

Cooperative Watershed Management Program Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria portion of your application should thoroughly address each of the following criteria and sub-criteria in the order presented to assist in the complete and accurate evaluation of your proposal (Note: it is suggested that applicants copy and paste the below criterion and sub-criterion into their application to ensure that all necessary information is adequately addressed). **Applications will be evaluated against the Evaluation Criteria (listed below), which comprise 100 points of the total evaluation weight.** Please note that proposals submitted under Tasks A and B will be independently evaluated using the same funding criteria. Proposals may be prioritized to ensure balance among the program Task Areas and to ensure that the proposed activities address the goals of the WaterSMART program. For examples of successful proposals from the fiscal years (FY) 2012-2014, please visit the CWMP website at www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/cwmp/index.html. The following evaluation criteria are compiled from the FY 2016 funding opportunity announcement (FOA).

Evaluation Criterion A: Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope (30 points)

Up to **30 points** may be awarded for this criterion. Sub-criteria are listed in descending order of importance.

Proposals demonstrating that the new or existing watershed group will represent the maximum diversity of interests, including representatives of the different sectors that exist within the watershed (e.g., hydropower production, livestock grazing, state and tribal governments) (see: Section I.B. of the FY 2016 FOA), will receive the highest priority consideration under this criterion. For example, in previous selection processes for this program, successful applicants targeted a diverse array of stakeholders that included farmers, irrigators, tourist and recreation groups, environmental organizations, local universities, and local governments.

Priority will also be given to those proposals that target stakeholders and project concepts for small to medium sub-basin sized watersheds with an approximate 8-digit hydrological unit code, as defined by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) <<http://water.usgs.gov/GIS/huc.html>>, and which represent the full extent of the watershed.

Sub-criterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity

Points shall be awarded to proposals based on the extent to which they encourage collaboration with a diverse array of stakeholders across the watershed.

Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: Please describe the efforts that you will undertake to ensure that the new watershed group will include a diverse array of stakeholders, including outreach to stakeholders or collaborating with other groups or partners. In responding to this sub-criterion, please include:

- A description of the affected stakeholders within the watershed that could potentially be involved in the watershed group's activities.

- If the watershed itself does not include a diverse set of interests and sectors, please provide an explanation of this also (e.g., some watersheds may not include affected stakeholders in all of the sectors identified in the definition of a “watershed group” provided in Section I.B. of the FY 2016 FOA).
- A description of the affected stakeholders within the watershed that support the formation of the proposed watershed group. Reference any letters of support or pledges/donations from stakeholders within the watershed supporting the establishment of the watershed group in support of this sub-criterion.
- Details on how you plan to target potential stakeholders to ensure that your group will represent a diverse set of affected stakeholders within the watershed, such as engaging in outreach to include new members or collaborating with different groups or partners (e.g., outreach or partnership activities, public meetings, newsletters, marketing materials, or recruitment of new members).
- Any other support demonstrating that the watershed group will include a diverse membership.

Task B—Further Development of an Existing Watershed Group: Please describe the current membership of the watershed group and explain whether the group is already diverse. If the group is not as diverse as it could be, please explain any planned efforts to expand the diversity of the group. In responding to this sub-criterion, please include:

- An explanation of the current membership of the watershed group and whether the current membership is representative of the affected stakeholders within the watershed. In other words, if the watershed group is already diverse, please provide support demonstrating the diversity of the group.
- If the watershed itself does not include a diverse set of interests and sectors, please provide an explanation of this also (e.g., some watersheds may not include affected stakeholders in all of the sectors identified in the definition of a “watershed group” provided in Section I.B. of the FY 2016 FOA).
- If there are plans to expand the watershed group, please provide a description of the affected stakeholders that will be targeted for incorporation into the group.
- Description of any efforts that you will undertake to increase the diversity of the watershed group and to inform stakeholders about the efforts of the watershed group, such as engaging in outreach to include new members or collaborating with different groups or partners (e.g., outreach or partnership activities, public meetings, newsletters, marketing materials, or recruitment of new members).
- Any other support demonstrating that the watershed group does or will include a diverse membership, representative of the interests and sectors existing within the watershed.

Sub-criterion No. A2. Geographic Scope

Under this sub-criterion, higher priority will be given to proposed or existing watershed groups representing the full geographic extent of the watershed. Applicants will receive points based on the extent to which they intend to do work across the entire extent of the watershed.

In addition, proposals that target small to medium sub-basin sized watersheds with an approximate 8-digit hydrological unit code, as defined by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) <<http://water.usgs.gov/GIS/huc.html>>, will be given priority over large or very small watersheds.

Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: Please provide the following information in response to this sub-criterion:

- Describe the extent to which the planned membership of the watershed group will represent the full geographic scope of the watershed.
- Provide a map illustrating the geographic boundaries of the watershed. If possible, the map should also identify the location or boundaries of entities that will be targeted as members of the watershed group. *If a map cannot be provided, please describe the geographic scope of the watershed to the best of your knowledge.*
- Describe the efforts that you will undertake to ensure that the new watershed group will target stakeholders that represent the full geographic scope of the watershed.

Task B—Further Development of an Existing Watershed Group: Please provide the following information in response to this sub-criterion:

- Describe the extent to which the existing watershed group already represents the full geographic scope of the watershed.
- Provide a map illustrating the geographic boundaries of the watershed and the boundaries of the existing watershed group. *If a map cannot be provided, please describe the geographic scope to the best of your knowledge.*
- Describe any efforts that you will undertake to expand the geographic scope of the watershed group, such as engaging in outreach to include new members with the full geographic scope of the watershed.

Evaluation Criterion B: Addressing Critical Watershed Needs (30 points)

Up to **30 points** may be awarded to proposals demonstrating that there are critical issues or needs within the watershed that can be addressed by the new or existing watershed group. Sub-criteria are not in descending order of importance; each sub-criterion will be worth up to 15 points.

Sub-criterion No. B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

Please describe in detail the critical issues or needs occurring within the watershed including, for example: declining ecological resiliency, water shortages, flooding, structural impairments, water quality issues (e.g., addressing Total Maximum Daily Loads, or targeting high priority activities in your state's "Measure W" watersheds), endangered species issues, conflicts over water supply, and other related issues faced by affected stakeholders. Endangered species issues may focus on, but are not limited to, activities prioritized by resource agencies such as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-NMFS) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and appropriate state natural resource agencies.

Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: For new watershed groups, applicants should consider contacting Federal, State, and local agencies; non-governmental organizations; and other affected stakeholders to discuss what critical issues are affecting the watershed.

Task B—Further Development of an Existing Watershed Group: For existing watershed groups, please describe in detail the critical issues or needs existing within the watershed, and if applicable, how the issues and needs have change or evolved since the formation of the group.

Subcriterion No. B2. Watershed Group Contributions that Address Watershed Needs or Issues

Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: For new watershed groups, please describe in detail how the group plans to positively contribute to the management of the watershed issues or needs. For example, in prior years, successful applicants discussed how they plan to gather information about water management issues critical to the watershed, how they would develop a watershed plan and project concepts to address those issues, and planned outreach to stakeholders to contribute towards addressing watershed issues. In responding to this sub-criterion, please:

- Explain how the watershed group will address critical issues and needs within the watershed
- Discuss how the new watershed group will enhance collaboration between stakeholders in addressing critical issues

Task B—Further Development of an Existing Watershed Group: Please describe in detail how the watershed group plans to continue or expand upon existing efforts to contribute towards improved management of the watershed. In responding to this sub-criterion, please:

- Describe how the watershed group will address critical issues or needs within the watershed

- Include a description of accomplishments by the watershed group to date in addressing critical issues or needs, and how the watershed group will build on these accomplishments through the activities proposed here
- In addition, please describe how the watershed group plans to enhance collaboration between existing stakeholder in addressing critical issues

Evaluation Criterion C: Implementation and Results (30 Points)

Up to **30 points** may be awarded to proposals based on the extent to which the proposal demonstrates that the applicant understands program requirements, is able to implement planned activities within the required two year time frame, and the extent to which the proposed activities will complement existing Federal, State or Regional planning efforts. Sub-criteria are in descending order of importance.

Subcriterion No. C1. Understanding of and Ability to Meet Program Requirements

Task A—Establishing a Watershed Group and Task B—Further Developing an Existing Watershed Group: Applicants should describe their plan for implementing the proposed scope of work. Please include:

- An estimated schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, costs, and dates (e.g., major milestones should include meeting program requirements, including the development of a mission statement, watershed restoration plan, bylaws and articles of incorporation, and the development of project concepts). Applicants may refer back to their Technical Proposal if this information is provided there and do not need to provide duplicate information in addressing this criterion if it exists elsewhere in the applicant's proposal.
- If cost share is provided, please demonstrate the level of readiness for in-kind and/or cash contributions.
- Please provide a specific discussion of any problems or major difficulties anticipated in performing or accomplishing the work.
- Describe any previous work or activities (e.g., collaborative efforts, studies, or projects) that relate to implementing the proposed scope of work.

Subcriterion No. C2. Building on Relevant Federal, State, or Regional Planning Efforts

Please describe how the proposed activities of the watershed group will complement or meet the goals of applicable Federal, State or regional water plans. Such plans may include but are not limited to:

- Water conservation plans

- Drought contingency plans
- Plans that meet the criteria identified in the U.S Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Nonpoint Source Management Program
- Plans that meet the EPA's criteria for Watershed-Based Plans
- Or other relevant plans or planning efforts

Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: New watershed groups should describe how the proposed activities of the watershed group will complement or meet the goals of applicable Federal, State or regional water plans. Reclamation suggests that new watershed groups contact Federal, State, or local agencies in your area to identify existing goals and plans relevant to the proposed establishment of a watershed group. Please reference any relevant plans, but do not include these plans as part of this application.

Task B—Further Development of an Existing Watershed Group: Existing watershed groups should demonstrate how existing plans developed at the Federal, State or regional levels are currently being used within the watershed group, and how existing plans will be used to conduct new activities as part of this proposal. Please reference any relevant plans that you will make contributions toward, but do not include plans as part of this application.

Evaluation Criterion D: Building Resilience to Drought (10 points)

Up to **10 points** may be awarded based on the extent to which the watershed group's activities will build resilience to drought.

Task A—Establishing a Watershed Group and Task B—Further Development of an Existing Watershed Group.

- Please describe the extent to which the watershed is suffering or has recently suffered from drought, including: (1) the time period and longevity of the conditions, and (2) any specific impacts (economic losses, public health concerns, impacts to ecological resiliency, etc.). Please provide support for this response (e.g., Drought Monitor, <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>, or references to reports regarding drought impacts).
- Please describe how the watershed group's activities will help build resilience to drought. This could include analysis of potential drought impacts in developing the watershed management plan, or consideration of projects to build drought resilience in the development of project concepts.