

**Frequently Asked Questions:**  
**Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects Funding Opportunity**  
**Updated April 2023**

**Applicant Eligibility**

***Can private landowners apply as Category A Applicants?***

- Individuals are not eligible applicants under the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program.

***Can a Category A entity propose a project involving land and infrastructure that is privately owned?***

- Category A applicants may apply for funding for a project involving land or facilities owned under any jurisdictional authority (private, public, Federal, etc.) if they have permission.

***Why are applicants in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico not eligible to apply for funding through the Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Program?***

- The authorizing legislation for the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program limits eligibility to projects that are located within a Reclamation State, as defined in the 1902 Reclamation Act (Act), as amended, including: the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, as well as the insular areas of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the US Virgin Islands.

***Can a Conservation District apply as a Category A entity? Do Conservation Districts qualify as Category A partners for Category B non-profit applicants?***

- Conservation districts are eligible Category A applicants. Non-profit conservation organizations may partner with a Conservation District if the project includes land or facility(ies) owned by the district.

**Project Siting/ Location**

***Is a project that covers land owned by multiple parties eligible for funding? For example, a project that includes land owned by individuals, municipalities, and the Federal government.***

- Projects may include land or facilities owned by more than one entity, provided that the applicant has permission from all applicable owners.

***Can a WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration project be located on Federal land?***

- Category A and B applicants may apply to fund a project that occurs entirely on Federal land or facilities. In this circumstance, the Federal Agency may serve as the Category A partner. Federal agencies may not apply for funding on their own.

***Does a proposal have to address conditions in a watershed with a USBR project (e.g., reservoir)?***

- Proposals may address conditions in any watershed(s) located in the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming, as well as the insular areas of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the US Virgin Islands.

***Are projects in tidal marshes eligible for funding?***

- “Aquatic ecosystem” refers to freshwater and brackish water habitats such as lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, wetlands, swamps, and estuaries and the adjacent floodplains, riparian corridors, deltas, and shallow aquifers that interact with surface water.

**Eligible Costs or Project Components**

***Are environmental compliance and permitting costs eligible under Task A or Task B?***

- Under Task A: Study and Design, applicants may conduct research on permitting and potential environmental compliance requirements regarding the project; however, the costs to obtain permits or conduct environmental or cultural compliance activities are not eligible project costs.
- The cost of permits and environmental and cultural compliance are eligible project costs under Task B: Construction.

***Are water purchases eligible under Task B if they improve water availability for aquatic species?***

- Water purchases or leases are not eligible project activities; therefore the costs are not eligible for funding nor can they be used as non-Federal cost share.

***Can projects include monitoring as a component of a Task A: Study and Design project?***

- Monitoring activities that are necessary for the completion of the Task A: Study and Design activities being funded can be included.

***Can Task B: Construction projects include post-construction monitoring activities?***

- Task B: Construction projects may include initial post-construction monitoring for a period of up to six months for the purpose of assessing project success and outcomes. However, the costs for these activities shall not exceed 25 percent of the total project cost. Monitoring activities that occur after this initial six-month period are ineligible and are the responsibility of the applicant.

***Does ecosystem restoration need to be the primary purpose of the project?***

- Improvement or protection of the health of an aquatic ecosystem should be the primary purpose of a project. Complimentary societal, economic, or infrastructural benefits may be included and will receive some consideration under the criteria, but the criteria focus primarily on the ecosystem benefits the project will produce.

***Is suppression of non-native fish an eligible project activity?***

- If necessary for the improvement or protection of the health of an aquatic ecosystem, non-native fish suppression actions are eligible for funding. Similar to other activities to remove

vegetative invasive species, a project will score more favorably if it includes actions to address the root cause of an invasive species outbreak, prevent re-infestation, or other complimentary restoration actions.

### **Application Questions**

***Is the authorized person referred to in Block 22 of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standard Form No. 424 (SF-424), Application for Federal Assistance, required to be the same person as the authorized SAM agent, or the person who is generally authorized to sign agreements for the applicant?***

- The SF-424 must be signed by a person that is authorized by their organization to sign agreements, applications, or other documents that bind the organization. This person does not need to be the Authorized Organization Representative identified in their SAM registration.

***Can you combine a Task A: Study and Design project with a Task B: Construction project in a single application?***

- A Task A project and a Task B project cannot be included in the same application. You may submit separate applications for each project if they meet the minimum funding request limitations.

***Is the Technical Proposal referred to in Section D.2.2.2., pg. 23, of the Notice of Funding Opportunity the same thing as the Project Narrative to be attached to the Project Narrative Attachment Form version 1.2?***

- With respect to the mandatory application content, the Technical Proposal is the “Project Narrative” referenced on the Grants.gov Project Narrative attachment form. You must use the Project Narrative attachment form to upload the Technical Proposal and can be used to upload any other items such as Letters of Support. The required Budget Narrative must be uploaded using the Grants.gov Budget Narrative Attachment form.

***Will this funding opportunity be offered again later this year or next year?***

- A 2024 WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects funding opportunity is anticipated to be posted in Winter/Spring 2024.