

## Groundwater to Surface Water Conversion Grant Criteria

The Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) is offering grant funding to be used for water projects targeted at converting lands irrigated from groundwater to surface water irrigation (Conversion Projects). The IWRB has developed these criteria to provide financial assistance on a statewide basis.

**Eligible Projects:** Projects located in eligible geographic areas that propose to convert from groundwater to surface water irrigation. Hard Conversions are projects that would permanently convert to the use of surface water. Soft Conversions projects would partially convert to the use of surface water but may have to use groundwater when surface water is not available.

**Eligible Entities:** Groundwater Districts, Irrigation Districts, Irrigation Boards of Control, Canal Companies. Individuals must apply through one of the eligible entities.

**Eligible Geographic Area:** Statewide basins that have been designated Critical Groundwater Areas and Groundwater Management Areas under Code Title 42, Chapter 233a and 233b

**Grant Award Limit:** \$5 million per application (IWRB reserves the right to fully allocate the total budget among the applicants)

**Total Budget:** \$20 million total funds available

### Grant Considerations:

- IWRB grant portion cannot exceed 1/2 (50%) of total project costs for soft conversions. IWRB grant portion cannot exceed 3/4 (75%) of total project costs for hard conversions.
- Must agree to cease pumping the proposed portion of groundwater related to project and that delivered conversion water will be used only on lands with an existing groundwater right tied to this project. Groundwater rights previously used on the conversion project lands cannot be put in the Water Bank for lease.
- Conversions projects are required to be at least 80% efficient (for every acre-ft of conversion water they receive, must be able to measure and record 0.8 acre-ft of groundwater savings based on their historic baseline pumping.)
- If project construction is underway or completed by the application deadline the project is not eligible for this funding opportunity.

**Grant Application Requirements:** Grant applications will require the applicant to provide the following information:

- Project background (infrastructure description, repair, rehabilitation, improvement needs/objectives/benefits)
- Project sponsor description (organization type, background, revenue sources, current operations)
- Project description (narrative, map, 30% design plans and cost estimates, land entitlements at project location, description of any known environmental issues).

- Project budget and implementation schedule
- Project funding sources (IWRB grant, other state and federal grants, sponsor's contribution)
- If not directly diverting from a river, documentation is required from Irrigation District/Canal Company of support for the project and agreement to deliver the surface water supply for the conversion project, and documentation of long-term leases, storage water, existing shares, etc. to support the proposed project. Documentation should address the term of the surface water delivery agreement and how often water will be available to support the project.
- Documentation from Groundwater District of support for the project and agreement to administer the pumping reduction.

**Evaluation Criteria:** To maximize the effective and efficient use of available funds, grant applications submitted by eligible entities for eligible projects will be evaluated, scored (*100-point scale*), and ranked according to the following criteria. Project scoring will be used to prioritize funding. Applications shall discuss how the project under consideration meets the evaluation criteria.

Benefits/Effectiveness (Up to 75 points)

- Project with a greater percentage of pumping offset will receive more points (up to 15 points)
- What is the reduction in average annual groundwater pumping in acre-feet associated with this project? (Up to 10 points)
- What is the dependability and duration of the water supply? (up to 5 points)
- Application has demonstrated aquifer storage benefits and/or reach gain benefits associated with the project? Applicants should submit modeling results to support their claims. (up to 20 points)
- Does the project involve multiple entities, or is the project regionally focused? (up to 5 points)
- Does the project have a recharge component? (up to 10 points)
- More points for conversions that are greater than 85% efficient. (up to 10 points)

Project Proposal Clarity and Detail (up to 15 points)

- Clarity and detail of project proposal: need, description, budget and benefits (*up to 5 points*)
- Plans and specifications included with the grant application (*up to 5 points*)
- Description of the personnel (sponsor employees, contractors and/or volunteers) that will plan, design, construct and implement the proposed project (descriptions may include the number, qualifications (resumes if applicable) and time of personnel that will be involved in the project. (*up to 5 points*))

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Urgency of Project (up to 10 points)

- Urgency of the project (up to 10 points)

**Grant Process:**

- Applicants will create their own application document. The application document will address the grant application requirements **and** the evaluation criteria listed above.
- Submit applications to [IWRBGrants@idwr.idaho.gov](mailto:IWRBGrants@idwr.idaho.gov) by due date
- IWRB staff will evaluate and make project funding recommendations to IWRB Finance Committee.
- IWRB reviews Finance Committee recommendation and makes grant funding awards
- IWRB staff will notify project applicants of grant approval
- Grant contracts between the IWRB and project sponsors will be developed and executed following IWRB funding awards
- Costs incurred after the date of IWRB grant funding award are eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursement requests can be made once a cost-reimbursement contract is established between Sponsor and IWRB. No reimbursement will be made until the contracts are fully executed. Projects completed prior to a contract being established are not eligible for reimbursement.
- During and/or after project implementation, IWRB will distribute and/or reimburse grantees for projects costs per those contracts. Grant reimbursement requests should be sent to [IdwrPayable@idwr.idaho.gov](mailto:IdwrPayable@idwr.idaho.gov)
- Additional funding rounds will be held if more funding becomes available