

Fiscal Year 2017 Call-for-Projects
Environmental Mitigation Program Land Management Grants
Pre-Proposal Workshop – April 20, 2016
Q & A

SDMMP and MSP Related Questions

- Will applications with objectives focusing on species not stated in the Management Strategic Plan (MSP) such as non SL¹ or SO¹ species, or species that are stated in the MSP but not highlighted as a priority for the specific sub-region, still be considered for receiving grant money?
 - Applicants that have objectives focusing on habitat conservation for non MSP, species, or MSP species located outside of their recommended management subzones, will still be considered. However, priority will go to those projects that include SL and SO species, specifically occurrences that are highly threatened. Applicants should review the evaluation criteria included in Attachment 1 of the Call for Projects to determine what scoring is available for inclusion of SL and SO species in the grant application.
 - Historically, projects involving non SL or SO species have been funded but the evaluation process is dependent on the quality of applications received for each funding cycle.

- On the San Diego Management and Monitoring Program (SDMMP) Map Viewer, what do the highlighted and outlined areas mean on the map?
 - The SDMMP Map Viewer is a tool available for spatially showing where targeted project areas occur and can be submitted as an attachment to the grant application to show the proposed project's location.
 - This map shows the specific locations and species occurrences of focus stated in the MSP.
 - There is a layer legend on the upper right hand side of the Viewer that identifies what each highlighted, outlined, and colored area means for each region. Information for each highlighted attribute also includes the main objectives for that specific species or region, status of projects focused on those species/areas, and then links to more detailed information such as threats.

- Are applicants required to use the MSP Map Viewer to generate the mapping requirement?
 - Applicants are not required to use this specific viewer. Any GIS mapping software can be used. All of the data layers available in this viewer can be

¹ SL species are those species whose persistence is at the highest risk of loss within the MSP Area without immediate action and SO species are those species whose persistence of one or more significant occurrences is at the highest risk of loss within the MSP Area.

downloaded and used in another mapping tool. Please contact SDMMP GIS Manager Emily Perkins (eperkins@usgs.gov) if you need assistance.

- If information on extant populations is not included in the MSP Map Viewer, can we still submit data and apply for funding?
 - If information on extant populations is not included in the MSP Map Viewer, please notify SANDAG or SDMMP so the database can be updated. Management guidelines are not stated for all MSP species. If an applicant's project refers to one of these species, state that it was not in the MSP Map Viewer when drafting the proposal, and explain what the species is. If it is a plant species, it is recommended to refer to the Master Occurrence Matrix (MOM).
- If you identify a new occurrence of a species that is not included in the summary table of all priority objectives for MSP 2014-2018, how would the evaluation committee determine the priority of the new occurrence?
 - It is the applicant's responsibility to justify the need for the project within the application. The applicant must make the case that the occurrence is present, explain how the project addresses a threat to this particular occurrence, and explain why removal of the threat should be viewed as a high priority.
- Is the Master Occurrence Matrix (MOM) accessible?
 - The MOM is accessible on the reports and products portion of the SDMMP website.
 - http://sdmmp.com/reports_and_products/Reports_Products_MainPage.aspx
- What are the "inspect and manage" objectives listed in the summary table of priority objectives for MSP 2014-2018, on the SDMMP website? Are all objectives listed in this table available for this round of Land Management Grants?
 - For priority species listed in the MSP it is expected that each occurrence of the species will be assessed annually to identify potential threats to the population. This funding is not available for this inspection, however if during your evaluation a threat is identified, you may use this grant funding to manage the threat.
 - The objectives specified in the table as "available for implementation" are all available for this round of Land Management Grant funding. The table can be found on the SDMMP website or by clicking [here](#) (view and download the summary table of all priority objectives for MSP 2014-2018). Although your application does not have to include one of the actions listed in this table, it can be a great tool to use to begin developing project ideas that you wish to apply for. If applicants have specific questions regarding an occurrence or objective, they should contact Yvonne Moore or Kristine Preston at SDMMP (evemoore99@gmail.com, kpreston@usgs.gov).

Grant Application Questions

- Can a grant application have several different objectives or occur in different regions for the same project?
 - Proposed projects can include a range of objectives and can occur in different regions for the same project, but it is important to break up each objective or location into discrete tasks with quantifiable results.
 - Remember that the evaluation committee may recommend partial funding and it will be easier for the committee to award partial funding if the project can be broken into discrete tasks with individual deliverables.
 - For example, if the project included similar activities to be conducted at multiple sites (such as weed control), to avoid having to submit multiple applications, it would be best to include all sites in a single project with each site treated as an individual task. The applicant should phase these tasks and prioritize them in the event that full funding is not available.
 - Applicants should be aware that the notice to proceed is expected to be issued (Winter 2016-2017) and structure project components and timelines accordingly.

- If an applicant has several different goals, is it better to apply to the grant as one project with several objectives or as several small projects with more focused objectives?
 - The project proposal should be made with a main task in mind, as a primary project category is required. Use the task that will provide the best opportunity for receiving the grant. If an applicant has three projects that are different but all align with priorities in the MSP, the applicant should apply for three grants. The submittal of multiple applications from the same organization is allowed.

- Can an agency/organization submit multiple applications for different projects in either grant category or in both?
 - Prospective applicants are welcome to submit as many applications for projects and funding as they would like but it is important to note that if the organization is awarded funding for multiple projects they must be able to complete those projects.

- What is the maximum duration that a project can receive funding from the grant?
 - Projects in the Threat Reduction Stewardship category can receive funding for up to 18 months and projects in the Species and Habitat Recovery category can receive funding for up to 5 years.
 - The EMPWG ADHOC Committee that reviewed and updated this cycle's call for projects determined that applicants can propose as many years as they feel are appropriate for the completion of the proposed project (within the limits outlined in the bullet above). This is useful for weather and rainfall

- dependent projects, and the applicant's grant proposal should help justify why the proposed timeframe was selected.
- It is suggested that applicants applying for funding in the Species and Habitat Recovery category phase their scope of work in a manner that, if necessary, would allow the Evaluation Committee to omit years. It is possible to request four to five years for a proposed project but only be recommended by the Evaluation Committee for funding for the first three years.
 - It is important to note that if the proposed project does not receive full funding, this does not mean that the project will receive funding in the future from the EMP Land Management Grant Program for the "remainder" of the proposed project that was not funded. This grant program is a competitive process and each cycle has its discrete application form, requirements, and evaluation criteria which all grant proposals submitted for that cycle are reviewed against.
- Initial Land Management Grants allowed for projects that were longer-term (up to 10 years) but the most recent grants are requiring that shorter projects are submitted. Can you explain this change in the grant program?
 - The change has been based on a number of factors and things that SANDAG has learned after awarding these contracts over the past 10 years. As projects get larger and more complex, it is more difficult for organizations with limited resources to remain within the scope of their original agreement. Emphasizing smaller projects increases the probability that the project will be completed and will remain within budget and on time.
 - When drafting the grant application, how should tasks that are extremely weather dependent and therefore hard to predict when they could occur, be reflected in the proposed budget?
 - It is recommended to keep that objective in one task and spread its expected budget out evenly over several years.
 - If the task is unable to occur in the first year stated, the unspent budget for that task will roll over and add to the budget stated for the following year. This will help prevent the need for an amendment (required for requests for shifting of the budget between tasks that is more than 10 percent of the total project budget).
 - The Proposed Project Schedule (Exhibit C) requires the proposed start date, months needed to complete the task, and the task end date. The proposed start date is the number of months after the Notice to Proceed (NTP), but the task end date is definite. Do these time schedules need to align?
 - Proposing the schedule using this format allows the applicant to state how many months are required to accomplish each task. Therefore, if the proposed start date gets pushed back, the task end date can be altered to allow for the stated months needed to complete the task without causing issues in the contracting process. It is recommended to allot more time than

might be necessary for the task to build flexibility into the scope of work to account for unexpected delays.

Matching Funds and Indirect Cost Questions

- How do matching funds get submitted when they come from the applicant's own organization and how should the applicant count volunteer hours?
 - Matching funds need to be submitted and tracked even when they come from the grant recipient's own organization. This can be accomplished by submitting the staff rate and number of hours worked. If volunteer hours are being calculated as matching funds, it is the responsibility of the grantee to track volunteer hours. This can be done using sign in sheets that specify the number of hours worked. Some organizations have had success using programs tracking programs such as Volgistics, however there is often a fee associated with these programs.
 - If volunteer hours are being calculated as matching funds, the grantee must determine the hourly rate of the volunteers to be used. There is no federal rate for volunteer services. Organizations that already have employees performing these activities may use their own rate of pay. If you do not have employees in a similar position, you may use the amount that would be paid for the activity in your location. Assistance in determining the value of volunteer services and other salaries is available using the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics Program. The program's web address is <http://www.bls.gov/oes/> . Please refer to IRS publication 4671 for more information.
 - On the application, the applicant would state the total number of hours and amount of matching funds that the applying organization will provide under the matching funds question and list accordingly under the proposed budget (Exhibit B).
- Is there any difference if matching funds are submitted by a certain source, such as non-profit versus local government?
 - The source of matching funds does not make any difference with respect to receiving funding.
 - The only aspect that is required is no "double dipping," where the proposed matching funds must only be used to complete this proposed project.
 - Federal matching funds may have their own reporting mechanisms separate from SANDAG.
- When the applicant's own organization will be providing the proposed matching funds, is a letter confirming commitment of the matching funds required as part of the application?
 - Yes, a letter confirming commitment of matching funds must be included in the application materials when the source is from the applicant's own organization. The total hours and proposed dollar amount must also be included.

- Does the letter confirming commitment of matching funds count toward the application page maximum?
 - No.
- At what date do matching funds start getting counted?
 - Matching funds can start being counted from the Notice to Proceed. Matching funds will not be counted before this date.
 - Very few exceptions can be made for this rule.
- For a current ongoing project that has received alternate funding, can available funds from this project count for this grant program's matching funds?
 - Matching funds can only be counted from the project's Notice to Proceed for objectives that have the same tasks for this proposed project as the ongoing project. For example, if an organization has a site that they have been restoring and has funds available, those unused funds can be counted as matching funds for this proposed grant project. However, the grantee also would have to provide backup to prove that those matching funds were spent after Notice to Proceed (date of invoice from subcontractors, payroll of staff, etc.) and were used to implement tasks within the project's scope of work.
- Can you include matching funds in your application that you anticipate to receive, such as Prop 1 funding?
 - Yes you can include matching funds that you anticipate receiving in your grant application however the funds must be secured prior to the Notice to Proceed (NTP) date. If a grant is submitted with matching funds and the applicant does not get approved for those funds, they are still responsible for contributing the level of match that was specified in the grant agreement.
- Do indirect costs need to be approved prior to submitting the grant application?
 - Indirect costs do not need to be approved prior to the submission of a grant application. Instead, the applicant's indirect cost methodology must be submitted as part of the grant proposal submission. Applicants will be notified if their project is approved and if their indirect costs have been accepted.
 - For calculation of overhead costs, there is a link in the application to the OMB website (pg. 2 footnote) that applicants can use to help determine indirect costs. However, agencies typically already have these rates established and applicants are advised to coordinate internally.
- Is there a maximum allowable proportion of indirect costs to the total project cost?
 - There is not a maximum proportion of the total project cost that can be designated as indirect costs.

Resolution Questions

- What does the resolution approve and why is it necessary?
 - The submission of a resolution confirms that the authorizing entity of the applicant's organization agrees and approves the submittal of the application,

including the capacity and ability to complete the proposed project and provide the proposed matching funds.

- When is the resolution due?
 - The resolution is expected to be due in September 2016 for those projects that are being recommended for funding. Applicants will be notified in advance of the need for the resolution.

Project Deliverables, Tracking, Invoicing Questions

- Do project deliverables need to be submitted in a particular format?
 - The type of deliverable is dependent on the specific project or work that is being accomplished. Deliverables allow SANDAG to track the project throughout the course of its execution, not just at the end.
 - Project deliverables need to be in a format that is compatible with SDMMP's database.
 - Quarterly reports and final reports should be submitted to SANDAG in either MS Word or PDF Format.
 - If the proposed Scope of Work includes data such as spreadsheets with hard data, reports, or shape files for GIS mapping use, these would not only be submitted to SANDAG, but also would need to be uploaded to the SDMMP website.
 - One method of tracking the project is by using and updating the Multi-Taxa Database located on the SDMMP website. Digitalized deliverables can be uploaded to the site. Metadata, data with descriptions as to why and how that data was collected, with correlating reports, must be compatible with the SDMMP guidelines which are located on SDMMP website.
 - For any questions concerning data formats compatible with SDMMP, please contact Yvonne Moore or Emily Perkins (evemoore99@gmail.com; eperkins@usgs.gov).
- How does SANDAG track the progress of projects and verify the actions that grant recipients claim are being accomplished? For example, will SANDAG have someone come into the field and observe the activities?
 - Field audits could be conducted if quarterly reports indicate that the project is behind schedule or not meeting its stated goals.
 - Quarterly reports for each task containing photos are the main method of tracking the progress of the project. It is best to be very specific about activities conducted in the deliverables, and the correlating quarterly invoices submitted add proof that those activities are being executed.
- What information should be included in the quarterly reports?
 - Quarterly reports should follow the SANDAG template that will be sent to grantees after the NTP is issued. Take photos and include them into the report for visual evidence. These accomplishments will be compared against the submitted invoices for that time period. These reports are what prove the project is being accomplished and allow SANDAG to follow the progress.

- Should bank statements be submitted with billing materials as backup?
 - Receipts or invoices from purchases made for the project are the preferred form of backup materials. This allows SANDAG to verify the purchase amount, the vendor that was used, and it typically provides an itemized listing of what the funds were used for.
- How quickly can applicants expect payment to be processed after submitting invoicing materials?
 - Payment will be released within one month of SANDAG receiving all correct and required deliverables and billing materials. If there are errors in your billing materials or deliverables, we will ask that you correct them prior to processing your invoice.
- The State of California has changed the retention amount required in contracts from 10% to 5%. Will this change be reflected in this round of Land Management Grant funding?
 - For this contract, the percent retention has been worked out as 10%.

Insurance Questions

- Does SANDAG need to be added as additionally insured and are the details regarding the insurance requirements available?
 - Yes, SANDAG must be named as an additional insured. Please refer to Section 16 of the sample grant agreement for specific insurance requirements. The sample grant agreement is included as Attachment 4 in the Call for Projects.

Miscellaneous Questions

- Can projects include, and do they require a monitoring component?
 - This grant funding is available for management activities so the outcome of the project must be a management action. If a monitoring component is necessary for the management outcome then it can be included in the project's scope but applicants must make this connection. Projects do not require a monitoring component to be considered for funding.
- Is there still funding available for enforcement activities?
 - This grant funding is for management activities but it can be used for enforcement activities if the applicant successfully identifies how the enforcement action can help to reduce a threat to the species or occurrence. There is also separate funding allocated specifically to enforcement efforts built-in to the EMP two year work plan.
- The city is backlogged trying to get right of entry permits (ROE's) approved. Is a letter from the City stating that they are processing the applicant's ROE permit sufficient?

- Yes, a copy of the letter or email confirming processing is sufficient as long as the permit will be issued in time for the start date agreed upon in your contract.
- Can grant funding be used to purchase equipment and if so, does the applicant retain the piece of equipment for future use?
 - Yes, funding can be used to purchase equipment required for completion of the proposed project. Following completion, the equipment is typically returned to SANDAG however agreements for ownership have been worked out in the past. This should be discussed with SANDAG staff on a case by case basis.
- If the evaluation committee needs to contact an applicant and the applicant is out of town, will they be passed over for funding?
 - If an applicant anticipates that they will be unavailable for an extended period of time following application submittal, we ask that they designate someone else within their organization as the committee's point of contact and notify SANDAG personnel of the situation.
- Can applicants contact SANDAG with questions regarding specific projects or management activities before submitting their application?
 - SANDAG staff is unable to comment on specific proposals or projects. Applicants should direct the MSP-related questions to Yvonne Moore and Kristine Preston of SDMMP (evemoore99@gmail.com, kpreston@usgs.gov). They will also be able to help applicants navigate the tools available on the SDMMP website that specify management needs for MSP species.
- Have captive breeding programs ever been funded through the Land Management Grant program?
 - Historically, captive breeding programs have not been funded by this grant program, but other federal and state funding sources have funded captive breeding efforts.
- Will an electronic signature suffice for a submitted application?
 - You can use an electronic signature to sign the application sent via email, but a wet signature is still required on the hard copy of the application. It is important to remember that a signed emailed copy and a signed hard copy must be submitted by the 4:00pm deadline on June 10th, 2016, for the application to be considered for this cycle of Land Management Grants.