

At a Glance:
**Conservation Innovation
Grants**

May 2008

Overview

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural production. Under this competitive grant program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds are awarded to non-Federal or Tribal governments, non-governmental organizations, or individuals.

Through CIG, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with other public and private entities to accelerate technology transfer and the adoption of promising approaches to address some of the Nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. CIG benefits agricultural producers by providing more options for environmental enhancement and compliance with Federal, State, and local regulations.

The national component of the CIG competition generally seeks projects that will benefit a large geographic area (watershed, region, multi-State, or nationwide). An Announcement of Program Funding is issued annually for the specific natural resource concerns eligible for these grants. State-level competitions may also be offered.

Selected applicants may receive grants of up to 50 percent of the total project cost and must provide matching non-Federal fund for at least 50 percent of the project cost, of which no more than one-half (25 percent of the total

project cost) may come from in-kind contributions.

Up to 10 percent of CIG funds each year may be set aside for applications from beginning, limited resource, or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers; Tribes; or community-based organizations comprised of or representing these entities. Matching funds for grants to any of these individuals or entities may consist of up to 75 percent in-kind contributions.

Legislative Changes

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) expands the CIG objectives to include forest resource management and projects that provide conservation benefits through increased participation by producers of specialty crops, and to emphasize the effective transfer of technologies demonstrated through CIG.

More Information

For more information about CIG and other Farm Bill topics, please refer to the USDA Web site <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill> or the Natural Resources Conservation Service Web site: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/>

