



SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN

DELTA CONSERVANCY

A California State Agency

GENERAL GRANT GUIDELINES

July 24, 2024

A. Introduction

A1. Background

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Conservancy) is a primary state agency in the implementation of ecosystem restoration in the Delta and supports efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents. The Conservancy works collaboratively and in coordination with local communities, leading efforts to protect, enhance, and restore the Delta's economy, agriculture and working landscapes, and environment, for the benefit of the Delta region, its local communities, and the citizens of California.

A2. Purpose of Grant Guidelines

These General Grant Guidelines (General Guidelines) establish the process and criteria that the Conservancy uses to administer grants for which individual grant-specific guidelines have not been adopted. Each grant provided by the Conservancy will specify the governing grant guidelines. More information can be found at: <http://deltaconservancy.ca.gov/grant-program/>.

A3. Contact Information

More information is available on the Conservancy's website at www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov. For questions or assistance, please contact the Delta Conservancy at (916) 375-2084 or contact@deltaconservancy.ca.gov.

B. What the Conservancy Will Consider Funding

The Delta Conservancy supports efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents, in accordance with statewide priorities. The Conservancy will not fund activities associated with regulatory compliance responsibilities. The Conservancy may limit any funding opportunity to one or more of the following activities that further the Conservancy's mission.

1. Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration.
2. Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes.
3. Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation in the Delta.
4. Promote Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission.
5. Mitigate the impacts of climate change and increase climate change resilience.

6. Increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission.
7. Protect and improve water quality.
8. Assist the Delta regional economy through the operation of the conservancy's program.
9. Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed.
10. Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources.
11. Assist local entities in the implementation of their habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans.
12. Promote environmental education.

B1. Activity Types

The Conservancy may grant funds for the following types of activities.

Planning

Planning includes activities that prepare for and enable implementation activities. Receipt of a grant for planning activities does not guarantee that a grant will be provided for implementation activities.

Examples of planning activities include, but are not limited to:

- **Project scoping:** Partnership development, outreach to impacted parties, stakeholder coordination, negotiation of site access and land tenure
- **Planning and design:** Engineering design, planting plans, identifying appropriate best management practices
- **Environmental compliance:** Permitting, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) activities, Delta Plan consistency
- **Science:** Developing adaptive management and monitoring plans, baseline monitoring, biological surveys, and studies that will aid and inform the implementation activities

Pilot Projects

Pilot projects must be directly related to and inform eligible implementation activities. Pilot projects that are large in scale or duration may be considered implementation activities. The Conservancy recommends that applicants proposing a pilot project consult with Conservancy to determine the most applicable activity type.

Implementation

Implementation includes activities such as construction or improvement of a capital asset. Planning for implementation must be complete or near completion. Implementation activities that include a construction component must, at a minimum, have design plans completed to at least 65 percent level of development. Implementation activities that do not have a construction component must have completed plans at a level that the Conservancy determines to be appropriate to the activities to be implemented. Implementation activities may include final design and permitting activities. The Conservancy may require that the outputs of implementation specific to capital assets be maintained for a minimum number of years after conclusion of the Grant Funding Term.

CEQA and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance must be completed prior to grant award. CEQA and NEPA-related activities are not eligible for implementation funding.

Land Acquisition or Easement

Land acquisition is purchase of real property. An easement is a real estate ownership right (and encumbrance on the title) granted to an individual or entity to make a limited, but typically indefinite, use of the land of another. Activities that the Conservancy may choose to fund include, but are not limited to purchase, appraisals (including water rights appraisals), negotiation, due diligence, surveys, escrow fees, title insurance, and closing costs.

Research, Analysis, or Support

Research, analysis, and technical support activities provide information, data, and technical or capacity assistance that contributes to the Conservancy's mission, contributes to problem solving, advances best available science, and enables advancement of high priority initiatives. Research, Analysis, and technical assistance activities may or may not relate to specific grant-related planning or implementation activities.

B2. Grant Terms

Grant Funding Term: The period from the Effective Start Date through the Funding End Date listed on the grant agreement during which grantees may incur grant-related expenses. The Funding Term is typically three years.

Grant Term: The period, which may extend beyond the end of the Grant Funding Term, during which the outcomes of implementation activities must be maintained. Acquisitions and easements must comply with the Grant Term outlined in the applicable grant agreement.

For implementation, or land acquisition and easement activities, grantees must submit a final report and invoice at the end of the Grant Funding Term but will be held to the terms of the grant agreement until the end of the Grant Term.

Effective Start Date: The date that the grant agreement has been fully executed which entails being signed by both parties and completion of all noticing and filing required of the Conservancy. The Conservancy will provide grantees written confirmation of the Effective Start Date of their grant.

C. Eligibility Requirements

C1. Eligible Geography

The Conservancy may fund activities within or benefitting the Delta and Suisun Marsh as defined in Public Resources Code section 85058 (a map can be found at this link: <https://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/delta-plan/figure-1-1-delta-boundaries.pdf>).

The Conservancy may fund an action outside the Delta and Suisun Marsh if the Board makes all the findings described in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act of 2009 (CWC, div. 35, §§ 85000 – 85350). Applicants applying for funds for activities outside of the Delta and Suisun Marsh must address the following:

- How the activities implement the ecosystem goals of the Delta Plan.
- How the activities are consistent with the requirements of any applicable state and federal permits.
- How the activities will provide significant benefits to the Delta.

C2. Eligible Grant Recipients:

Grants may be awarded to:

- State agencies
- Local public agencies
- Nonprofit organizations

C3. Ineligible Activities and Expenses

Activities that are not eligible for grant funding include but may not be limited to:

- Design, construction, operation, mitigation, or maintenance of water conveyance facilities.

- Activities dictated by a legal settlement or mandated to address a violation of, or an order (citation) to comply with, a law or regulation.
- Activities that subsidize or decrease the pre-existing mitigation obligations of any party.
- Monetary donations.
- Food or refreshments.
- Fees or expensed related to tours.
- Activities related to eminent domain processes.
- Subsidization or decrease the mitigation obligations of any party.
- Any other activities or expenses that the Conservancy deems inappropriate use of grant funding.

C4. Eligible Expenses

To be eligible for grant funding, activities must be conducted, and expenses must be incurred during the Grant Funding Term. Other than land acquisition costs, grant funding will be paid in arrears on a reimbursement basis. All expenses require supporting documentation and are subject to audit. Funding for all grant-related activities will be dispersed quarterly in arrears for all costs save for the cost of land acquisition, for which funds will be transferred into escrow once all requirements of the Land Acquisition Checklist have been met. Some grant funds may allow for advanced payment of funds rather than reimbursement and payments on a monthly rather than quarterly basis. If reimbursement and quarterly payments are cost prohibitive for your organization, work with Conservancy staff to determine if advanced payments are allowable in your case.

Direct Costs

Direct costs are for work specified in the scope of work, terms, and conditions of the grant agreement, and that are distinctly related to tasks and expenditures to implement activities as described in the grant agreement. The Conservancy will fund direct costs related to personnel services, operating expenses (general), operating expenses (subcontractor), operating expenses (equipment), land acquisition, and land easement costs.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs do not have a specific direct relationship to the project but are required for completion of the grant activities. The Conservancy may elect to include or exclude indirect costs as an eligible expense for a specific funding opportunity.

D. Grant Proposal and Determination Process

Funding opportunities, along with instructions and any application forms and templates specific to each opportunity, will be available through the Conservancy's website.

Grants may be competitive or non-competitive in nature. The Conservancy may define a timeframe in which it accepts proposals or accept proposals on a continuous basis. If a timeframe for proposals is specified, only proposals submitted by the submission deadline will be considered.

The Conservancy will post notice of any public workshop opportunities on its website. For competitive grants, the Conservancy will post responses to questions of universal relevance on its website. The Conservancy Board has final decision-making authority regarding grants and grant funding.

The Conservancy may use a two-step process that consists of a concept proposal and a full proposal or a one-step process that requires only a full proposal. If concept proposals are required, full proposals will only be accepted if a concept proposal was submitted.

D1. Concept Proposal

Step 1: Concept Proposal Submittal: The applicant submits a concise proposal that describes at a high level the proposed activities and budget that will form the basis for a full proposal. Applicants may, and are encouraged to, consult with the Conservancy during the drafting of their concept proposal.

Step 2: Concept Proposal Review: Conservancy staff will review concept proposals and provide feedback to all applicants to aid them in assembling a complete, clear, and responsive full proposal. Concept proposals will not be scored. All applicants will be provided with written feedback regarding their concept proposals, as well as an opportunity to meet with Conservancy staff to discuss feedback. Feedback is provided on aspects such as:

- Description of Activities
- Project Team
- Budget
- Cost Share and/or Cost Leveraging
- Alignment with State Priorities
- Long Term Benefit
- Readiness
- Local Support

- Scientific Merit

D2. Full Proposal

Step 1: The applicant submits a proposal that comprehensively describes the proposed activities, budget, and applicant and others that will conduct activities through the grant. The full proposal provides the information upon which Conservancy staff and external reviewers, if applicable, base their scoring and/or recommendations for Board consideration. Each application must include the required attachments, in the specified file type (Word or Excel), and use the templates that the Conservancy provides. For more information on components of a full proposal, see Proposal Requirements section below.

Step 2: Administrative Review: After the submission deadline, the Conservancy will conduct an administrative review of all full proposals to check for eligibility, consistency with grant requirements, and completeness. Proposals that fail to meet the administrative review requirements may not receive further consideration.

Step 3: Site Visits: Conservancy staff will conduct site visits for all implementation, pilot, and land acquisition or easement grants. At its discretion, the Conservancy may conduct site visits for planning, or research, analysis, and support grants. Applicants may be required to accompany Conservancy staff on site visits. Adjustments will be made in consideration of public health as needed.

Step 4: Full Proposal Evaluation: Full proposals will be evaluated and may be numerically scored by Conservancy staff. As needed to ensure review and evaluation appropriate to the proposed activities, the Conservancy may utilize independent reviewers from state, federal, or local agencies, academia, non-profit organizations, or other entities or individuals with technical or subject matter expertise.

Proposals that do not provide enough information to allow reviewers to adequately evaluate them may not be considered.

Full proposals will be evaluated using criteria, which may or may not include numerical scoring, specific to the funding opportunity; evaluation criteria will be specified for each funding opportunity. The Conservancy may specify a minimum score that must be obtained in order for staff to consider recommending the Board fund the proposal. Achieving the minimum score does not guarantee that the proposal will be recommended for funding, that a grant award will be made, or that an applicant will receive the requested funding. The Conservancy may specify key evaluation criteria, each of which must be deemed adequate by reviewers, regardless of the adequacy of other components of the proposal, to be considered for funding.

D3. Board Consideration

All final determinations regarding grant funding will be made by the Conservancy Board at a public meeting. The Delta Conservancy Executive Officer, with coordination of the Conservancy Board Chair and/or Vice Chair, may award grant funding for projects less than or equal to \$50,000 in time-sensitive situations. Staff recommendations regarding grant funding, and final scores, if applicable, will be posted on the Conservancy's website and shared with all applicants at least nine days in advance of the Board's consideration of grant funding. All applicants and members of the public will have the opportunity to appear before the Board at the public meeting. Any applicant whose proposal was not recommended for funding may contest the recommendations by notifying Conservancy staff in writing by 5:00 p.m. at least five business days prior to the Board meeting at which funding recommendations will be considered. The notification must describe the specific aspects of the staff recommendation that the applicant wishes to contest and provide information relevant to the grant proposal that they wish the Board to consider.

If proposals for a funding opportunity exceed the funds available, the Conservancy may choose to award partial funding to one or more proposals. The Board may also choose to designate for award proposals that were initially denied funding, should additional funding become available. If a proposal does not demonstrate strong local support or a lack of significant conflict from local interests, the Conservancy reserves the right to not fund activities or to require that the conflict is satisfactorily resolved before awarding funding. The Board may, within its discretion, approve a conditional award of funds.

D4. Grant Agreement

If funding for a grant proposal is approved, Conservancy staff will coordinate with the applicant to complete a grant agreement that specifies the scope of work, reporting requirements, specific performance measures, invoicing protocols, funding disbursement, and other terms and conditions of the grant.

E. Proposal Requirements

Required components of all full proposals includes, but are not limited to:

- Financial Management System Questionnaire and Cost Allocation Plan
- Schedule and List of Deliverables
- Line Item Budget by Task
- Justification of Expenses and How Determined to be Fair and Reasonable
- Funding by Source

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

The following attachments are required if relevant to the proposed activities:

- California Conservation Corps Consultation
- Acquisition Table
- Performance Measures Table

The following supplementary materials are required if relevant to the proposed activities:

- Authorization or Resolution to Apply
- Organizational documents
- Acquisition information (see E12. LAND Acquisition~~E12. LAND Acquisition~~ in this document for more information)
- Maps and site plans
- Letter from landowner/water rights holder (if not the applicant)
- Final CEQA documents
- Covered action checklist
- Letters of support and cost share commitment letters
- Resolutions of support from applicable local government agencies

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E1. Conflict of Interest

Applicants are subject to state and federal conflict of interest laws. If an applicant has formerly worked for the Conservancy, presently works with the State of California, or has an existing or previous contract with the Conservancy and is contemplating applying for a grant, the applicant should consult with Conservancy staff to determine eligibility. Applicable statutes include, but are not limited to, Public Contract Code sections 10365.5, 10410, and 10411.

All proposals must identify current and prior relationships of all individuals or entities that will directly or indirectly receive grant funding or be responsible for substantive decision-making responsibility.

E2. Privacy Rights

Once an applicant has submitted a proposal to the Conservancy, any privacy rights, as well as other confidentiality protections afforded by law with respect to the application package, are waived. All proposals are public records under the California Government Code sections 6250-6276.48 and will be provided to the public upon request.

E3. California Conservation Corps

Funding opportunities may require applicants to consult with the California Conservation Corps and the California Association of Local Conservation Corps (Corps) to determine the feasibility of using their services to implement activities unless noted exceptions apply. Planning activities and acquisition activities are generally exempt. If an applicant submits a proposal to the Conservancy for activities for which it has been determined that Corps services can be used, the applicant must identify in the proposal the appropriate Corps and the component(s) of the activities in which they will be involved, and include estimated costs for those services, and enter into a contract with the Corps if awarded a grant. Even if not required, applicants are encouraged to consult with the Corps to explore opportunities for collaboration.

E4. Environmental Compliance

Grant-funded activities must comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Delta Plan, and other environmental permitting requirements. Conservancy staff may be able to assist with the compliance process; however, the applicant is solely responsible for compliance. Applicants should be prepared to submit any permits, surveys, or reports that support the status of their environmental compliance.

For projects subject to CEQA, the Conservancy will not serve as a responsible agency unless there is no other public agency responsible for carrying out or approving the project for which the applicant seeks funding, in which case the Conservancy may serve as the lead agency. If the Conservancy is proposed to act as the lead agency for the project, the applicant must coordinate with the Conservancy, beginning at the concept proposal stage if concept proposals are applicable to the funding opportunity.

For proposed activities that include an action that is likely to be deemed a covered action pursuant to the California Water Code section 85057.5, the applicant is responsible for ensuring consistency with the Delta Plan. The Conservancy encourages all applicants to communicate with the Delta Stewardship Council to understand if their activities will need to certify their consistency with the Delta Plan. For all implementation activities, a covered action checklist must be submitted with the full proposal. For those activities that will need to certify consistency, the proposal shall include a description of how consistency will be achieved and may include in its budget the funding necessary to complete related tasks, including the development of an Adaptive Management Plan. The activities must be certified as consistent with the Delta Plan before funds are disbursed for construction or the physical implementation of the activities. If the Conservancy is proposed to act as the covered action lead agency for the

proposed activities, the applicant must coordinate with the Conservancy, beginning at the concept proposal stage if concept proposals are applicable to the funding opportunity.

E5. Water Rights

Funded activities that address stream flows and water use shall comply with the Water Code as well as any applicable state or federal laws or regulations. Any activities that would require a change to water rights, including, but not limited to, bypass flows, point of diversion, location of use, purpose of use, or off-stream storage shall demonstrate in their grant proposal an understanding of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) processes, timelines, and costs necessary for approvals by SWRCB and the ability to meet those timelines within the grant funding term. In addition, any activities that involve modification of water rights for an adjudicated stream shall identify the required legal process for the change as well as associated legal costs. Proposals to acquire a permanent dedication of water must be in accordance with section 1707 of the Water Code. Specifically, the SWRCB must specify that the water proposed for acquisition is in addition to the water that is needed to meet regulatory requirements (CWC, § 79709(a)). Applicants may apply for funding from the Conservancy to complete the section 1707 petition process, but the SWRCB must approve the petition prior to the dispersal of funds for any other activities. Prior to its completion, any water right acquisition must be supported by a water rights appraisal approved by the Department of General Services, Real Property Services Section.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to comply with SWRCB regulations regarding the diversion and use of water, including ensuring that the applicant has adequate water rights to complete the activities and that the activities will not reduce or otherwise affect the rights of other water rights holders (CWC, § 79711(d)). For implementation activities and pilot projects that require water application (e.g., restoration, working lands enhancements, etc.), applicants must submit a statement number or application number for the water right they propose to use, as well as a short narrative demonstrating that the activities' water use has been considered, is reasonable, and that there is sufficient water to implement and maintain the activities without causing adverse impacts to downstream users or surrounding landowners. Conservancy staff will consult with the office of the Delta Watermaster regarding activities that propose to use water. The Delta Watermaster will review the water rights affiliated with the proposed activities and will provide an informal opinion as to whether these water rights appear to be subject to challenge. When considering if a proposal should be recommended for funding, Conservancy staff will consider the Watermaster's input and any issues identified during review.

If applicable, applicants must provide a letter of support from the entity providing water for implementation activities. The letter must verify that the water rights holder has the right to deliver water to the property on which the proposed activities will be implemented, and that the water rights holder recognizes its obligation to provide water to that property for the purposes of implementing the proposed activities. The Conservancy may at any time request that an applicant or grantee provide additional proof that it has a legal right to divert water and sufficient documentation regarding actual water availability and use.

E6. Best Available Science

All proposals with a scientific component will be evaluated on the scientific basis of the proposed activities. Applicants must provide a description of the scientific foundation of their activities, including scientific literature, studies, or expert opinion that they have consulted. Applicants must use the best available science when planning and implementing their proposed activities. A more complete review of best available science can be found in [Appendix 1A of the Delta Plan](#).

Applicants proposing ecosystem restoration and enhancement activities are encouraged to take into account the landscape considerations and guidelines discussed in A Delta Renewed: A Guide to Science-Based Ecological Restoration in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (A Delta Renewed, SFEI-ASC, 2016) when determining appropriate habitat restoration or enhancement actions. All applicants are encouraged to consult relevant climate change-related resources, which include, but are not limited to: California Natural Resources Agency's [Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update](#) (particularly the Biodiversity and Habitat Section), [Cal-Adapt](#) (includes climate tools, data, and resources), the [California Climate Commons](#), Point Blue Conservation Science's [Climate-Smart Restoration Toolkit](#), [Adapting to Rising Tides \(Bay Area, Eastern Contra Costa County, and Contra Costa County\)](#), [Delta Adapts](#), and the Ocean Protection Council's [2017 Rising Seas in California: An Update on Sea-Level Rise Science](#).

E7. Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is a framework and flexible decision-making process that advances scientific understanding and increases the likelihood for activities to achieve desired goals, objectives, outcomes, and outputs in the face of uncertainties such as climate change or ecological response to management decisions. Long-term management is related to adaptive management, and the two terms are frequently conflated. Adaptive management describes the scientific process in which an entire project is embedded, whereas long-term management deals with the ongoing stewardship and maintenance. The process for collecting and analyzing science-based information – a critical component of adaptive management – should be a factor

in long-term management planning and decisions. The Conservancy will require all applicants, as relevant, to develop and utilize science-based adaptive management that is consistent with the [Delta Plan's Nine-Step Adaptive Management Framework](#). Resources and support can be found through the [Interagency Adaptive Management Coordination](#) webpage.

Depending on the status and type of proposed activities, adaptive management expectations will vary. Planning, research, analysis, or support activities may not have all nine steps fully developed but are expected to describe how they will be considered and incorporated as the activities progress. Conservation easement proposals must describe the application of an adaptive management framework but may not have much leeway to alter easement terms. Activities that employ well-established best management practices do not carry the same burden of proof as those attempting new, untested approaches. Since the adaptive management approach should be integrated throughout activities, its description will be incorporated into many sections of the proposal. Where relevant, applicants will be asked to summarize their approach to adaptive management in the Scientific Merit section of the full proposal.

E8. Performance Measures

Performance measures are used to track progress toward project goals and objectives. They provide a means of reliably measuring and reporting the implementation and effectiveness of a project and how it contributes value to the Delta, Suisun Marsh, and the state. Performance measures will be developed to reflect the unique benefits of individual projects. Conservancy staff may help in development of performance measures. All implementation, land acquisition, land easement, and pilot project proposals must include a performance monitoring and assessment framework that identifies the performance measures that will be used to demonstrate public benefits for the required length of time years following the end of the Grant Funding Term, how they will be monitored and assessed, and how monitoring data will be reported.

E9. Monitoring and Assessment Framework

In addition to identifying performance measures and long-term management, some funding opportunities may require applicants to describe their approach to monitoring and assessing performance. Applicants should incorporate standardized monitoring approaches, where applicable, into their monitoring and assessment frameworks and evaluate opportunities to coordinate with existing monitoring efforts or produce information that can readily be integrated into such efforts. If an applicant determines that the use of standardized approaches is not appropriate, the proposal must provide a clear justification and a description of the

proposed approach. Examples of standardized methods and related data portals for environmental activities include:

- **Wetland and riparian restoration:** [Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Program](#) (WRAMP) framework for data collection, [EcoAtlas](#) for data reporting
- **Water quality, toxicity, and bioassessment data:** [Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program](#) (SWAMP) for standardized methods and data collection, [California Environmental Data Exchange Network](#) (CEDEN) for data reporting
- **Coastal salmonids:** [California Coastal Monitoring Program](#) for both methods and reporting

Grantees must add projects into [EcoAtlas Project Tracker](#) as relevant and provide periodic updates.

Environmental data and information collected through Conservancy grants must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users in a timely manner, except where limited by law, regulation, policy, or security requirements. All data collected and created is a required deliverable.

E10. Long-Term Management

The Conservancy may require applicants to describe future management activities, explaining how the activities, once implemented, will be stewarded for a specified timeframe for capital assets. Properties restored, enhanced, or protected, and facilities constructed or enhanced with funds provided by the Conservancy shall be operated, used, and maintained consistent with the purposes of the grant.

E11. Land Tenure

For activities conducted on land that is not owned by the grantee, the grantee may be required to demonstrate that they have adequate site control prior to the disbursement of grant funds. At the time of application, proposals for activities that require site access may be required to describe the status of site control and provide a letter of support from the landowner(s) of the activities site(s) if the applicant is not the landowner. Once funds are awarded, grantees may be required to submit documentation showing that they have adequate site control to implement the proposed activities. For implementation activities, grantees may be required to submit documentation proving that they have adequate control to improve or restore the site, and to maintain the outputs of the activities for the required timeframe. Grantees may assign the responsibility to implement, monitor, and maintain activities and their outputs, but will still be accountable for any assigned tasks. If the grantee owns the land on which the activities are

being conducted, the grantee may be required to record the grant agreement against the deed of the property. At the discretion of the Conservancy, a Notice of Unrecorded Grant Agreement may be substituted for recording the grant agreement against the deed of the property. If the grantee does not own the land on which the activities will be implemented, a landowner access agreement may be required as a condition of the grant agreement and may be required to be executed and recorded before funds are disbursed. Landowner access agreements must be signed by the grantee and the landowner(s) and must include a legal description of the land on which the activities are being conducted; the Conservancy will approve as to form. A landowner access agreement template can be found on the Conservancy's [Grant Program webpage](#). Grantees that must submit a landowner access agreement, who opt not to use the template, must submit an alternate agreement that conforms to the terms of the template. Costs associated with the development of land tenure agreements may be included in the grant budget but cannot be reimbursed until the landowner access agreement is approved as to form by the Conservancy. The Conservancy may also require recording of a landowner access agreements before disbursing grant funds. For lands being acquired with Conservancy grant funds, the Land Acquisitions section, below, describes land tenure requirements.

E12. Land Acquisition

The Conservancy may award grant funds for land acquisition. Land acquisitions must adhere to the following requirements.

- Property must be acquired from a willing seller and in compliance with current laws governing acquisition of real property by public agencies in an amount not to exceed fair market value, as approved by the state.
- If a signed purchase and sale or option agreement is unavailable to be submitted with the application, a Willing Seller Letter is required from each landowner indicating they are a willing participant in the proposed real estate transaction. The letter should clearly identify the parcels to be purchased and state that "if grant funds are awarded, the seller is willing to enter into negotiations for sale of the property at a purchase price not to exceed fair market value."
- Once a proposal is submitted, another property cannot be substituted for the property specified in the application. Therefore, it is imperative that the applicant demonstrate that the seller is negotiating in good faith, and that discussions have proceeded to a point of confidence.
- The Department of General Services (DGS) must review and approve all appraisals of real property. Appraisals must comply with section 5096.510 of the Public Resources Code. The Conservancy will not directly pay the Department of General Services to

review and approve the required appraisal; the grantee must pay DGS directly for this expense and seek reimbursement from the Conservancy.

Land acquisitions are also subject to a specific set of additional requirements that must be met prior to and immediately after closing escrow. The Conservancy will provide a Land Acquisition Checklist to assist applicants and grantees. Note that the Conservancy will do an assessment of mineral rights based on information provided by the applicant. Based on its assessment, the Conservancy will determine whether the risk posed by exercising existing mineral rights and the related consequences for intended conservation purposes is acceptable to the Conservancy. If the Conservancy determines that the risk is not acceptable and the risk cannot be reduced to an acceptable level within a reasonable amount of time, then the Conservancy may rescind the grant award.

In addition to the purchase of real property, applicants may seek reimbursement for costs associated with personnel time, appraisal and appraisal review, due diligence costs, closing costs, and other costs related to the acquisition of real property. In total, other costs related to the acquisition of real property may not exceed 10 percent of the land acquisition cost that is being requested from the Conservancy. The cost of land acquisition may not be factored into the indirect cost calculation. Funding for all grant-related activities will be dispersed quarterly in arrears for all costs save for the cost of land acquisition, for which funds will be transferred into escrow once all requirements of the Land Acquisition Checklist have been met. Some grant funds may allow for advanced payment of funds rather than reimbursement and payments on a monthly rather than quarterly basis. If reimbursement and quarterly payments are cost prohibitive for your organization, work with Conservancy staff to determine if advanced payments are allowable in your case.

Land acquisitions must address all requirements pertinent to implementation activities, including the development of scientific outputs and outcomes and a performance monitoring and assessment framework. The following additional information is required at the time of application:

- A table including parcel numbers, acreage, willing seller name and address, breakdown of how the funds will be budgeted, and an acquisition schedule (a template is available on the Conservancy's web page)
- Copy of the Purchase and Sale or Option Agreement, or Willing Seller Letter(s)
- Appraisal or justification of estimated Fair Market Value
- Map showing lands that will be acquired, including parcel lines and numbers

Proposals for acquisition of real property must also address:

- The intended use of the property
- The manner in which the land will be managed
- How the cost of ongoing operations, maintenance, and management will be provided, including an analysis of the maintaining entity's financial capacity to support those ongoing costs
- How payments will be provided in lieu of taxes, assessments, or charges otherwise due to local government, if applicable

E13. Budget

Using the Budget Tables provided with the full proposal application materials, applicants must identify all expenses for which Conservancy funds are being requested. **All budget numbers must be demonstrated to be fair and reasonable, consistent across budget tables, and fully explained and justified. Related-party contracts are prohibited.** All expenses must be eligible and be organized by the following cost categories.

- **Personnel Services:** Personnel rates may only include salary and wages, fringe benefits, and payroll taxes. Compensation for personnel services includes all compensation paid by the organization for services of employees during the Grant Funding Term. The expenditures are allowable to the extent that the total compensation for individual employees is supported and reasonable for the services rendered. Fringe benefit expenses may include holidays, vacation, sick leave, actual employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen's compensation insurance, and pension plan costs. Grantees must ~~provide~~ maintain timesheets with 100 percent time accounting ~~to the Conservancy~~ to support invoices.
- **Operating Expenses (General):** General Operating Expenses include all materials and supplies, such as field supplies, office supplies, permits and fees, travel expenses, and other general expenses required to directly implement grant activities. All costs should be allocated according to the most equitable basis practical. ~~During invoicing, all expenses must be supported by receipts or other documentation payment has been made (not just incurred).~~ For all invoiced expenses, grantees must maintain receipts or other documentation to demonstrate payments have been made (not just incurred).
- **Operating Expenses (Subcontractor):** Subcontractor expenses, including equipment rentals, are allowable if work to be completed or services to be provided are directly linked to the proposed activities and are consistent with the tasks and schedule provided in the proposal. Note that subcontractor expenses may not be factored into the indirect cost calculation. Grantees must provide copies of all contracts to the Conservancy.

- **Operating Expenses (Equipment):** Equipment includes nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a unit price of \$5,000 or more, as well as theft-sensitive items of equipment costing less than \$5,000 (such as electronics). All equipment purchased or built by the Grantee is owned by the Grantee during the Funding Term. The Conservancy will only reimburse for a cost proportionate to the usage of the equipment for the activities being funded by the Conservancy. Equipment purchases are allowable, if specified as a requirement for the completion of the activities. However, justification for the purchase of equipment must be provided at the time of application. The Grantee is required to maintain accountability for all property purchased and to keep, and make available to the Grantor, adequate and appropriate records of all equipment purchased with grant funds. Grantees must keep an inventory record including the date acquired, total cost, serial number, model identification, and any other information or description necessary to identify said equipment for the duration of the Grant Funding Term. Note that equipment expenses may not be factored into the indirect cost calculation.
- **Acquisition Cost:** The acquisition cost includes only the purchase of real property or conservation easement. In total, appraisal and appraisal review, personnel time, due diligence costs, closing costs, and other costs related to the acquisition of real property or conservation easement may not exceed 10 percent of the acquisition cost that is being requested from the Conservancy. Note that the acquisition cost may not be factored into the indirect cost calculation.
- **Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs that do not have a specific direct relationship to the grant activities but are a requirement for the completion of the activities may be eligible for reimbursement. If allowed, indirect costs may only be applied as a percentage of personnel services and will be limited to the percentage set by the Conservancy, not to exceed twenty percent of personnel services. Indirect costs over twenty percent that are paid by the grantee may qualify as cost share for the grant. Indirect costs must be reasonable, allocable, applicable, and must provide benefit to the grant funded activities. Indirect costs may include expenses such as administrative support (e.g., personnel time for accounting, executive, information technology, or other staff who support the implementation of the proposed activities but are not directly billing their time to the grant) and office-related expenses (e.g., insurance, rent, utilities, printing/copying equipment, computer equipment, and janitorial expenses), and other similar expenses that are not direct expenses and are not included in the hourly rate for personnel services that are a direct expense for the grant. Indirect rates are strictly enforced for all applicants. Applicants must provide their indirect cost rate, explain the

methodology for calculating it, and describe the cost pool used to calculate the indirect cost rate. Indirect costs are subject to audit and must be documented by the grantee.

Budget Tables should include costs for the tasks described in the full proposal and must demonstrate how grant management and reporting costs will be funded, either by the Conservancy grant funds or by cost share or state-leveraged funds. Applicants should review other Conservancy requirements that may be eligible for Conservancy grant funding (e.g., Delta Plan consistency, developing a landowner access agreement, etc.) and include these in their budgets where applicable.

Applicants must also identify cost share contributions if receiving funding for the activities from a source other than the Conservancy.

E14. Cost Share and State-Leveraged Funds

Cost share is the portion of the cost for proposed grant activities borne by private, local, and/or federal funding partners (other state funds may not count toward the cost share). Cost sharing encourages collaboration and cooperation, and the Conservancy may require cost share for grant funding opportunities. Even if cost match is not required for a particular funding opportunity, applicants are encouraged to cost share to support their proposed activities. Cost share percent is calculated by dividing the total cost share from federal, local, or private sources by the total dollar amount requested from the Conservancy.

In-kind contribution is defined as all non-cash contributions to the grant activities from private, local, and/or federal funding partners, that have an assigned value; this may include volunteer time, supplies, and equipment. The Conservancy may require that in-kind contributions be matched with cash cost share at a one-to-one ratio (for example, if a grant has \$25,000 of cash cost share, the maximum qualifying in-kind contribution is \$25,000).

The Conservancy will also consider, and may provide points if scored, for the leveraging of state funds. Leveraged funds do not count toward cost share. Applicants stating that they are leveraging other state funds must include commitment letters from leverage partners when submitting the full proposal, and funds must be spent during the Grant Funding Term. The Conservancy may require that in-kind contributions from state leveraged sources be matched with cash cost share at a one-to-one ratio.

Only commitments made explicitly for the proposed activities may count as cost share, in-kind contribution, or leveraged funds. Applicants stating that they have a cost share, in-kind, or leveraged funds must include commitment letters from partners at the time the full proposal is submitted; the letters must specifically confirm the dollar amount and/or in-kind cash value

committed. The Conservancy may require that Cost share, in-kind contributions, and leveraged funds be spent during the Grant Funding Term.

E15. Financial Management Systems Questionnaire and Cost Allocation Plan

A Financial Management Systems Questionnaire and Cost Allocation Plan form is required from all applicants at the time of full proposal (a template will be available through the Conservancy's website). The information provided will be used to assess the applicant's financial capacity for managing the proposed grant.

The Cost Allocation Plan should be tailored to fit the specific policies of the applicant. The plan requires information about how the applicant allocates costs to ensure an equitable distribution of costs to programs. Recipients must have a system in place to equitably charge costs.

E16. Demonstration of Local Support

Applicants are expected to demonstrate local support by describing in their proposals both public and institutional support for the activities, including how the community and stakeholders are engaged in the activities. Letters of support may also be included. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact, seek support from, and coordinate with applicable state agencies, cities, counties, local districts, other public and private stakeholders, and surrounding landowners. If an applicant has a specific resolution of support from the affected city, county, or local district, it should be included with the full proposal to facilitate the overall assessment process. A resolution of support from the Board of Supervisors from the county in which the activities are proposed to be conducted may be required as part of the full proposal.

E17. Local Notifications

The Conservancy will notify local government agencies – such as counties, cities, and local districts – and tribal organizations about eligible grant activities in their area being considered for funding. The Conservancy will also notify the applicable public water agency, levee, flood control, or drainage agency (when appropriate). The individual Conservancy Board members representing each of the five Delta counties will also be notified and may wish to communicate with the affected entities. For land acquisitions, the Conservancy will coordinate and consult with the Delta Protection Commission and the city or county in which a grant is proposed to be implemented or an interest in real property is proposed to be acquired. The Conservancy will work with the grantee to make all reasonable efforts to address concerns raised by local government entities.

E18. Consultation and Cooperation with State and Local Agencies

It is the responsibility of grantees to coordinate and cooperate with the appropriate state and local agencies with interests in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. State Departments may include but are not limited to: the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, the Delta Stewardship Council, the California Natural Resources Agency's EcoRestore program, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Delta Protection Commission (grantees are encouraged to utilize their Good Neighbor Checklist as relevant). It also may include applicable Native American tribal governments.

If activities are proposed to be funded by multiple agencies or entities, the Conservancy strongly encourages applicants to contact the applicable agencies or departments prior to applying for funding to discuss options for funding activities. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that proposals submitted to each potential funder describe the specific work that will be funded by all applicable entities. The proposed scope of each proposal must be distinct and without overlap. Applicants must describe the overall project and how the proposals relate.

E19. Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged Communities

Many communities in the Legal Delta and Suisun Marsh are considered disadvantaged communities (DAC) or severely disadvantaged communities (SDAC). A DAC is a community with a median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide average (based on the U.S. Census). Applicants must identify any disadvantaged communities that overlap with the footprint of the proposed activities or would be served by the proposed activities. Mapping resources available for the purpose of identifying SDACs and DACs by census tract and/or block group are available on the Parks for All Californians website (<http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities>) and the Disadvantaged Communities Mapping Tool (<https://gis.water.ca.gov/app/dacs/>). The Conservancy may consider other means of identifying SDACs and DACs as well.

E20. Coordination with Tribes, Communities of Color, and other Underrepresented Groups

Applicants are strongly recommended to engage in early, meaningful, and often coordination with Native American tribes and tribal communities, communities of color and other underrepresented groups. If the proposal is citing benefit to one or more community, the applicant must demonstrate how they are working with that community to ensure community support.

F. Requirements if Funded

F1. Grant Provisions

For each awarded grant, the Conservancy will develop an individual grant agreement with detailed provisions and requirements specific to approved activities.

- Grant awards are conditional upon funds being available from the state (see Loss of Funding section, below).
- For implementation activities, funds for construction or physical implementation will not be disbursed until all required environmental compliance and permitting documents have been received by the Conservancy, including certification of consistency with the Delta Plan.
- As part of the grant agreement, the grantee is required to certify that it is the grantee's responsibility to comply with all federal, state, and local laws that apply to the activities.
- Grant funds will not be paid if any of the following conditions occur:
 - The grantee has been non-responsive or does not meet the conditions outlined in the grant agreement.
 - The activities have received alternative funding from other sources that duplicates the portion of work or costs funded by a Conservancy grant.
 - The activities have changed and is no longer eligible for funding.
 - Work was conducted outside of the grant funding term.
 - The applicant requests to end the grant.

F2. Reporting

All grantees must provide regular progress reports and a final report. The final report must be approved by Conservancy staff prior to the release of the final disbursement of grant funds. Specific reporting requirements will be included in the grant agreement.

F3. Amendments

Applicants should very carefully consider the Scope of Work and budget for the proposed activities as amendments to grant agreements will generally only be considered by the Conservancy for unavoidable circumstances where no other feasible solution exists. If an unanticipated situation arises which jeopardizes the approved activities, it is imperative that the grantee contact the Conservancy Grant Manager as soon as possible to discuss options.

F4. Signage and Recognition

Grantees shall inform the public of activities received funds through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy. Grantees shall recognize the Conservancy on signs, websites, press or promotional materials, advertisements, publications, digital content, or exhibits that they prepare or approve and that reference grant-funded activities. For implementation activities, grantees shall post signs at activity sites acknowledging the source of the funds. Size, location, number of signs, and draft design shall be approved by the Conservancy. Whenever possible, Grantees shall notify the Conservancy at least ten working days prior to any public event or media feature publicizing the accomplishments and/or results of the activities and provide the opportunity for attendance and participation by Conservancy representatives.