



## COLORADO

### Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, CO 80203

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board

FROM: Steve Miller, Senior Water Resource Specialist  
Interstate, Federal, and Water Information Section

DATE: August 29, 2014

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 18, September 11-12, 2014 Board Meeting  
Interstate, Federal, and Water Information Section,  
Colorado River Salinity Control Technical Assistance Grants  
Review and Approve RFP Criteria

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#### Introduction

In the 2014 Projects Bill (HB14-1333, section 9) the Board was authorized to provide technical assistance grants to enhance participation in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program ("CRBSCP"). Staff has developed the attached draft grant criteria to be used in the selection of entities to receive these technical assistance grants.

The program will offer funding for engineering services to non-federal irrigation systems in high salinity loading areas of the Gunnison Basin and allow them to more effectively compete in the CRBSCP. These entities would receive between \$3,000 to \$10,000 reimbursement for engineering services to evaluate and design enhancements to their existing irrigation systems. In addition, the engineers will consider opportunities to realign and combine systems and will produce credible designs and cost-estimates. That information will enable irrigators to better compete for significant federal funding available in the 2015 CRBSCP Funding Opportunity Announcement ("2015 FOA") and more effectively utilize any such funds awarded. The Colorado River District and USBR will participate in the selection of the individual technical assistance grants.

#### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board approve the Colorado River Salinity Control Technical Assistance Grants RFP Criteria.



**COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD**  
**Gunnison Basin Salinity Control Technical Assistance Grant Program**  
**Grant Guidance September 2014**

**I. Background**

**A. Introduction**

The purpose of this Guidance and Procedures is to establish and describe the criteria and competitive process for the issuance and administration of grants from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (Board or CWCB) for the **Gunnison Basin Salinity Control Technical Assistance Grant Program (Salinity Tech Assist Grants)**. The Board is the state executive branch agency responsible for state water policy and planning. The Board's mission is to conserve, develop, protect, and manage Colorado's water for present and future generations. Its major programs include: 1) Watershed & Flood Protection; 2) Water Supply Planning; 3) Finance; 4) Stream and Lake Protection; and 5) Interstate, Federal and Water Information. More information about the CWCB and its sections can be found at <http://cwcb.state.co.us>.

**B. History**

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (CRBSCP) is a federally authorized program to control and reduce salt loading to the Colorado River. The CRBSCP has been active in portions of the Gunnison basin since the 1980's, controlling saline return flows primarily by improving irrigation delivery systems (US Bureau of Reclamation) and increasing on-farm irrigation efficiencies (USDA-NRCS). More recently, the Gunnison Selenium Management Program (SMP) was created to address endangered fish recovery limitations linked to high selenium levels in the Gunnison and its tributaries. The establishment of the SMP was a requirement under the Record of Decision and the Biological Opinion for the Operations of the Aspinall Unit. The primary selenium control strategy adopted by the SMP is accelerated implementation of salinity control projects in the basin since selenium is derived from some of the same geological formations as are the sources salinity. Therefore, providing financial assistance to potential salinity control participants is of significant interest and benefit to the CWCB and the State of Colorado, generally.



Beginning in 1995 the US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) introduced its Basinwide Program which makes grant awards for salinity control to owners of irrigation delivery systems through a competitive process called Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA). For additional information on the 2012 FOA go to the USBR Salinity Control Program website: <http://www.usbr.gov/uc/progact/salinity/index.html> FOA's are offered approximately every three years, with the next one occurring in 2015. This Salinity Tech Assist Grants program is intended to assist the owners of certain irrigation infrastructure in the Gunnison Basin plan for and compete in the 2015 FOA by reimbursing them for a portion of the engineering services they retain for such purposes.

### **C. Authorization**

HB14-1333, The Colorado Water Conservation Board Projects Bill authorizes this grant program:

SEC. 9. Gunnison basin irrigation system planning and optimization  
... \$250,000 ... to provide grants for engineering services to evaluate and design enhancements to nonfederal irrigation systems in a portion of the Gunnison basin, to allow owners of such systems to more effectively participate in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program.

## **II. Grant Approval Criteria**

### **A. Competitive Process**

The CWCB will select applicants to receive individual grants of between \$3,000 and \$10,000 totaling up to \$150,000 from those eligible applicants that best meet the evaluation criteria below (Section III. A.-B.). The CWCB reserves the right to negotiate with successful applicants to modify the scope and/or budget of their projects to better meet CWCB objectives and fund availability. A minimum of four member evaluation team consisting of a CWCB staff member, a Colorado Department of Agriculture staff member, a US Bureau of Reclamation representative, and a representative of the Colorado River Water Conservation District will review the applications and recommend projects for grant funding.

## **B. Eligible Entities**

Owners and/or operators of non-federal irrigation delivery system diverting water from the any portion of the Gunnison River Basin below the Aspinall Project are eligible to apply. Non-federal irrigation delivery systems for this purpose is defined as: irrigation delivery systems that are privately owned or organized under various state statutes related to irrigation companies and receive no federal O&M assistance, however they receive supplemental water from an adjacent or associated federal project. Salinity Tech Assist Grant applicants must also be eligible to apply for grants pursuant to USB's 2015 FOA. For purposes of determining 2015 eligibility the provisions of the 2012 FOA may be used as found at: <http://www.usbr.gov/uc/progact/salinity/index.html>

## **C. Basic Application Criteria**

Before scoring an application, an applicant must demonstrate that it has met the basic application criteria. Failure to meet any of these elements will result in rejection of the application. The basic application criteria are descriptions of how the project complies with the following criteria.

1. Basic eligibility requirements set forth in Section II.B.
2. Support for the grant application from water users served by the ditch company.
3. Demonstrated ability to provide the appropriate in-kind or cash match if needed, see reimbursement schedule at II.D.
4. Capacity to enter into a contract with the State of Colorado and be able to furnish a valid federal taxpayer ID number.
5. Demonstrated ability to accept grant funds from the CWCB pursuant to any limitations established by the TABOR Amendment (Taxpayer Bill of Rights) and any other relevant laws.

## **D. Reimbursement Schedule**

Selected applicants will enter into a purchase agreement with the CWCB specifying the terms of the grant, including the following sliding scale reimbursement rates. Only services provided and invoiced by an engineering licensed to practice in Colorado are eligible for reimbursement.

Actual Invoiced Cost of Engineering services	Required Grantee Cost Share	Maximum CWCB Reimbursement
Up to \$2,500	0%	Up to \$2,500
\$2,500 - \$10,000	25% of the amount over \$2,500	Up to \$8,125
Over \$10,000	\$1,875 plus 50% of the amount over \$10,000	Up to \$10,000

#### **E. Application Submittal and Format**

Applications may be submitted electronically or by mail and must utilize the CWCB application template which will be provided to any interested party. Applications may be emailed to [steve.miller@state.co.us](mailto:steve.miller@state.co.us). Applications exceeding 10mb in size should be mailed on CD or DVD to Steve Miller, 1313 Sherman St., Rm 721 Denver, Co 80211. The entire application, including attachments, should be submitted as one file in adobe ".pdf" format.

The application must include:

1. Detailed map of the project area showing relevant watercourses, irrigation infrastructure including all ditches and laterals, and the location of irrigated acres served by that system.
2. Estimated engineering budget including any matching fund sources. The budget will form the basis for a grant agreement with the CWCB and the structure for reimbursement.
3. Project schedule demonstrating ability to complete all activities and submit a responsive FOA application prior to the 2015 deadline (currently estimated as October 2015.).
4. Letters of commitment from any entity identified as providing matching funds, or otherwise contributing to the essential feasibility of the proposed project.
5. A full explanation of how the applicant meets the grant evaluation criteria.

**Failure to include any of this information may result in rejection of the application.**

### **III. Grant Evaluation Criteria**

**Applications will be rated based on the following evaluation criteria:**

#### **A. Organizational Capability [25%]**

The Applicant should include information about its ability to utilize the grant funds. This type of information could relate to the following criteria or answer the following questions:

- Identify the lead project sponsor and describe any other stakeholders' level of participation and involvement.
- What is the applicant organization's history participation in the CRBSCP or any other programs that address irrigation efficiency or modernization? Provide any past project examples.
- What information is the project sponsor using to develop the proposed plan or project?
- What level of staffing will be directed toward the implementation of the proposed project/planning effort? Discuss the number of staff and amount of time dedicated for the project
- Specify in-kind services and cash contributions (match) amount for the proposed activities
- Is the applicant willing to consider using loans from the CWCB's construction Fund as part of the funding package submitted to USBR in the 2015 FOA application? What is the applicants financial capacity to use such loan funding?

#### **B. Effectiveness of the Project - Salinity Control Potential [75%]**

The Applicant should include information about its ability to effectively control salinity. This type of information could relate to the following criteria or answer the following questions:

- System is currently deemed a significant source of salinity loading to the Gunnison Basin. Salinity loading is a function of the soils and geology in the service area and current irrigation system delivery efficiency. The best evidence of loading is written documentation from USBR containing salt loading factors for

the applicant's system. Estimates from other sources will be considered if necessary.

- Current system delivery efficiency and potential to improve. Describe company's improvement goals and objectives.
- Number of irrigated acres in service area and current average annual diversions.
- Availability of storage to better utilize water saved through elimination of delivery losses.
- Potential for additional on-farm irrigation system improvements after delivery system is improved. Indicate likely willingness of water users to participate in USDA's EQIP in the future.

#### **IV. Grant Program Administration**

##### **A. Application Timeline**

The timeline for the Round 1 grant application cycle is:

Applications and criteria available: October 1, 2014

Deadline to submit applications: November 1, 2014

Applications selected for funding: November 15, 2014

Depending on interest and fund availability a Round 2 of grant applications may be solicited in early Spring of 2015.

##### **B. Contact Information**

Interested parties are strongly encouraged to call the CWCB to discuss potential applications. For more information please contact:

Steve Miller,

Colorado Water Conservation Board

1313 Sherman St., Room 718.

Denver, Co 80203

303 866 3441, ext. 3228;

steve.miller@state.co.us

**C. Payment Procedure**

The CWCB will reimburse grantees for eligible expenses upon proof that a responsive 2015 FOA application has been filed with USBR. Payments will be based on invoices and the sliding scale payment schedule. Eligible reimbursable expenses shall be limited to those items and rates in the approved budget which will be made a part of the grant contract between the applicant and the CWCB. Invoices must include supporting documentation justifying all claimed expenses and be based on the engineering company's established rate sheets.