

**Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program
Stakeholder Workshop Feedback**

Eligible applicants

Point	Votes	Notes
<u>Tribes</u>		
Tribes Good inclusion of recognized tribes and non profits that represent tribes. Need to find out how many tribes are within boundaries of program	3	
<u>GSA's</u>		
Program is set up to go through GSAs. Some GSAs have done a great job integrating their local communities, but not all... Many have NOT! Many avenues to desired outcomes	11	Multiple types of organizations are eligible applicants. Those who are not must partner with a GSA in order to ensure appropriate accounting of groundwater benefits; however, the extent to which the GSA leads or is involved beyond that may vary. The statewide support entity will assist in building regional capacity to facilitate this work in future.
Many GSAs in critically overdrafted basins may not have approved plans by March 21, and will likely have deficiencies with 180 days to fix	2	GSAs are not required to have an approved plan to submit an application. Critically overdrafted basins must have an approved plan to be an eligible area; however, critically overdrafted basins that are also either a high or medium priority basin subject to an emergency drought declaration may qualify for funding under that eligibility allowance.
<u>General Comments</u>		
Fewer high-capacity block recipients that can better disseminate information from subawardees; also, consider ability to streamline implementation and permitting.	1	
We are part of a GSA and the current list of eligible applicants would be OK with our GSA.	0	

Proposed Deliverables

Point	Votes	Notes
<u>Ensuring long-term benefits/Prioritizing long-term land use change</u>		
prioritize incentivizing the long-term land-use changes we want to see in the future, beyond the 10-year impact period/Concerned that 10 years will not address potential urbanization of sensitive ag lands and habitat - need more permanence.	15	We provide both ten-year and longer term funding options.
Conservation measures should be permanent and not just in place for a period of years (e.g. fee acquisition or easements).	2	
<u>Landowner participation and incentives</u>		
Need to prioritize landowner participation (including as applicants/financial incentives to landowners); also prioritize land that is no longer viable	17	Block grant recipients are required to engage farmers and ranchers in the development of the Land Repurposing Plan, which will outline the block grant recipient's strategy for land repurposing and identify and prioritize projects for funding. Landowners are eligible to receive incentive payments directly from the block grant recipients for land repurposing work.
Shifting crops requires new equipment, distribution channels, irrigation methods to still compete with out of state or international sources/Just because a crop can be grown (dry farm), doesn't mean that a farmer can do it economically./ Funding needs to be enough so that a farmer with poor land can retire that land and develop another revenue stream on that land to still support his/her family/Landowners will look to minimize economic losses and stay viable / solvent in any possible. Structure incentives accordingly.	17	
What are the mechanisms for private landowners' submission of lands for repurposing, aside from conservation easements?	2	Landowners may undertake any of the eligible activities/project types listed.

For incentives, take a look at Grasslands Reserve Program for examples of payments	1	
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<u>Relationship between planning and implementation</u>		
lots of regional planning has been done, need to ensure we build on that to minimize planning components	7	
Need more info on how existing plans and GSPs will be integrated into a repurposing plan/project development deliverable	3	Relevant work for GSP can and should be incorporated/used toward MLRP Plan, but the State cannot pay for work already completed. The program can only pay for work conducted during the grant term. Projects already developed through GSP work can be funded using MLRP implementation dollars.
Projects should be consistent with GSPs	3	This is required by the program. Added clarification to draft guidelines.
Need to have the ability to bring projects forward without planning process.	2	This is explicitly allowed by the program.
There are systemic gaps in planning and project delivery ... regional capacity, labor, materials. Collaborations key, but uneven capacity/greatest need regions are least equipped to put together a competitive package; need TA	1	One of the statewide support entity's tasks will be to build capacity in those regions where support is needed to ensure they can put together a competitive application in future
<u>Ensuring measurable outcomes</u>		
recharge is required; others-- energy generated, carbon sequestered etc	6	
You have to use process, capacity and partnership measures to get this launched.	4	
Higher report-back requirements to DOC and the community to inform subsequent repurposing efforts./Communicate how priorities get translated into funding decisions	3	
How would a GSA demonstrate that it will fulfill its grant obligation to administer a program that benefits an area beyond its service area	1	Through partnerships with other GSAs/entities outside that specific GSA's service area. Many GSAs/orgs have already gone through this exercise for WCP.
<u>Statewide Support Entity</u>		
The diverse set of deliverables & expertise expected of the 1 statewide entity seems unrealistic. Will the statewide entity be allowed to subcontract w/ experts to help them deliver?	5	Yes; It can be a single entity or partnership, but in either case the statewide support entity would be allowed to subcontract to perform services it doesn't have the capacity to conduct in-house.
<u>Project implementation priorities to consider</u>		
Prioritize projects that achieve multiple environmental benefits: water conservation, wildlife habitat, water conservation, air quality	5	
Seems like funding for rewilding/regenerating should be paramount. Letting animals get the water and carbon cycles restored while life back	3	
Prioritize land that is no longer viable	3	(see also "Landowner Participation" above)
sustainable working lands is great - should be preference given to introducing or sustaining working animals to help restore those lands/special consideration given to conventional crops/livestock operations that want to go regenerative	3	
prioritize highly erodible land (tracked by NRCS)	2	
Focus should be on water and land use. Carbon considerations should be addressed separately.	2	
Concerned about the program's emphasis on switching from more intensive water uses to just less intensive, rather than restoration or other	2	The program is designed to be flexible and allow for multiple land repurposing options depending on what is most appropriate for the area.
Avoided future water demand, not only reducing irrigated acreage, should be a project category	2	
many stakeholders see land fallowing as an absolute last resort	2	The program is designed to incentivize uses that avoid fallowing.

Do not provide funding to lands not irrigated since 2015 unless it is a continuation of an existing local conservation program.	1	
can lands already converted away from AG such as solar fields be eligible? We've had farmers go this route and might be interested in funding	1	
how is climate impact going to be considered? happy that biodiversity is in there but need climate metrics up top and as deliverables	1	
separate funding stream for eg reference laboratory to do pre and post soil carbon measurements	1	Research is an optional cost that can be funded by individual block grant recipients.
Grants for animal ag farmers that want to switch to dry farming?	1	These would fall under sub-grants provided by regional block grant recipients to landowners, as long as the work met the program requirements for project implementation. Incentive payments item will be expanded to "landowners, farmers, and ranchers" to allow lessees access to funds to transition operations.
habitat/green space often makes farmers nervous that they'll be opening up their land to hikers, cyclists, recreational access	0	The program does not require landowners to allow public access unless the project is specifically a recreation project, and in that case, block grant recipients would need to work with landowners on a voluntary basis to implement those projects.
For definitions of small/medium farmers, look at regulatory programs such as Irrigated Lands Reg program and Air Quality orgs	0	
Monitoring		
Importance of funding long-term monitoring and stewardship costs for land restoration projects (not just initial cost of land)	11	These are eligible costs. Funding project monitoring is a deliverable of the program to ensure these costs are covered.

Funding Distribution

Point	Votes	Notes
Match Requirement		
50% match may be difficult to meet; what specifically does it apply to? Can there be a waiver for disadvantaged communities?	23	Applies only to project implementation. Discuss whether to remove requirement or allow no match for DAC projects.
Reduce the funding cost-match for DAC related projects	2	
Targeted Program Focus		
\$50 million does not seem like a lot when compared to the size of the agricultural sector. Considering targeted focus intial for local economy of scale, getting some demonstrated success to build on./prioritize strategic use of funds--not enough to support landowners for acquisition/easements	11	
Objectives are too broad for only \$50 mill. Need clarification on what will be prioritized.	2	
Prioritize funding to reach as many landowners and farmers on implementation, less on planning	3	
Prioritize funding on critical basins	2	
Disadvantaged Communities		
Would be good to see a set percent (40%?) dedicated to DACs	2	
Miscellaneous		
Elucidate Decision Support System to evaluate these projects and provide transparency in how they are scored.	6	Block grant recipient and statewide support entity selection criteria and scoring system will be provided in the full Guidelines.
What is the process/guidance by which block grantees will decide which projects get funded? How much autonomy? Is there a framework to follow?	5	work with statewide support entity and DOC to ensure consistency of projects with program goals and requirements. Block grant recipients will have flexibility to decide how best to disperse funds to contractors/subgrantees/landowners for projects, whether projects will be funded on a competitive, non-competitive, or first-come first-serve basis, and to select which projects best meet their regional priorities within the context of the state program's goals (not all State goals/outcomes may apply to every region, and each region may work toward the goals that best fit their regional context).

What is envisioned by DOC as the size of a region?	0	DOC does not have a defined ideal region size. The region size should be determined by the applicant based on the work they wish to accomplish with this funding.
Concern on impacts of SGMA and GSAs, want to ensure there are smaller project funds that can be accessed more easily	0	Block grant recipients will make smaller grants/contracts to local entities/landowners to conduct work/implement projects
\$50 million may go far in developing clear, concise pathways for projects for landowners over the coming decades.	0	

Partnerships & Collaboration

Point	Votes	Notes
<u>Landowners as partners</u>		
Make landowners (not just local agencies) partners. Ease risks and impacts. Breakdown possible mistrust. Dont forget leasees/it needs to be clear how being involved will help them continue doing business /producing if possible (a financial benefit).	17	Landowners, farmers, and ranchers are an integral component of the program, and block grant recipients will be required to engage farmers and ranchers in their work. Landowners are not defined as partners by the program because a partner as defined by the program is an organization that provides a financial commitment to the work conducted under the grant.
<u>Agency Advisory Group</u>		
oversight at the DOC level and the statewide coordinator level does not include stakeholders like farmers/rangers or NGOs like Audubon/Add an advisory group to work with the statewide implementer that includes statewide NGOs like ag associations and environmental justice./Consider having practitioners, RCDs, Point Blue, etc	16	Agency Advisory Group convened for the very specific purpose of receiving guidance on state-specific priorities/needs. We agree that additional input from other sectors is beneficial and welcome other groups to convene to inform our work. Consider whether this may be the responsibility of the statewide support entity or a third party.
<u>Incorporation of diverse interests</u>		
Mistrust between ag and environmental interests/Using non profit tax exempt organizations like ag associations (ie. Farm Bureaus) would also be a valuable way to build trust with farmers.	8	Non-profits are eligible applicants for block grants and are eligible to be subgrantees through block grant recipients. Block grant recipients will be highly encouraged to engage with non-profits and other entities to conduct their work.
Identifying regional big players is important- notably, cattlemen, farmers, environmental justice groups.	4	
Draft summary does not articulate how disadvantaged communities will be engaged and meaningfully benefit outreach is outdated approach/need to ensure more input from small farmers and DACs	3	
How can local food companies support (and get in contact with) farmers for collaborative grant applications?	3	This will be addressed at the regional block grant level
Public outreach and engagement of beneficial users within project area	1	
<u>Miscellaneous</u>		
Farmworker communities could establish Controlled Environment Production centers (aquaponics, hydroponics) with cooperative marketing./Grazing Collaborative: Connect grazers to adjacent properties. Opportunity for grazing cover crops but need adjacent non-irrigated land.	2	
Irrigation districts don't all interoperate due to either bureaucratic or physical reasons, limits ability to use surface water for recharge in surplus years	2	
Need list of attendees to help form partnerships	1	To be provided
Lack of clarity on how partnership is demonstrated leaves program at risk of same pitfalls as DWR SGMA funding.	1	Letters of support with specifics from partners on financial contributions and what portions of grant work they will conduct will be required in application as proof. Applicant will also need to identify how much of their budget they intend to put toward supporting partner capacity in their
Landowner education will be needed in order to have buy-in. Will a specific organization be responsible for outreach per blockgrant region?	1	Statewide support entity available to assist. Each block grant recipient can also contract with individual service providers or conduct the outreach themselves.
Farm Service Agency administers the Conservation Reserve Program since 1985 which is very similar to the goals of MLRP	1	

Other

Point	Votes	Notes
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<u>Landowner concerns</u>		
Need to develop pathway to protect against increased liability for take of endangered species. Maybe safe harbors or other mechanisms.	5	
Information about how permit requirements interact with projects should be collected by DOC (CV Salts, ILRP, water rights, etc.)	5	
Shock and awe- growers are challenged by reality with the water situation, land retirements, they want to keep producing food	1	
<u>Program Structure</u>		
It seems hard to achieve landscape scale wildlife connectivity with current program design.	4	
Concern about structure of program; management challenges of block grant managers and concern about lack of identification of statewide entity	0	
Backstops to ensure that these funds don't result regional economic instability, disproportionate impact on small farmers, etc.	2	
<u>Groundwater Accounting</u>		
Conservation projects may want to have access to the groundwater credits that may be generated by the land repurposing.	3	
Only the portion of a project that is funded with public funding should apply to the statute regarding ground water accounting	1	
How are pumping or other water savings reductions with term agreements tracked and reflected over time vis-a-vis SGMA?	1	
How will demand reduction / water reduction be demonstrated? Will recharge projects require evidence of a right to water that could be used?	1	
<u>Miscellaneous</u>		
Advocates would like to see more funding for the program	5	
Maintain a flexible, local approach, with metrics by which it is going to be evaluated.	6	
Our Farm Bureau is administering a CA RCD Grant, and we see a lot of conflicting advice about cover crops (pro/cons) due to water shortages	3	
Williamson Act issues will need thoughtful straightening out over time. DOC well positioned to help in this area.	2	
How to maximize compatibility/integration with other programs?	2	
project examples would be really helpful	2	
Our GSA has a vision for a potential wildlife corridor from the foothills in the east all the way to the western boundary of the Subbasin.	1	That's exactly the kind of vision we'd like to see.
important to focus on protecting broader economic and community values along with multiple benefits at the project level	0	This is a goal of the program.