

## **Fiscal Year 2020 RCPP Renewals Implementation**

The 2018 Farm Bill allows USDA to develop a process to allow for noncompetitive renewals of successful RCPP projects. NRCS will start offering these renewals in fiscal year (FY) 2020. This document provides partners with details of the RCPP Renewals process and policy.

### **Due Date**

Partners interested in being considered for a FY 2020 renewal must submit their self-assessment worksheet to their lead NRCS State office no later than September 15, 2019.

### **Renewals Process**

- Projects where 90 percent or more of the allocated NRCS financial assistance (FA) funds are obligated or scheduled for obligation by September 30, 2020 will receive priority consideration for renewal.
- Date of agreement expiration is not an eligibility criterion, though if funds are constrained, projects expiring in FY 2020 may be afforded priority consideration for available funds.
- Lead partners interested in renewing their existing RCPP projects must indicate their interest by completing a self-assessment worksheet.
- Lead State Conservationists must review each worksheet and, if they concur and support a project renewal, submit the worksheet to national RCPP staff.
- For multi-state projects, the lead State Conservationist should consult with the other relevant State Conservationists.
- The NRCS Chief makes the final renewal selections and will announce the provisional renewal offers through a national press release no later than November 15, 2019.
- Lead partners offered a provisional renewal must then enter the RCPP Portal and complete a streamlined application (to ensure consistency with the new RCPP rules and regulations) by December 31, 2019.
- NRCS intends to complete RCPP Renewal partnership agreements by March 31, 2020.

### **RCPP Renewals Criteria**

The self-assessment worksheet contains the criteria against which each lead partner seeking a renewal will be evaluated. The FY 2020 renewals criteria are:

- Attainment of project goals and objectives
- Overall project accomplishments
- Project reporting—timeliness and completion
- Obligation of FA and TA funding

- Partner contribution expenditures

The worksheet will also require lead partners to describe in broad terms their future project plans should they be chosen for a renewal.

### **Additional Provisions**

- Any existing National pool project will be shifted to the new State/Multistate pool. National pool projects must select a State to process their renewal self-assessments.
- Renewal funding requests are limited to the funding amount awarded for the existing project.
- Partner contributions for renewed projects must be of a ratio equal to or greater than the original negotiated contributions of the existing project. For example, if the negotiated contribution/NRCS funding ratio is 1:1 for the existing RCPP project, it must be at least that for the renewed project. Similarly, if the contribution/NRCS funding ratio is 2:1 for the existing RCPP project, it must be at least that for the renewed project.
- Renewed projects may continue the existing project or propose to expand the scope of the existing project, if the scope expansion remains within the objectives and purposes of the original partnership agreement.
  - A continuation means that the project is effectively the same but new producers will be engaged in conservation activities.
  - An expansion of scope refers to a change or expansion of geographic area, conservation activities (e.g., adding new practices or easements to a project that didn't have them previously), or resource concerns (e.g., the previous project solely focused on water quality and now proposes to add air quality as a resource concern).
- Projects may be renewed for up to five years. The RCPP statute allows projects to be extended one time for up to 12 months. Partners with proposed renewal activities that cannot be fully implemented in this period should consider applying competitively for a new project, where longer projects may be considered.