

## **CT DEEP Long Island Sound Ecosystems Grant**

### **Answers to Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q1: If a project has elements of both Habitat Restoration and Green Infrastructure, is there any guidance as to which track it should fall under?**

A1: Review your project to see if it leans more towards one category than the other, look at your project goals and review the evaluation criteria for both categories. Also review the budget, is there significantly more money to be spent on habitat restoration or green stormwater infrastructure? We encourage projects like this to reach out to our program email [DEEP.EcosystemsGrant@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.EcosystemsGrant@ct.gov) to set up a meeting to discuss further.

**Q2: Is it generally anticipated that award/contracting processes would support work starting at some point in calendar year 2026?**

A2: Generally, yes. Please see the timeline section on page 4 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for typical contracting times.

**Q3: Are no cost extensions possible, if necessary, after the two years?**

A3: Yes, extensions are possible but please plan for your project to be completed within 2 years from contract execution date.

**Q4: For any leveraged funds – will awardees be required to track and report these if included in the application?**

A4: No, DEEP will not be tracking or asking for reporting on leveraged funds. We ask that you include them in your application so we understand the larger context of what applicant resources, partners and programs, if any, are supporting the project.

**Q5: Can you expand on the opportunity for site visits?**

A5: DEEP encourages applicants to reach out to us to discuss their projects and schedule site visits. Please email [DEEP.EcosystemsGrant@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.EcosystemsGrant@ct.gov).

**Q6: Are there Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) or Women Business Enterprise (WBE) requirements?**

A6: This grant program is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Long Island Sound Partnership. DEEP is required to pass-down the terms and conditions of the EPA award to all sub-awards. One of the terms and conditions is “utilization of disadvantaged business enterprises,” which requires the funding recipient to make good faith efforts during procurement. Please see item #27 of this document for more information: [EPA General Terms and Conditions effective October 1, 2024 or later](#)

**Q7: What are the procurement rules under this grant?**

A7: This grant program is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Long Island Sound Partnership. DEEP is required to pass-down the terms and conditions of the EPA award to all sub-awards. Prospective applicants should review the terms and conditions available here for the requirements associated with procurement: [EPA General Terms and Conditions effective October 1, 2024 or later](#). Item #8(5), “establishing and managing subawards,” provides an overview of the applicable “flow-down” requirements, which includes the procurement standards in 2 CFR 200. “Procurement” is a broad term, and the document provides guidance on a wide range of topics that may apply based on the type of project (for example, item #49 addresses the Build America, Buy America requirements that apply to construction projects). Prospective applicants can follow up with DEEP if they have specific procurement questions.

**Q8: What are examples of coastal habitat restoration projects?**

A8: Projects from this category could include, but aren’t limited to, restoring river connectivity and fish passage, restoring tidal wetlands, and implementing living shorelines. Examples of specific projects include the Strong Pond Dam Removal in Wilton, CT and the completed Great Meadows Marsh shoreline restoration project in Stratford, CT.

**Q9: What are examples of green stormwater infrastructure projects?**

A9: DEEP considers green stormwater infrastructure a broad category of best management practices (BMPs) working independently or in concert to reduce non-point source pollution from stormwater runoff. DEEP has funded various green stormwater infrastructure projects including, but not limited to, bioretention features (swales and rain gardens), infiltrating tree wells, pervious pavement, and stormwater wetlands. Some specific locations to observe green stormwater infrastructure BMPs include the Hole-in-the-Wall parking lot in Niantic, CT; various practices at UConn in Storrs, CT; and a large-scale rain garden at Town Center Park in Hamden, CT.

**Q10: For green infrastructure projects, since they are eligible across most of the state, is there any prioritization you're making as far as proximity to waterways connecting to the Long Island Sound? For example, would projects along a larger river be a higher priority than projects along smaller tributaries?**

A10: DEEP often funds green stormwater infrastructure projects within proximity to a waterbody, however the higher priority is the significant impact the project would have at reducing non-point source pollution. As a hypothetical comparison, a project that infiltrates 250,000 gallons of stormwater runoff annually a mile from a stream has a more significant impact and higher priority than a project infiltrating 10,000 gallons of stormwater runoff annually in close proximity to a stream.

**Q11: Can you talk about the prioritization of construction projects over planning/design?**

A11: One of the evaluation criteria awards points to projects that are ready for implementation - fully designed, fully permitted.

**Q12: Is there any consideration about improving water quality with respect to adjacent urban populations?**

A12: One of the evaluation criteria awards bonus points to projects that are located in municipalities that are more developed.

**Q13: Is there any coordination between this program and other Long Island Sound Partnership funding opportunities? Do you encourage funding from this program to be leveraged as match for other opportunities?**

A13: This program, although administered by DEEP, uses federal dollars. We encourage funding from this program to be leveraged as match for other opportunities if and where applicable and allowable.

**Q14: Are there any restrictions on grantees that have received previous grants?**

A14: There are not any restrictions, however, performance in other DEEP awards will be taken into consideration.

**Q15: Who can we talk to about eligibility of a specific project?**

A15: Please contact our Program Lead, Mindy Gosselin, via the program email [DEEP.EcosystemsGrant@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.EcosystemsGrant@ct.gov).

## **Additional FAQs added after the 11/18 Q&A Session and 12/9 Office Hours**

**Q16: Can we be reimbursed us for a project that was implemented prior to a contract with the state being executed?**

A16: No, reimbursement can only be issued for costs incurred during the contract period – no reimbursements will be issued for expenditures made prior to the receipt of a fully executed contract or after the contract has expired. Please see the reimbursement section on page 4 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for more details.

**Q17: Can a private company be the grantee?**

A17: No, please see the eligible applicants section on page 2 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for eligible entities. Private and for-profit entities can partner with eligible entities; however, only those eligible can submit the application.

**Q18: Can we request funding to cover a portion of a large initiative?**

A18: Yes, DEEP is able to fund a portion of a larger initiative. Please ensure that the portion of the project you are proposing to the Ecosystems Grant aligns with the timeline section guidance on pages 4 and 5 of the NOFO. Please also clearly describe the other sources of funding contributing to the initiative and their status in item 7 of the application template.

**Q19: If we get grant funds from another Long Island Sound Partnership (LISP) program, can we still receive funds from the Ecosystems Grant?**

A19: Yes, there are not any restrictions with the Ecosystems Grant on combining grant funds from other LISP programs. However, check with the other program as well.

**Q20: Will the program consider partially funding a proposal or is it “all or nothing?”**

A20: Yes, DEEP will consider partially funding proposals.

**Q21: Will you be sending out this PowerPoint?**

A21: The PowerPoint is posted on the [Ecosystems Grant program website](#).

**Q22: What is a reimbursement grant? Are pre-award costs eligible for reimbursement?**

A22: Reimbursement can only be issued for costs incurred during the contract period – no reimbursements will be issued for expenditures made prior to the receipt of a fully executed contract or after the contract has expired. “Reimbursement grants” means that the grantee must incur the project costs and then request to be reimbursed by DEEP; DEEP does not provide funding in advance. Recipients must submit reimbursement requests on at least a quarterly basis and provide proof that payments have been made for project expenses (e.g. canceled checks, paid invoices or bank statements). Please see the reimbursement section on page 4 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for more details.

**Q23: Could a beach nourishment project fit into the habitat restoration category?**

A23: DEEP encourages applicants to review the evaluation criteria to see if ecological/habitat priorities are being addressed.

**Q24: Since green infrastructure allows you to apply for both planning and construction- do you need to have 100% design already in order to apply for construction?**

A24: For green stormwater infrastructure, applicants that do not have 100% design and want to apply for construction funds should check both planning/engineering/design AND construction on their application.

**Q25: If awarded a grant, how much time should we estimate for the contracting process?**

A25: For most organizations it typically takes 4-6 months to establish a contract with DEEP. Please see the timeline section on page 4 of the NOFO for more details.

**Q26: Is the QAPP only required if you’re collecting data for the project or is it standard?**

A26: A QAPP is required if the project is collecting environmental data.

**Q27: Can the planning portion include a project that would result in a change of the planning and zoning codes to improve the health of the watershed and not result in a construction project?**

A27: Projects that solely result in new or updated municipal planning documents and related are not eligible.

**Q28: Does a construction project also need a QAPP?**

A28: They typically do not, but please contact the Ecosystems Grant program email for project specific questions.

**Q29: Could a project that converts one habitat to another equally important habitat qualify?**

A29: DEEP encourages the applicant to review the habitat restoration evaluation criteria.

**Q30: Can you confirm the geographic range of this grant?**

A30: All projects must be located in Connecticut. Habitat restoration projects must be located with the Long Island Sound Partnership's Long Island Sound (LISP LIS) Coastal Boundary, unless it is a fish passage project, which must be located within the LIS Watershed Boundary.

**Q31: The practices that we are hoping to install are relatively inexpensive. Can we submit one application for multiple smaller projects that all perform the same function, located within a close proximity of each other, all with the same design/build team? Or would that technically require multiple independent submissions?**

A31: Yes, one application for multiple small projects within a given area (e.g. a watershed or municipality) is acceptable.

**Q32: Do I need to submit a letter of intent (LOI)?**

A32: The Ecosystems Grant does not require an LOI. Submittal will consist of a complete application, budget template, timeline template, site map, letters of support (optional), and other supplemental documents (photos, plan sets, etc.) (optional).

**Q33: Can my organization submit multiple applications?**

A33: Eligible organizations can submit multiple applications. However, the same project cannot be a part of multiple applications.

For coastal habitat restoration – DEEP is unable to fund one project for initial planning/design through construction (i.e. a “design-build” project). It must be one or the other. DEEP would typically like projects to have at least ~60% design if construction funds are being requested.

For green stormwater infrastructure – Applicants are able to apply for planning/engineering/design through construction under one application. Applicants can also just pick one or the other.

**Q34: “Large scale” projects are discussed in the NOFO. Does my project need to be a certain acreage to be considered?**

A34: We do not have a minimum size requirement for habitat restoration projects.

**Q35: Maintenance and monitoring are mentioned in the NOFO for construction projects, can you elaborate on that?**

A35: Applicants should describe how they intend to follow up with the project once it is complete – to ensure its function and success. An in-depth plan is not required.

**Q36: Does the budget template include just the costs assigned to the funds requested from this program? Or do you want a budget that reflects all the elements of the project.**

A36: Applicants should only include the funds that they would be requesting from our program in the budget template. Other funds that are being used/leveraged can be described within the application.

**Q37: What if my submittal email is too big to send?**

A37: If your email is too big to send you can zip your files or send multiple emails. If you send multiple emails, please indicate that in the body of the email.

**Q38: How do I prove ownership?**

A38: Applicants can provide proof of ownership through municipal land records. Using the municipal GIS system is also acceptable.

**Q39: Can I put multiple projects in one application?**

A39: Yes, but this is ultimately up to the applicant. DEEP encourages the applicant to make sure that they can adequately describe both projects within one application (within the word limits) and review the evaluation criteria to see how it would apply.