

## **CAL FIRE Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Grant Program**

### **Questions and Answers**

**1. Q Can the budget be modified from the budget submitted with the concept proposal?**

A Yes, the budget submitted with the project application can be modified for the budget submitted in the concept proposal.

**2. Q Are State agencies eligible for GGRF grants?**

A State agencies eligible for GGRF grants (except CFIPs and PTEIR grants).

**3. Q Do you have a preferred scientific methodology to quantify the GHG emission reductions for your fuel reduction grants?**

A We do not have a preferred methodology. We have offered some guidance on the website and hope to have additional guidance posted on the web during the project application period. We are working with the Air Resources Board on acceptable methodologies.

**4. Q Can the funds be used on an individual basis to provide cost share on lots with single family homes or vacant lots that need to have fuels reduction?**

A Cost-share agreements are for small non-industrial landowners and use the California Forest Improvement Program to facilitate the fuel reduction work. The GGRF funds are used to supply the State's share of the cost-share and cannot be used for the landowners share.

**5. Q Is there a cost share or match share requirement for the Fuels Reduction grant program.**

A For Fuels Reduction grants (not CFIP Fuels Reduction or CFIP Reforestation agreements) there is no mandatory match or cost share but it is a desirable

attribute of the project. For CFIP Fuels Reduction or CFIP Reforestation cost share agreements, there is a cost share contribution requirement from the landowner of 10 to 25%.

**6. Q Can large landowners and or forestry consultants submit for the fuels reduction grant? Or do they need a sponsor?**

A For Fuels Reduction Grants landowners will need a sponsor, but not for the CFIP Fuels Reduction agreements.

**7. Q For the Watershed Reforestation and Reforestation Grants, on the acreage section how do we show the acres to be treated since reforestation requires multiple treatments over the same acre such as site prep etc.?**

A We count the acres with the seedlings. The other activities can be noted separately, but the project size is where “trees are in the ground”.

**8. Q Is a high school district considered a public agency?**

A Public Schools are public agencies.

**9. Q Will there be another grant application period in the coming future?**

A CAL FIRE has been identified to receive funding in the FY 2015/16 Governor’s Budget. There will be no certainty on receiving this funding until the budget is signed. All information on future funding opportunities will be on CAL FIRE’s Grant website <http://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/grants.php>.

**10. Q Can a Federal agency apply for fuels treatment dollars to reduce open burning?**

A Yes, federal agencies can apply for GGRF Fuel Reduction Grants. Eligible grantees for fuels reduction grants may be Native American tribes, public agencies, or nonprofit organizations. Per the Public Resources Code, Section

30910 (c) "Nonprofit organization" means any California corporation organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code. "

**11. Q Does the fuels reduction program (Fuels Reduction Grants or CFIP Fuels Agreements) allow for chipping and removal of small trees, brush or tops and limbs to offset the GHG outputs of open burning? It looks like a project has to have a thinning component to even be considered? Can a previous thinning that meets the GHG standards be included in the application as a "cost-share" or be given any weight in a proposal?**

A The fuels reduction programs allows for chipping and removal of hazardous fuels. Thinning should be a component of the treatment. Thinning or other treatments that have a different funding source can be used to demonstrate collaboration, but will not fulfill the CFIP landowner cost share requirements unless it is done during the CFIP agreement period.

**12. Q Is there a cap on the amount of indirect costs a grant can have in the budget?**

A The indirect rate is capped at 12% of the direct cost of the grant (excluding direct cost related to equipment purchases).

**13. Q Could this money fund the construction of a biomass facility?**

A Projects must have direct, quantifiable GHG emission reduction. Project which include a biomass facility construction and also have a direct GHG emission reduction activities conducted within the grant period could be considered for funding. Projects which have a long term biomass supply agreement would be considered as a project with direct GHG emission reduction activities. It is unlikely that standalone biomass facility construction would be a competitive project in this grant cycle if there is not direct GHG emission reduction activities associated with facility construction.

**14. Q Are implementation projects preferable over feasibility studies?**

A Yes, projects with a tangible GHG benefit are preferable; however research projects will also be funded.

**15. Q Is CEQA always required for these projects or can NEPA substitute?**

A NEPA can substitute if the conditions in [14 CCR §15221](#) are satisfied.

**16. Q When does the project need to be completed by?**

A If your project is selected for funding, it must be completed by the Project Completion Date identified in your Project Application or December 31, 2019, whichever is earlier. Under no circumstances will the project be awarded for a period beyond December 31, 2019. CFIP projects need to be completed by September 30, 2019.

**17. Q Would applying for two or more grants from different sources at the same time negate our application through the GGRF Grant Program?**

A Applying for multiple grant programs at the same time would not negate the application. However, it is expected that you would not enter into an additional grant contract award for the same portions of the same project. If portions of the project were split, grants could be obtained from different sources for the split portions, not to exceed 100% of the project value. Attempts to bill two grants for the same work within a project would likely result in legal action by the State against the applicant.

**18. Q Why was a Concept Proposal not invited to submit a Project Application?**

A The main reason projects were not invited to submit a Project Application was they were determined to not meet the minimum eligibility requirements described in the corresponding Procedural Guidelines. The most common reasons for ineligibility were:

- applicant was not eligible for programs requested;
- insufficient GHG information or project did not provide a GHG benefit;
- proposal exceeded the maximum stated grant amount; and/or

- project was not on forestland.

For CFIP Fuel Reduction submissions, some projects were determined to be eligible, but further prioritization screening determined the project was a lower priority and not invited. Also, any CFIP submission that contained reforestation activities has not yet been invited.

CFIP Reforestation project application invitations are expected to be sent in the near future.

**19. Q Will the CAL FIRE protocol for the GHG calculation be made available before the dead line?**

A Yes, the document on examples of methods for evaluating GHG reductions will be posted on CAL FIRE's grant page <http://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/grants.php>. Note that these are examples only. Using these methods does not guarantee that a proposal will be approved.

**20. Q If the CAL FIRE document on methods for evaluating GHG reductions is not posted during the application period, will the proponents be allowed to show, by some reasonable means - like a calculation done with Forest Vegetation Simulator showing more C sequestered now than before treatment - this net Carbon stored benefit?**

A Proponents may use any reasonable method at any time during the application period to calculate the GHG emission reduction. The CAL FIRE guidelines and methods for evaluation GHG document is just one suggested methodology that may be useful to applicants.

**21. Q If the GHG calculations are being done by someone with great knowledge, PhD for example, will those proposals still require a Registered Professional Forester (RPF)?**

A All proposals require a Registered Professional Forester (RPF), regardless of other qualifications.

**22. Q For CFIP Fuels Reduction funding, what were the Concept Proposal evaluations and initial selection criteria that resulted in an applicant being invited to submit a project application?**

- A The CFIP Fuels Reduction project Concept Proposal selection was based on an assessment of the project eligibility and priority.

Eligibility assessment included whether the application was eligible for programs requested; the amount of the grant requested compared to stated maximum limits; ability to finish the project within the specified maximum time allotment; project being located on forestland; project included appropriate type of work for the program; project achieved objectives of the program: Concept Proposal contained an outline of the methodology used to calculate expected GHG benefits of the project; expected co-benefits; and the disclosure that an RFP prepared the Concept Proposal.

For CFIP Fuel Reduction submissions, some projects were determined to be eligible, but further prioritization screening determined the project was a lower priority and not invited. The priority screening criteria included assessment of the level of collaboration with partners; support by CAL FIRE; and past performance of landowner; and project being part of a larger landscape plan or cohesive strategy.

- 23. Q What were the results of the Concept Proposal /Project Application invitation process in terms of who was invited and the county location of projects?**

- A The names of individuals who submitted Concept Proposals and those who received project applicant invitations are not being disclosed. All persons who will be awarded grants will be published at that time on the CAL FIRE grants web page.

- 24. Q Can an invited project applicant still apply without the GHG assessment but provide CALFIRE a methodology and then get an GHG analysis after we apply?**

- A No, all Project Applications must contain a calculation of the GHG emission reduction /carbon sequestration benefit by the application deadline, April 30th.

- 25. Q As we prepare our Projects Applications, can we get feedback to help create the strongest possible proposal?**

- A Assistance to grant applicants is limited to procedural type information that can be obtained from the Procedure Guides. CAL FIRE is committed to ensure an unbiased grant competition process, in which all applicants receive exactly the same information. This means that we cannot provide specific assistance to

individual applicants to improve their application. This Question/Answer document will be routinely updated with answers to questions received from stakeholders.

**26. Q On the Project Application, item number 5, the project location is on both Federal and Private lands, but the Ownership type box only allows for one entry. How should I handle that piece of information?**

A In item 5 check the box that corresponds to the ownership where the majority of the project is located. In the Scope of Work, Item 13 of the Application, further describe the other ownerships and corresponding acreage where the project will occur.

**27. Q Can other experienced persons who are not RPFs substitute for RPF responsibilities stated in item 12 of the Project Application?**

A No, an RPF must certify as preparing the GHG calculations. See Question /Answer #21. RPFs are also required for preparing the vegetation management prescriptions and administering the forest management project implementation.

**28. Q On the Project Application, item number 14, is budget information requested for the 2015/16 period, the entire project period, or broken down by year?**

A Information on the budget should be for the entire project period. The information should be entered in the format shown in the Sample Budget of the Procedural Guidelines. Information on annual budgets and projected expenditures on a year by year basis is useful information and can be entered in the Scope of Work in the project timeline information.

**29. Q On the Project Application, item number 40, would a project qualify as being an area adversely affected by wildfire if it is within one mile of the wildfire area?**

A This application item is assessing whether the reforestation or restoration activity is in an area of a past wildfire or other catastrophic event. Only projects where a treatment area is within the boundary of a past wildfire or other catastrophic event should respond "yes" to this question.

- 30. Q Is tuition for a graduate student an allowable expense? If yes, would this go under “Budget template” sheet?**
- A We are not disallowing these expenses up front, but a part of our evaluation of each proposal will be for cost-benefit and overall use of the funds. If these expenses directly support the overall objectives of the grant project, they should be included in the “G. Other” budget line item of the Budget template sheet.
- 31. Q Would consulting fees paid to an Advisory Board or travel expenses to the Board be an allowable expense?**
- A Expenses must directly support the overall objectives of the grant project. We are not disallowing these expenses up front, but a part of our evaluation of each proposal will be for cost-benefit and overall use of the funds.
- 32. Q On page 4 of the grant application form, there is a link to a sample budget document but the link is to the general Cal Fire Grants website. Where is the Budget template form?**
- A The budget form is available on the “Budget Template” link located in the bottom blue shaded box on the right side of the web page for all GGRF grant programs except for the CFIP grant programs. For example, the Budget Template can be found at [http://calfire.ca.gov/resource\\_mgt/resource\\_mgt\\_fuelreduction.php](http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_fuelreduction.php).
- 33. Q Are GHG reduction estimates required by April 30, 2015, and can it be assumed that they will remain largely conceptual and will be improved as part of the project?**
- A Applicants need to calculate the GHG reduction resulting from implementing the project by April 30th. This is an evaluation criterion for applications. Applicants are free to use best available data and methods that may be applicable to the project area, such as FIA data. The accuracy of the estimated GHG reduction will be a part of determining the success of the application.

34. Q **Will a research project that does not directly reduce GHGs, but improves efficiency of methods for GHG reduction or improves the knowledge base, qualify?**
- A Such a project will not be funded. There needs to be a direct quantifiable GHG reduction as a result of implementing the project.
35. Q **Can these funds be used for reduction of fuels within 100' of a house or man-made structure?**
- A Fuels reduction work with 100 ft. of a house is an eligible use of grant funds. However, in every case all grant work must be designed to achieve a GHG emission reduction or improve carbon sequestration.
36. Q **To make our project more competitive, should the scope (size) and relatedly large amount of money requested be reduced?**
- A Funding for projects are limited and requests for funds far exceeded amounts available. While not required, in some cases scaling down the project size and funding requested could make the project more competitive. Note the Project Application invitation letter stated *"We encourage you to segment your application to allow the Department flexibility to approve portions of the project if necessary."*
37. Q **Where can I find the information in regards to the Region 5 standards for nursery seedling and the USFS/CAL FIRE protocol for seed zone or climate adapted zones?**
- A The document can be found at:  
[http://calfire.ca.gov/resource\\_mgt/resource\\_mgt\\_GGRF\\_reforestation.php](http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_GGRF_reforestation.php), see the link titled "USFS Seedling Protocol". The USFS Seedling Guideline is what the USFS, CAL FIRE and the forest industry uses as a minimum size and health for successful seedling establishment.
38. Q **Do Pest Control Grants have to be in State Responsibility Area (SRA) or in a Pest Mortality Risk area?**

A There is no requirement for Pest Control Grants to be in SRA. Pest Control Grants that are in a higher pest tree mortality risk area, as determined by the Pest Risk Mortality Map link cited in the Application, are preferred and will receive a higher score in the grant project evaluation process.

**39. Q Can our local CAL FIRE forester help prepare and sign off on our Application's GHG method and calculations?**

A No. Assistance to grant applicants is limited to procedural type information that can be obtained from the Procedure Guides. See Q/A #25.

**40. Q The CAL FIRE document "Guidance on Methods and Evaluating GHG Emission Reduction for CAL FIRE Programs with GGRF" has guidance for fuel reduction projects that details typing and fire modeling methodologies that are far beyond a reasonable effort for smaller projects. What is the level of detail required for smaller projects?**

A CAL FIRE's guidance document constitutes examples of suggested methods for estimating GHG emission reduction resulting from the proposed project. Applicants are not required to use the methods described in this document. Regarding the level of detail required for smaller projects: The methods for estimating GHG emission are not necessarily scalable to the size of the project. In order to convincingly demonstrate that a project will reduce GHG emissions, a certain level of detail is necessary regardless of the size of the project. See also Q/A #20.