

OREGON CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS

Fiscal Year 2012 Announcement of Program Funding

Announcement Number: AG-0436-G-12-005

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.912

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

NRCS Oregon requests applications for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. Applications will be accepted from any eligible entity within the 50 States, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Basin Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) for projects within the state of Oregon. For fiscal year 2012, up to \$225,000 may be available for the Oregon statewide CIG competition. NRCS will reserve the right to offer more or less funding at the discretion of the State Conservationist. Funds will be awarded through a competitive grants process. The Oregon CIG category available in FY 2012 is the State Resource Concern Category. Applications are requested from eligible government or non-government organizations or individuals for competitive consideration of grant awards for projects between one to three years in duration. This notice identifies the objectives for Oregon CIG projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and associated instructions needed to apply to CIG. To participate in the Oregon CIG sign-up, project proposals should request federal funds of \$75,000 or less and must be implemented within the state of Oregon. Proposals that request more than \$75,000 or are multi-state in scope should be submitted under the National CIG competition: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig/index.html>.

PROPOSAL DUE DATE AND ADDRESSES:

Dates: Proposals must be submitted in grants.gov or received in the NRCS Oregon State Office by 4:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time (PST) on **Friday, May 4, 2012**.

Addresses: The address for hand-delivered applications, applications submitted using express mail or overnight courier service, and for applications sent via the U.S. Postal Service is: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Innovation Grants Program; Programs Staff, 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 900, Portland Oregon 97232.

To submit your application electronically, visit www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp and follow the instructions.

Applications submitted by fax or e-mail will NOT be accepted.

For more information contact:

Todd M. Peplin, USDA-NRCS
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd. Suite 900
Portland, OR. 97232
Phone: (503) 414-3292
E-mail: todd.peplin@or.usda.gov

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) was authorized as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance ("CFDA") 10.912 [16 U.S.C. 3839aa-8] under Section 1240H of the Food Security Act of 1985, as added by Section 2509 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-246). The Secretary of Agriculture delegated the authority for the administration of EQIP and CIG to the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), who is Vice President of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). EQIP is funded and administered by NRCS under the authorities of the CCC.

B. OVERVIEW

The purpose of CIG is to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging the Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural and forestry production. CIG projects are expected to lead to the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches (such as market-based systems) into NRCS technical manuals, guides, and references or to the private sector. CIG does not fund research projects. It is a vehicle to stimulate the development and adoption of conservation approaches or technologies that have been studied sufficiently to indicate a likelihood of success, and to be candidates for eventual technology transfer or institutionalization. CIG funds projects targeting innovative on-the ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations.

NRCS will accept applications for single or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years, submitted to NRCS from eligible entities including Federally-recognized Indian Tribes, State and local governments, and non-governmental organizations and individuals. Applications are accepted from all 50 States, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), but the project must be implemented within the State of Oregon.

Complete applications will be reviewed through a three tiered process; 1) basin working groups, on local adaptation of the project, 2) technical review team, based on the Criteria for Proposal Evaluation (located in section V.B.), and 3) executive review board to ensure adherence to policy. The executive review board makes award recommendations to the Oregon NRCS State Conservationist, who will make final award selections. Regional equity may be considered in evaluating State CIG proposals for selection.

C. INNOVATIVE CONSERVATION PROJECTS OR ACTIVITIES

For the purposes of CIG, the proposed innovative project or activity must encompass the development and field testing, evaluation, and implementation of:

- Conservation adoption approaches or incentive systems, including market-based systems; or
- Promising conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures, or approaches.

To be given priority consideration, the innovative project or activity:

- Has been studied sufficiently to indicate a good probability for success;

- Demonstrates, tests, evaluates, and verifies environmental (soil, water, air, plants, and animal) effectiveness, utility, affordability, and usability in the field;
- Adapts conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption;
- Introduces conservation systems, approaches, and procedures from another geographic area or agricultural sector; and/or
- Adapts conservation technology, management, or incentive systems to improve performance.

D. STATE COMPONENT CIG CATEGORY

For Fiscal Year 2012, one category, the State Resource Concern Category, will be offered in Oregon. This category may include applications that focus on Market-based Approaches, Ecosystem Services, Environmental Credit Trading, or related conservation approaches and tools. Beginning or Socially Disadvantaged farmers or ranchers or eligible entities servicing Beginning or Socially Disadvantaged farmers or ranchers are encouraged to submit application(s), and will receive special consideration in the selection process. Additionally, proposals must identify the most appropriate resource concern sub-category and subtopic, listed below, for their proposal. **Subtopics that are in bold print are considered high priority for the state and will be given additional consideration.**

1. State Resource Concern Category

i. Energy Subcategory

The objective of this sub-category is to implement new technologies and/or approaches to conserve energy and/or produce renewable energy, while sustaining agricultural and forest productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Demonstrate the use of immediate feedback devices such as smart meters and their effect on increasing energy conservation and efficiency in the farming sector;
- Evaluate and demonstrate renewable energy systems (e.g. hydropower, solar, and/or wind) that displace fossil fuel energy and meet on-farm energy needs, while increasing energy efficiency and/or reducing environmental contaminants (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions); or
- Innovative tools to estimate the energy and fossil fuel implications of cropland agronomic practices. May be based either on extending and validating the NRCS Cropland Energy Estimator prototype or developing a new tool.

ii. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Subcategory

The objective of this sub-category is to demonstrate the capabilities of agricultural and forest conservation systems to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase soil and vegetation carbon sequestration, and to maintain high levels of food and fiber production in the face of changing temperature and precipitation regimes.

Possible subtopics include:

- Conservation planning approaches that integrate agronomic or forestry knowledge with climate and weather information in order to assist farms with adapting to changing climate patterns;

- Innovative greenhouse gas reduction technologies; or
- Innovative technologies or methods that assist growers to comprehensively inventory on farm greenhouse gas emissions.

iii. Water Quality Subcategory

The objective of this natural resource concern is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance water quality resources associated with agricultural and forest land uses while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Technologies that support “farmer-friendly” recordkeeping software, including quantification of organic and inorganic nutrients applied by crop and field, dates, irrigation data, and crop nutrient uptake;
- Innovative approaches to animal waste management systems such as low-cost methods of storing animal waste on small farms or economic methods of exporting phosphorus from dairy farms;
- New methods/technologies to reduce water use on dairy operations;
- Integrated pest management systems that protect ground and surface water on organic farms;
- Innovative approaches to management, application and/or treatment of manure;
- **Development of real-time technologies to inform farmers of nutrient uptake by crops; or**
- Implementation of market-based approaches to reducing nutrient runoff on farms, including approaches that are integrated with NRCS conservation programs.

iv. Water Quantity Subcategory

The objective of this natural resource concern is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance water quantity resources associated with agricultural uses while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- User friendly technologies or innovations that utilize precision irrigation techniques on various agricultural crops that promotes irrigation efficiency, and improved management of irrigation water;
- **Implementation of automated and/or remotely-controlled irrigation technologies, including diversion headgates, pumping stations, control valves, and flow monitoring methods in order to control the application of irrigation water based on crop needs, irrigation cycles, soil moisture and precipitation;**
- **Development of an inventory/GIS tool that assesses irrigation district infrastructure, irrigation water delivery and usage, irrigation water delivery efficiencies, and parameters that can be used state-wide to compare and prioritize irrigation projects;**
- Innovative technologies that improve the water holding capacity of irrigated soils. Soil amendments or structures that decrease water loss due to evaporation, deep percolation below root zones, and surface runoff; or
- Development of an inventory of economically viable crop alternatives which require less water than those traditionally grown.

v. Plant Health/Vigor Subcategory

The objective of this subcategory is to develop and/or implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance plant health and vigor on forest, crop, hay, pasture and range lands while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

Forest lands

- Innovative methods or technologies in fire management on forest land or reduction, including invasive species management;
- Development of techniques and methods to improve forest establishment and reduce tree mortality;
- **Develop design and specification criteria using Geosynthetic Reinforced Soil (GRS), for culvert and bridge replacement/installation and demonstrating the innovation in a forested setting;** or
- Implement new and innovative technologies to restore and/or enhance at-risk forest ecosystems.

Grazing lands

- New and innovative approaches/methods to treat annual invasive species on grazing land and promote health, and productivity; including invasive species management (e.g. Medusahead Rye);
- Innovative conservation practices and/or systems to improve forage use and/or restore lands for grazing opportunities at sustainable production levels;
 - Low-input approaches to increasing forage production; or
 - Alternative grasses or forages for livestock; production that improve or enhance resource conservation.
 - Production technologies and/or management strategies that improve or enhance resource conservation on grazing lands.
- **Innovative technologies to promote highly efficient management for livestock grazing;**
- Innovative method or technologies to promote water development or storage to facilitate grazing and forage management;
- **Development and / or implementation of innovative processes or strategies to remotely monitor livestock watering sources located on isolated range and pasture areas, thus reducing energy and ensuring animal health;** or
- **Innovations or method to assess and preserve cultural plants critical to tribal needs.**

vi. Soil Quality Subcategory

The objective of this subcategory is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance soil resources associated with agricultural and forest landuses while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Development of efficient technologies for producing and utilizing biochar to enhance soil quality, retain plant nutrients on site, sequester carbon to mitigate climate change, and produce bioenergy as a byproduct; or

- Technologies and methods (e.g. carbon fractions, enzymes, other) for early prediction of soil quality degradation;

vii. Wildlife Habitat Subcategory

The objective of this subcategory is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches for environmentally sound wildlife habitat management while sustaining agricultural and forest productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- **Develop an Oak Habitat Evaluation Guide based on the habitat requirements of oak-dependent wildlife species. This rapid assessment tool would be used by conservation planners to generate an index of current oak habitat quality and to estimate the level of habitat improvement resulting from the implementation of a restoration treatment or management change; or**
- **Develop a metric to estimate the effects of juniper removal on rangeland hydrologic function and/or quantify water conservation from juniper removal treatments.**

II. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

A. STATE COMPONENT

The intent of the State Component of the CIG program is to provide flexibility to NRCS State Conservationists to target CIG funds to individual producers and smaller organizations that may possess promising innovations, but may not compete well on the larger scale of the national grant competition.

For Fiscal year 2012, up to \$225,000 may be available for the Oregon State CIG competition. NRCS will reserve the right to offer more or less funding at the discretion of the State Conservationist. Regional equity may be considered when evaluating State CIG proposals for selection.

State CIG project proposals that request federal funds of \$75,000 or less and are not multi-state in scope can participate, and should send their application to the address listed in this announcement.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

CIG applicants must be a federally recognized Indian Tribe, State, or local unit of government, non-governmental organization, or individual.

A. MATCHING FUNDS

Selected applicants may receive CIG grants for up to 50 percent of the total project cost. Applicants must provide non-Federal funding (matching funds) for at least 50 percent of the total project cost. Up to half of the applicant's matching funds (up to 25 percent of the total project cost) may be from in-kind

contributions. Matching funds must be available at time of application. Additional information about matching funds can be found at the following link: [2 CFR 215](#).

B. BEGINNING FARMERS OR RANCHERS AND SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS OR RANCHERS

Proposals may be given special consideration if the applicant or participants involved are Beginning Farmers or Ranchers, Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers, or community-based organizations comprised of or representing these entities. The applicant must make a declaration in the application as described in Part IV C.7 of this notice. An exception regarding matching funds is made for projects submitted by Beginning Farmers or Ranchers and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers. Up to three-fourths of the required matching funds for such projects (up to 37.5 percent of the total project cost) may derive from in-kind contributions.

Beginning Farmer or Rancher Definition - a person or legal entity who:

- Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of an entity who will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.
- In the case of a contract with an individual, individually, or with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch consistent with the practices in the county or State where the farm is located.
- In the case of a contract with an entity or joint operation, all members must materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. Material and substantial participation requires that each of the members provide some amount of the management or labor and management necessary for day-to-day activities, such that if each of the members did not provide these inputs, operation of the farm or ranch would be seriously impaired.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers Definition - a farmer or rancher who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as a member of a group without regards to their individual qualities. This includes members of the following groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders or Hispanics.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP) PAYMENT LIMITATION AND DUPLICATE PAYMENTS

Section 1240G of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C.3839aa-7, imposes a \$300,000 limitation for all cost-share or incentive payments disbursed to individuals or entities under an EQIP contract between fiscal years 2008 and 2012. The limitation applies to CIG in the following manner:

- CIG funds are awarded through grant agreements; these grant agreements are not EQIP contracts. Thus, CIG awards in and of themselves are not limited by the payment limitation.
- Direct or indirect payments made to an individual or entity using funds from a CIG award to carry out structural, vegetative, or management practices count toward each individual's or entity's EQIP payment limitation. Through project progress reports, CIG grantees are responsible for certifying that producers involved in CIG projects do not exceed the payment limitation. Further, all direct and indirect payments made to producers using CIG funds must be reported to the NRCS CIG program manager in the semi-annual report. Direct or indirect payments cannot be made for a practice for which the producer has already received funds, or is contracted to receive funds,

through any of the USDA Programs (EQIP, Conservation Security Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, etc.) since this would be considered a duplicate payment.

- Following are two examples of how the \$300,000 EQIP payment limitation applies to CIG projects:
- A \$75,000 CIG grant is awarded to a State environmental agency to demonstrate an innovative, market-based, water quality trading program. The money is used to finance the development of a market infrastructure, and none of the funds are used to implement structural, vegetative, or management practices. Producers in the trading market demonstration area may indirectly benefit from their eventual participation in the market, but there is no direct transfer payment of CIG dollars. If, on the other hand, part of the CIG award were used to make payments to producers who implement conservation practices on their land as part of a trading program, those payments would count towards each producer's \$300,000 EQIP payment limitation.
- A \$75,000 CIG grant is awarded to a Conservation District to pilot a community-based animal waste treatment technology innovation. EQIP-eligible producers in the area transport their animal waste to a central treatment location. Because producers are not directly or indirectly receiving CIG funds, the payment limitation does not apply. If, however, the producers were paid for their waste, or for transporting their waste to the central treatment location using CIG funds, the payments would be subject to each producer's EQIP payment limitation.

D. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for CIG, projects must involve landowners who meet the EQIP eligibility requirements as set forth in 16 U.S.C. 3839aa-1. Further, all agricultural producers receiving direct or indirect payments through participation in a CIG project must also meet the EQIP eligibility requirements. Refer to <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/> for more information on EQIP eligibility requirements. Participating producers are not required to have an EQIP contract.

A person or legal entity shall not be eligible to receive any benefit during a crop, fiscal, or program year, as appropriate, if the average adjusted gross non-farm income of the person or legal entity exceeds \$1,000,000, unless two-thirds of that income is derived from agriculture, ranching or forestry, unless not less than 66.66 percent of the average adjusted gross income of the person or legal entity is average adjusted gross farm income.

A person who is determined ineligible for USDA program benefits under the Highly Erodible Land Compliance (HELIC) and Wetland Compliance (WC) provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 will not be eligible to receive direct or indirect payments through CIG.

Technologies and approaches that are eligible for funding in a project's geographic area through EQIP are ineligible for CIG funding except where the use of those technologies and approaches demonstrates clear innovation. The burden falls on the applicant to sufficiently describe the innovative features of the proposed technology or approach (applicants should reference the appropriate State's EQIP Eligible Practices List by contacting the NRCS State office).

The grantee is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully implement and complete the project. NRCS will designate a Program Contact, Administrative Contact, and Technical Contact to provide oversight for each project receiving an award.

IV. APPLICATION, SUBMISSION INFORMATION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. HOW TO OBTAIN APPLICATION MATERIALS

All Office of Management and Budget standard forms necessary for CIG submissions are posted on the following website: http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved_standard_forms.jsp an application checklist and links to the required application forms are also available on the Oregon CIG website: www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/.

B. APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

Applications must contain the information set forth below in order to receive consideration for a grant. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NRCS or others as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Applicants must submit their application in the following format:

- Applications should be typewritten or printed on 8½" x 11" white paper. The text of the application should be in a font no smaller than 12-point, single spaced, with one-inch margins.

NOTE: Applications that fail to comply with the required content and format will not be considered for funding.

Applications must include all required forms and narrative sections described below.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

1. **Application Cover Sheet:** Applicants must use Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance as the cover sheet for project application. Standard Form 424 can be downloaded from http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved_standard_forms.jsp or obtained from the Oregon NRCS State Office.
2. **Executive Summary Sheet:** Applicants must submit an Executive Summary Sheet (**no more than two pages in length – single sided – single spaced**) that includes the information listed below. Executive summary should describe the work to be undertaken, brief budget summary, expected outcomes and benefits, and evaluation factors. A template for the Project Summary Sheet is available on the Oregon NRCS CIG website: www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/.
 - Project Title
 - Project Director Name, contact information (including e-mail)
 - Names and Affiliations of Project Collaborators
 - Project Purpose
 - Project Deliverables/Products
 - Project Scope/Area
 - Project Start and End Dates (Projects should plan to begin no earlier than October 1, 2012)
 - State Resource Subcategory (Energy, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Water Quality, Plant Health/Vigor, Wildlife Habitat) and subtopic. (**Proposals must choose the most appropriate resource concern sub-category and subtopic**)
 - Certification-Request for Federal Funds (Standard Form (SF) 424B, additional information under B.10)

3. **Project Description:** The project description must be **limited to 7 pages (single-sided, single-spaced) in length** and include the information listed below. Pages in excess of the 7-page limit will be discarded and not evaluated (Bibliography, resumes and references will be included in the page count for the project page limit).

- **Project narrative:** The project narrative should provide a clear description of the work to be undertaken and how it will be accomplished. It must be formatted to address each of the merit review criteria listed in section V.B.1 and provide sufficient information for the reviewers to evaluate the application in accordance with these merit review criteria;
- **Project background:** Describe the history of and need for the proposed innovation. Provide evidence that the proposed innovation has been studied sufficiently to indicate a good probability for success of the project;
- **Project objectives:** Be specific using qualitative and quantitative measures, if possible, to describe the project's purpose and goals. Describe how the project is innovative;
- **Project methods:** Describe clearly the methodology of the project and the tools or processes that will be used to implement the project;
- **Location and size of project or project area:** Describe the location of the project and the relative size and scope (e.g., acres, farm types and demographics, etc.) of the project area. Provide a map, if possible;
- **Producer participation:** Estimate the number of producers involved in the project and describes the extent of their involvement (**all producers involved in the project must be EQIP eligible – see website that describe EQIP eligibility <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/fy10/Eligibility10.html>**);
- **Project action plan and timeline:** Provide a table listing project actions, timeframes, and associated milestones through project completion;
- **Project management:** Give a detailed description of how the project will be organized and managed. Include a list of key project personnel, their relevant education or experience, and their anticipated contributions to the project. Explain the level of participation required in the project by government and non-government entities. Identify who will participate in monitoring and evaluating the project;
- **Benefits or results expected and transferability:** Identify the results and benefits to be derived from the proposed project activities and explain how the results will be measured. Identify project beneficiaries, i.e., agricultural producers by type or region or sector; rural communities; municipalities. Explain how these entities will benefit. In addition, describe how results will be communicated to others via outreach activities;
- **Project evaluation:** Describe the methodology or procedures to be followed to evaluate the project, determine technical feasibility, and quantify the results of the project for the final report (Grant recipients will be required to provide a semi-annual report of progress, quarterly financial reports, and a final project report to NRCS. Instructions for submitting quarterly reports will be detailed in the grant agreement); and
- **Environmental Information and Assessment of Environmental Impacts:** Describe the anticipated environmental effects of the proposed project. The description of the potential environmental and social impacts must address all potential beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. A full description of the potential impacts to all potentially impacted environmental resources must be disclosed. **One line or short descriptions of environmental impacts are not acceptable.** The length of the analysis should be commensurate with the complexity of the project proposed and the environmental impacts impacted either directly, indirectly (later in time), or cumulatively. Where possible, information on environmental impacts should be quantified, such as number of acres of wetlands impacted, amount of carbon sequestration estimated, etc. Environmental resources include soil, water, air, plants, and animals, as well as other specific resources protected by law, Executive Order, and Agency policy. These resources are outlined in the NRCS Environmental Evaluation Worksheet, form NRCS-CPA-52, which is available at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ECS/environment/CPA-52.doc>. The CPA 52 form can be used as a guide for the scope of environmental information that should be prepared for this section of the application. In addition to describing impacts, applicants are required to assess the significance or degree of potential environmental impact of the proposed project on environmental resources. Applicants may consult with NRCS an Environmental Liaison concerning the scope of what should be addressed in this section of the application. For additional assistance please contact Oregon's Environmental Liaison, Jim Regan-Vienop (503) 414-3209; jim.reganvienop@or.usda.gov

NOTE: Please be aware that applications for projects with potentially adverse impacts may need to be modified in order to achieve acceptable and beneficial levels of environmental impact. If projects cannot be modified, then there is a potential during the screening process that the application may not be selected.

4. **Budget Information:** Applicants must submit an SF 424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs to document budget needs. SF 424A is available at: http://www.grants.gov/agencies/approved_standard_forms.jsp or can be obtained from the Oregon NRCS State Office.

In addition to the SF 424A, all applicants must provide a detail narrative (**4 pages maximum, single-sided and single-spaced**) in support of the budget for the project **broken down by year**, which includes:

- Amount of Federal funds requested and the matching resources provided by the applicant and collaborators in order to carry out the project.
- Proposed costs for each task identified, as well as the matching or corresponding resources devoted to this project by the applicant, including each of the participating entities in a consortium engaged to carry out the project as proposed.
- Indicate the total amount (both cash and in-kind) of non-Federal matching support that will be provided to the proposed project.
- Identify and provide documentation of the source(s), the amount, and the nature (cash or in-kind) of the matching funds. **An indirect cost-rate agreement must be included if the applicant is claiming indirect costs.** Indirect costs cannot exceed 15 percent. In-kind costs of equipment or project personnel cannot exceed 50 percent of the applicant's match (except in the case of projects carried out by either a Beginning or Socially Disadvantaged farmers or ranchers or Indian Tribe, or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities). The remainder must be cash match from non-Federal sources.
- Identify the following for the applicant and each participant involved in the project:
 - Position title, number of hours, and total cost for personnel proposed;
 - Total cost for travel;
 - Proposed equipment, supplies, or other major expenses over \$5,000;
 - Total of all direct costs;
 - Total of indirect costs; and
- Provide an overall summary of total project costs.

NOTE: The applicant shall submit a proposed Schedule of Deliverables with a corresponding Schedule of Payments. This should identify when each deliverable described in the proposal will be furnished to the government and what portion of the grant price is then payable.

5. **Declaration of Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher:** If an applicant identifies themselves as a beginning farmer or rancher, socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, (see Part III B.) and avail themselves of the in-kind contribution exception, **applicants must make a declaration in writing of their status as a Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities.** These definitions can be found in section III B.

6. **Declaration of EQIP Eligibility:** Applicants must include a statement indicating that the proposed project will involve EQIP-eligible producers. Applicants must make a declaration in writing that they, or parties involved in the project, are eligible for EQIP **(if EQIP eligible producers are not involved in the project, the proposal will be considered ineligible).** Declaration must describe and certify level of involvement by EQIP eligible producers.
7. **Certifications:** All applications must include a signed Standard Form (SF) 424B - Assurances, Non-construction Programs. SF 424B may be found at: http://www.grants.gov/agencies/approved_standard_forms.jsp or contact the NRCS State Office. Applicants, by signing and submitting an application, assure and certify that they are in compliance with the following from 7 Code of Federal Register (CFR):
 - Part 3017, Government wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement);
 - Part 3018, New Restrictions on Lobbying; and
 - Part 3021, Government wide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).
8. **DUNS Number:** A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A *Federal Register* notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number, go to <http://www.grants.gov/RequestaDUNS> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.
9. **Required CCR Registration:** The Central Contractor Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database will also be used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. CIG applicants must register with the CCR. To register, visit <http://www.ccr.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration. A DUNS number will be needed in order to complete the CCR Registration process.

C. HOW TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit one signed original copy of the project application. Hard copies must be accompanied by an electronic copy on a compact disc (CD). Electronic files must be either Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (pdf) files. **Applications submitted via facsimile will not be accepted.**

The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using express mail, overnight courier service, or regular mail is:

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Conservation Innovation Grants Program Programs Staff
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 900
Portland, OR. 97232

D. HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION ELECTRONICALLY

Applicants may submit applications electronically through Grants.gov, the Federal Government's e-grants portal. Applications submitted through Grants.gov must contain all of the elements of a complete application and meet the requirements described above. Instructions for electronically submitting the

required standard forms, abstract, narrative, and declarations are posted on Grants.gov. Instructions for adding attachments are available on Grants.gov. Applications submitted electronically are date and time stamped by Grants.gov and must be received by the identified closing date. Note that NRCS is not responsible for any technical malfunctions or website problems related to Grants.gov submissions. Applicants should begin the Grants.gov process well before the submission deadline to avoid problems.

E. APPLICATION DUE DATE

Complete applications must be received by 4:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time (PST) on **Friday, May 4, 2012**, either through Grants.gov or at 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd. Suite 900 Oregon NRCS State Office. A postmark date is NOT a factor in whether an application is received on time. The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application delivery. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by NRCS.

F. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUBMISSION

Applications received by the due date will be acknowledged with an official letter. If an applicant has not received an acknowledgement within 30 days of the submission, they must contact the NRCS program contact (See Part VII). Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding.

G. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Awardees may not use unrecovered indirect costs as part of their matching funds.

CIG funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law, or approved in writing by the Authorized Departmental Officer in advance of incurring such costs:

- Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project;
- Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant;
- Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and any amendments thereto;
- Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
- Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities;
- Consulting services performed by a Federal employee during official duty hours when such consulting services result in the payment of additional compensation to the employee;
- Renovation or refurbishment of research or related spaces; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces; and the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions regarding the allowances of particular items of cost should be directed to the administrative contact person.

H. PATENTS AND INVENTIONS

Allocation of rights to patents and inventions shall be in accordance with USDA regulation 7 CFR 3019.36. This regulation provides that small businesses normally may retain the principal worldwide patent rights to any invention developed with USDA support. In accordance with 7 CFR 3019.2, this provision will also apply to commercial organizations for the purposes of CIG. USDA receives a royalty-free license for Federal Government use, reserves the right to require the patentee to license

others in certain circumstances, and requires that anyone exclusively licensed to sell the invention in the United States must normally manufacture it domestically.

I. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NRCS regulations that implement NEPA require that an environmental review be prepared for actions where the Agency has discretion and control. Accordingly, NRCS' financial assistance under the CIG program requires compliance with these regulations. **As part of the application packet, applicants are required to provide environmental information pertaining to their project (described further under Part IV B.4.k.) to help NRCS determine the appropriate documentation required to comply with NEPA and NRCS regulations.** If the application is selected for funding, the NRCS Program Contact and NRCS Environmental Liaison will coordinate with the selected applicant concerning documentation for compliance with NEPA. The selected applicant will be required to prepare and/or pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document (e.g., Environmental Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Statement if required for NEPA compliance). Grant funding cannot be approved until the environmental review requirements demonstrating compliance with NEPA are met.

J. WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATIONS

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before an award is made. Applications may be withdrawn by the applicant, or by an authorized representative thereof, if the representative's identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt for the application.

K. DELIVERABLES

In addition to the project deliverables, applications must include the following activities as deliverables:

- Semi-annual reports;
- Supplemental narratives to explain and support payment requests;
- Final report;
- Performance items specific to the project that indicate progress; A thorough list and explanation of measurable performance items specific to the project will be used in the technical evaluation.
- New technology and innovative approach fact sheet;
- Presentation regarding the project to the Oregon Technical Advisory Committee.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW

A. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Applications will be sent to the NRCS Oregon State Office and screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete applications, and those that do not meet the provisions of this notice, will be eliminated from competition and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant. Proposals submitted by applications appearing on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) will not be considered. The EPLS can be viewed at <http://epls.gov>.

Basin working groups will have the opportunity to review applications that originate from their basin. Applications will be reviewed for duplication of efforts, ethic concerns, consistency with overall EQIP objectives, purpose and approach, management and applicability.

Basin working groups will recommend to the basin team leader priority applications. Applications will be forwarded to the CIG Grant Program Manager who will offer further opportunity for evaluation and comment from the Technical Review Team (TRT). The TRT will evaluate applications on its technical merit and the Criteria for Proposal Evaluation identified in this document (V.B.).

The Technical Review Team will make recommendations for project approval to the Executive Review Board (ERB). The ERB will review recommendations from the basin working groups and Technical Review Team along with program policy and make recommendation to the NRCS Oregon State Conservationists. Final award selections will be made by the NRCS Oregon State Conservationist. Regional equity may be considered when evaluating State CIG proposals for selection.

B. CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION EVALUATION

The following criteria will be used to evaluate project applications. Applications must identify a primary resource subcategory and subtopic they are addressing in their application. You can indicate additional resource categories that are addressed by the proposal, however, in order to assist in the ranking process a primary subcategory needs to be identified.

1. Purpose, Approach, and Goals:

- Design and implementation of project based on sound methodology and/or demonstrated technology.
- Promotes environmental enhancement & protection in conjunction with agricultural production.
- Project outcome is clearly measurable.
- Potential for successful completion.
- Both beneficial and adverse impacts are considered and a significant level of improvement will be achieved.

2. Innovative Technology or Approach:

- Project is innovative (Statewide, regionally, or local in nature).
- Project conforms to description of innovative projects or activities in proposal request announcement.
- Technical design and implementation strategy is based on sound science.
- There is a good likelihood that the project will be successfully completed on time and within budget.
- The project clearly promotes environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural production.

3. Project Management:

- Timeline and milestones are clear and reasonable.
- Project has sufficient staff with the necessary technical expertise to successfully accomplish the objectives and timeframes of the project.
- Budget is adequately explained and justified.
- The proposal includes a proposed schedule of deliverables with a corresponding schedule of payments.
- Experience and capacity to partner with and gain the support of other organizations, institutions and agencies.

- Percentage that project leverages non-Federal matching funds above the required 50 percent (degree to which non-Federal matching funds are leveraged).

4. Transferability:

- Potential for producers and landowners to use the innovative technology or technologies.
- Project has a direct relationship to an NRCS Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) in addressing a resource concern.
- Potential to transfer the approach or technology nationally or to a broader audience or other geographic or socio-economic areas, including limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved producers and communities.
- Potential for NRCS to successfully use the innovative approach or methods.
- Project will result in the development of technical or related technology transfer materials (technical standards, technical notes, guide sheets, handbooks, software, etc.)

C. ANTICIPATED ANNOUNCEMENT AND AWARD DATES

CIG Awards are anticipated to be announced by July 13, 2012. Funds are not awarded until an agreement is signed by both NRCS and the grantee. All agreements are expected to be awarded on or before August 31, 2012 with work commencing in September 2012.

VI. AWARD INFORMATION AND ADMINISTRATION

A. AWARD NOTIFICATION

Applicants who have been selected for funding pending environmental review will receive a letter of official notification from the NRCS Oregon State Office. Upon notification of selection, the applicant should contact the NRCS Environmental Liaison in order to determine the scope and level of NEPA documentation required for the project. The environmental documentation prepared to meet NEPA requirements must be prepared prior to award of grant funds. The official notice will also indicate the need to work with the administrative contact to develop an agreement prior to starting work on the project. Applicants who are not selected will be notified by official letter.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Project proponents that are selected to receive grant funding will need to work with the NRCS Program Contact and NRCS Environmental Liaison concerning what documentation will need to be prepared for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NRCS regulations. **Selected applicants may be required to prepare and/or pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document if an Environmental Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Statement is needed. Grant funds cannot be awarded until the environmental review requirements demonstrating compliance with NEPA are met.** For additional assistance please contact Oregon's Environmental Liaison, Jim Regan-Vienop (503) 414-3209; jim.reganvienop@or.usda.gov

C. GRANT AGREEMENT

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), through NRCS, will use a grant agreement with selected applicants to document participation in the Oregon CIG program. The grant agreement will include:

- Project purpose;

- Project objectives;
- Project schedule of deliverables, schedule of payment;
- Final project plan listing cooperators in the project and identifying the grant applicant and project manager;
- Project timelines and expected project completion date;
- Project progress and budget reporting requirements;
- Award amount and budget information;
- Information regarding requests for advance of funds or reimbursement;
- Role of NRCS technical oversight in the project;
- Reporting requirements including attendance and presentation to the Oregon Technical Advisory Committee during the period of the grant;
- Changes in project plans;
- Other requirements and terms deemed necessary by the CCC to protect the interests of the United States.

D. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantees receiving an advance of Federal funds of more than \$25,000 are required to submit a SF-272 (Report of Federal Cash Transactions) and, when necessary, the continuation sheet, SF-272-A, no later than 15 days following the end of each quarter or 90 days after project completion. These reports are used to monitor cash advanced to recipients and to obtain disbursement and outlay information for each award.

Grantees must submit a Federal Financial Report (SF-425) no later than 30 days after the end of each quarter and 90 days after completion of project. The SF-272 and SF-425 are available at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/InfoForGrantees.html>.

In addition, the grantee must submit a written performance progress report to the NRCS program contact and the NRCS technical contact every 6 months. This report is distinct from the quarterly financial report described above. Each progress report shall cover work performed during the previous 6-month period, including any funded or unfunded time extensions, a comparison of actual accomplishments to project goals, and a statement of work projected to be completed in the next 6-month period.

The grantee is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully implement and complete the project. NRCS will designate a Program Contact, an Administrative Contact, and a Technical Contact to provide oversight for each project receiving an award. These individuals will have technical oversight responsibility for the project.

To satisfy the requirements of EQIP (7 CFR 1466) compliance measures, the grantee is required to submit as a component of the semi-annual progress report:

1. A list of producers, identified by name and social security number, of all EQIP-eligible producers or entities involved in the project;
2. The dollar amount of direct and indirect payment made to each individual producer or entity for any structural, vegetative, or management practices. Both quarterly and cumulative payment amounts must be submitted; and
3. A self-certification indicating that each individual or entity receiving a direct or indirect payment through this grant is in compliance with the EQIP Payment Limitation, AGI, HEL, and Wetlands Conservation Compliance Farm Bill provisions.

A progress report template will be provided to grantees by the NRCS program contact. This template is available on the NRCS CIG website at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/InfoForGrantees.html>.

The grantee must send copies of each semi-annual progress report to these NRCS contacts, and comply with any requests for information from these individuals. NRCS recommends that the grantee work closely with these subject matter experts throughout the course of the project.

Upon passage of the completion date of the project, a final report must be submitted within 90 days detailing project activities, funding received, funding expended, results, and potential for transferability of results. The final report should address completion of the project deliverables listed in the grant agreement.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

CIG Program Contacts:

Todd M. Peplin
Oregon CIG Program Manager
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 900
Portland, OR. 97232
Phone: (541) 923-4358 ext 131
(503) 414-3292
E-mail: todd.peplin@or.usda.gov

CIG Administrative Contact:

Chris Martin
Contracting Officer
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 900
Portland, OR. 97232
Phone: (503) 414-3213
Fax: (503) 414-3201
E-mail: chris.martin@or.usda.gov

Additional information about CIG is available through the CIG webpage:
www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/

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