CDFA established a Technical Review process to evaluate grant applications, including the project design. The Technical Reviewers consist of highly qualified irrigation experts from the State University and University of California systems. Refer to page 4 of the [Application Guidelines](#) for additional information regarding the review process.
6. If an applicant's project includes installing a variable frequency drive (VFD) on their pump, will a project design for the entire irrigations system be required?
No, a project design for the entire system is not required.
7. The Application Guidelines under Step 2: Project Design, Calculations and Resources section states "a global distribution uniformity (DU) of at least 0.92 must be specified in the design plan." If an applicant's system cannot meet this requirement, would a project design meeting the NRCS requirement of a DU of at least 0.85 be acceptable?
A project design with other DU values may be considered for funding. In the application, an explanation of why a DU of 0.92 cannot be achieved must be provided.
8. Does a project design including the installation of a VFD on a well pump need to meet the requirement of a DU of at least 0.92?
No. The DU of at least 0.92 applies to criteria 7 and 8. The VFD is a standalone practice that applies to criteria 9. Refer to page 5 the [Application Guidelines](#) for additional information on ranking criteria.

New question: July 14, 2014

1. The water savings calculator tools provided in the Application Guidelines under Step 2: Project Design, Calculations and Resources section does not provide information on utilization of flow meters. Are there other available resources besides the organizations provided in the Application Guidelines, such as RCDs?
The following are two resources available for information regarding flow meters:
 - <http://www.itrc.org/>
 - <http://www.fresnostate.edu/jcast/cit/index.html>

RANKING CRITERIA

1. How will criteria be used to rank applications?
Projects within a D3 or D4 drought designated area will be ranked according to: (1) the greatest water savings; (2) the greatest greenhouse gas reductions; and (3) the remaining six criteria will be weighted equally. Refer to page 5 of the [Application Guidelines](#) for the list of ranking criteria.
2. Can a project address only greenhouse gas emission reductions?
Yes. Applicants are not required to address all criteria; therefore, a project addressing only greenhouse gas emission reduction is eligible for funding. Refer to page 5 of the [Application Guidelines](#) for additional information on ranking criteria.

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BUDGET WORKSHEET

1. Are monthly service charges, such as a company providing soil moisture information on a monthly basis, allowable expenses under SWEEP? If so, where can an applicant include monthly service charges in the budget worksheet?

No, service and maintenance costs are not allowable expenses.

New questions: July 14, 2014

2. Can modifications be made to the Budget Worksheet to either increase or decrease budget category amounts, such as Supplies, Equipment, and Contractor/Consultant, during project implementation?

Yes, the amount requested in the Budget Worksheet as part of the application is based on initial estimates of the funds needed to support project implementation. The actual installation of a project may result in slight modifications to the original budget category amounts. However, modifications to budget categories cannot increase or decrease the total grant award. If awarded, successful applicants will receive specific instructions regarding modifications to budget categories.

3. If the a project's equipment costs exceed the USDA, NRCS payment schedules provided in Appendix D of the Application Guidelines, are the excess costs matching funds to the project?

Yes. CDFA will only reimburse for costs provided in the USDA, NRCS payment schedules in Appendix D of the Application Guidelines to the extent feasible. If costs to implement a project exceed the USDA, NRCS payment schedules, the excess equipment costs are considered matching funds.

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, SWEEP 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.

4. Are matching funds contributed outside the implementation period of the project (October 1, 2014 – April 1, 2015) considered matching funds?

Applicants are encouraged to indicate all matching funds contributed to support the project. If matching funds have been secured outside the project duration, attach written documentation to the application indicating how it will be used to support the project after implementation.

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5. Is a signature required on the matching funds written documentation?

No, a signature is not required on the matching funds written documentation.

6. Can an organization submitting an application on behalf of an agriculture operation and assisting with the project implementation be considered in-kind contributions for a project?

Funding can only be requested and utilized for project implementation. If an organization is assisting an agriculture operation with project implementation, then the organization's time is considered in-kind contributions for the project. However, an organization's time involved with submitting an application on behalf of an agriculture operation can be considered in-kind contributions.

New question: July 14, 2014

7. If the a project's equipment costs exceed the USDA, NRCS payment schedules provided in Appendix D of the Application Guidelines, are the excess costs matching funds to the project?

Yes. CDFA will only reimburse for costs provided in the USDA, NRCS payment schedules in Appendix D of the [Application Guidelines](#) to the extent feasible. If costs to implement a project exceed the USDA, NRCS payment schedules, the excess equipment costs are considered matching funds.