

CFLRP Tier 1 Pre-Proposal Application Process Overview and Criteria

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# **Welcome!**

*Thank you for your interest in submitting a proposal for CFLRP! A few notes to get you started:*

* CFLRP represents a significant investment of funding to help transform a collaborative vision into action on the ground. Since its inception in 2009, we have learned much about CFLRP implementation and what potential applicants may want to consider in determining whether CFLRP is a good fit for them - and to help evaluate whether the proposed project would compete well.
	+ **Given that, we recommend potential applicants review and discuss the “****[Is CFLRP Right for Us](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/documents/cflrp/is-cflrp-right-for-us.docx)?” overview and guide first**.
	+ Please know that developing a full CFLRP proposal (more information on the pre-proposal vs the full proposal below) is a significant investment of time. In part for that reason, we encourage you to take time to check in early with your Forest Service Regional Office to ensure the investment in proposal development aligns with the CFLRP program and priorities. Note: Future funding for additional CFLRP projects is unknown.

# **Request for Proposals Process Overview**:

*The proposal process for new CFLRP projects will involve two tiers of review. The purpose of the two-tier process is to minimize the time field units need to invest in proposal development and ensure alignment.*

* **Tier 1 (Pre-Proposal)**: Use the [Tier 1 template](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/documents/cflrp/tier1-application-template.docx) to provide a brief and high-level description of the proposed CFLRP project. The US Forest Service Regional Offices will evaluate Tier 1 proposals using a common set of criteria, and the Regional Forester will determine which projects will be invited to submit a full Tier 2 proposal.
* **Tier 2 (Full Proposal)**: Project proposals selected in Tier 1 will proceed with detailed proposal development. These proposals will be reviewed for completeness by the Regional Office, and if they meet all of the CFLRP eligibility criteria (see [Is CFLRP Right for Us](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/documents/cflrp/is-cflrp-right-for-us.docx)?), they will be submitted to the [CFLRP Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Committee](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLRP/advisory-panel.shtml) for evaluation based on criteria in the authorizing legislation and the Infrastructure Law. The CFLRP FACA Committee will make recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary (or delegate) will determine which projects to select for funding. Note: Future funding for additional CFLRP projects is unknown.

# **Timeline:**

*The entire proposal process, from the release of the template and materials to when the full proposals are due, spans 7 months. Besides the final deadline for Tier 2 proposals, Regions may establish different Region-specific deadlines as needed.*

**Week of March 28:**USDA Forest Service Washington Office sends Request for Proposals (RFP) and guidance package to Regional Foresters.

**May 9:** Suggested deadline to submit Tier 1 proposals to the Regional Offices. This allows 6 weeks for Tier 1 development. Regions may establish a different Region-specific deadline if desired.

**June 6:** Suggested deadline for Regional Offices to issue decisions on which proposals advance to Tier 2. This allows 4 weeks for Regional Tier 1 review.

**October 10:** Suggested deadline to submit Tier 2 proposals to the Regional Offices. This allows just over 4 months for Tier 2 development. Regions may establish a different Region-specific deadline if desired*.*

**October 24: LAST DAY for the Regional Forester nominations of final Tier 2 proposals to be submitted to the CFLRP FACA Committee through the Washington Office.***\**

**October 2022**: Expected earliest time the CFLRP FACA Committee can convene.\*

**Fall/Winter 2022**: Expected earliest time Secretary (or his designee) will make selection decision.\*

*\***If the CFLRP FACA Committee convening is delayed, the Washington Office will notify the Regions of any extensions to the deadlines above.*

# **Instructions for Regional Office Review Team:**

*To review the Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals, it is recommended that each Regional Office do the following:*

**Form an interdisciplinary review team**. It is recommended that each Regional Office forms an interdisciplinary team to review the Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals that includes representatives from:

* National Forest System including staff with an ecological background and/or experience with integrated ecological restoration
* Hazardous Fuels
* State and Private Forestry
* Others as needed. Suggestions to consider include Partnerships/Communications/Collaborative Capacity and a line officer who had a CFLRP project.

**Interact with applicants during the process:** Follow up on questions and learn more as needed. This may take the form of a proposal presentation, virtually or in person. There is Regional discretion on the approach.

**Evaluate Tier 1 proposals using the Tier 1 Review Checklists (below).** The Regional Office team should review each Tier 1 pre-proposal to evaluate whether they meet all of the Tier 1 criteria. Regions have discretion to further define the criteria as needed.

Regional Office teams should be aware of the CFLRP eligibility and selection criteria from the CFLRP authorizing legislation and the additional selection considerations outlined in the Infrastructure Law (see [Is CFLRP Right for Us](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/documents/cflrp/is-cflrp-right-for-us.docx)?).

**Provide a rationale for decision**. Regional Review Teams are asked to provide a brief write-up of their decision rationale for each proposal reviewed to share with the applicants. Rationales will made available to the Committee if interested. After providing response and rationale for decision, ensure selected Tier 1 applicants have the information needed to complete Tier 2 full proposal development.

**Evaluate Tier 2 proposals using the CFLRP Eligibility Criteria from the CFLRP Statute.** See forthcoming Tier 2 Full Proposal Package for additional details.

**Submit Tier 2 proposals by October 24** (with Regional Office rankings, if applicable and desired) to National Forest System Deputy Chief Christopher B. French (chris.french@usda.gov), with a cc to Lindsay Buchanan, National CFLRP Coordinator (Lindsay.buchanan@usda.gov). If the Committee selection process is delayed, the Washington Office will notify all Regional reviewer points of contact.

**Tier 1 Pre-Proposal**

# **Who Can Apply?**

Those interested in applying to CFLRP are advised to review the “[Is CFLRP Right for Us](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/documents/cflrp/is-cflrp-right-for-us.docx)?” guidelines, as well as the rest of this document. These resources provide information on the types of projects that may be considered for CFLRP.

## **Pre-Proposal (Tier 1) Instructions for Applicants**

**The intent of the Tier 1 (or Pre-Proposal) is to communicate general information about the context of the CFLRP landscape you plan to propose, and the needs and opportunities you plan to address.** This information will allow a Regional review team to determine which proposals meet the criteria to advance to full proposal development. Applicants selected in Tier 1 will be asked to submit a complete Tier 2 proposal.

**While all proposals must be submitted via the local Forest Service unit(s), active collaborative and partner involvement in crafting the proposal reflects the shared ownership and alignment central to CFLRP**. Specific Tier 1 submission instructions will be provided by your Forest Service Region’s [CFLRP Coordinator](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLRP/overview.shtml).

**To complete the pre-proposal, please fill out the** [**template**](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/documents/cflrp/tier1-application-template.docx). *Before moving ahead, we recommend you review the formatting and guidance below.*

## **Formatting:**

Proposals need to be relatively uniform to allow efficient and timely evaluation. The guidelines ensure a standard organization.

* Responses should be typed into the Word Document template.
* The total document should be no more than 6 pages
* Proposals should use 12 point font.
* Page numbers should appear in the bottom of each page.

## **Additional Tier 1 Template Guidance**:

General definitions for key terms used in the template (for example, “collaborative,” “adaptive management,” etc.) are available on the **Glossary page** of the CFLRP website [here](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLRP/glossary.shtml).

Note that the Infrastructure Law requires that the program “discontinues funding for a project that fails to achieve the results included in a project proposal[…] for more than 2 consecutive years.” Applicants are encouraged to be ambitious but realistic when developing their proposed program of work.

**Question #3: Where is the proposed CFLRP landscape?**

Follow the instructions in the template. Note: adjustments to the landscape boundary may be made for the Tier 2 detailed proposal, if needed, in coordination with the Regional review team. In the table, “Estimated total area to be treated in acres” refers to the area proposed for treatment over the life of the CFLRP project (up to ten years). In other words, what is the **estimated footprint or spatial extent of treatments**? Each acre should only count once: if you would expect an acre to be treated more than once (more than one treatment type, or multiple treatments over time), you would only count it once. While not all treatments are acre-based, the intent is to provide a general sense for the scale.

**Question #14: Estimated total implementation and monitoring funding requests**:

Please provide the total expected cost of the CFLRP project implementation and monitoring *across all lands* within the proposed CFLRP landscape in year 1 and in year 1 through 10. This should include:

* The ***CFLRP funding*** (which can cover **up to 50% of the costs** of implementation and monitoring on National Forest System lands only). Funding for projects selected under this RFP can include a mix of funds under the CFLN and Infrastructure Law Budget Line Items (BLIs).
* Projects may request **up to $4M annually** **for discretionary expenses** as described below.
	+ Starting in Fiscal Year 2021, CFLN covers discretionary expenses NOT salary and expenses. Regions should be prepared to cover the additional salary and expense costs associated with successful execution of a CFLRP project. Any increase in staffing should be considered in the context of sustainable, long-term operations and a ramp down after CFLRP.
		- **Discretionary Costs:** (Term not specific to CFLRP - related to USFS FY21 budget modernization categories): Contracts, agreements, materials, supply, fleet
		- **Salary and Expense Costs:** (Term not specific to CFLRP - related to FY21 budget modernization): Salary (permanent and temporary employees), overtime, awards, travel, training, transfer of station. NOTE: Salary time spent on CFLRP implementation or monitoring may count as match. This time will be coded with a CFLRP shorthand code.
	+ While the focus is not on equipment acquisition, if there is equipment needed that would be key to implementation of the proposal, that may be included and described in the Tier 2 proposal. The Forest Service provides additional guidance that up to 10% of the CFLRP funding can be spent on monitoring.
* Other ***Forest Service appropriated and perm and trust*** funds for implementation and monitoring on National Forest System lands (and other lands via agreements such as the Wyden Amendment[[1]](#footnote-1)). **Units should work with Regional Office staff to determine funding availability.**
* ***Partner contributions*** includes funds contributed through agreements and in-kind contributions for implementation and monitoring *across all lands* within the proposed CFLRP landscape.
	+ Partner contributions **through agreements** represents the transfer of actual funding.
	+ Partner contributions **in-kind** represents the expected value of goods, services, and time contributed from partners for CFLRP project implementation and monitoring.
* ***Goods for services*** generated through stewardship contracts. This category includes service work paid for through the exchange of goods for services in a stewardship contract or agreement. CFLRP projects report on the service work claimed as match (the contract’s credit limit in the year awarded). Please also note Program Revenue through Good Neighbor Authority expected to be invested in the CFLRP proposal.

*Note that a more detailed proposed funding plan will be required for the Tier 2 full proposals.*

* **Funding for any needed NEPA work:** Planning funding cannot be covered by CFLRP funding and should not be included in any of the categories above. Please provide an estimate of the total planning funding needed to implement the proposed strategy over the 10-year period for Regional review.

## **Questions?**

Please contact the Regional CFLRP Coordinator for your Region with questions about the Tier 1 pre-proposal review. This contact information is available on the CFLRP website [here](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLRP/overview.shtml).

# **How will Tier 1 Pre-Proposals be evaluated?** **Regional Office Review Checklist:**

*The Regional Office review team will review all Tier 1 proposals submitted and evaluate whether they meet the Tier 1 review criteria below, which serve to indicate fit with CFLRP and appropriateness of investing time to develop a full Tier 2 CFLRP proposal. The criteria are intended to allow space for adaptation given the context of a particular Region. CFLRP project proposals that meet* ***all of these*** *criteria will be asked to prepare a full Tier 2 proposal.*

## **Criteria for Tier 1 Project Proposals**

1. Proposed landscape[[2]](#footnote-2) reflects an appropriate spatial scale (at least 50,000 acres of mostly NFS lands). **(Question 3)**
2. Proposed landscape is “NEPA ready,” meaning signed NEPA exists and/or will be ready in time for scheduled implementation **(Question 4)**
3. Proposal includes clear description of economic, ecological, and social needs and desired outcomes once the work is completed **(Question 5)**
4. Proposal includes description of risks from wildfire and the wildfire hazard potential in the project area **(Question 6)**
5. Proposal identifies key resources, services, and/or values at risk from wildfire and describes overlap with wildland-urban interface and/or public drinking water source areas[[3]](#footnote-3) (**Question 7**)
6. Proposal clearly aligns with National and Regional priorities, including cross-boundary coordination[[4]](#footnote-4) at the appropriate scale for mutually-defined priorities and outcomes **(Question 8)**
7. Proposed core treatment activities are expected to address the key resources, services, and/or values at risk **(Question 9)**
8. Proposed treatment activities align with capacity for implementation **(Question 10)**
9. Project is expected to be accessible by existing or proposed wood products infrastructure/markets that are needed to implement the proposal **(Question 11)**
10. Expected collaborative partners demonstrate participation representing multiple, diverse interests **(Question 12)**
11. Expected collaborative partners have demonstrated successes to date **(Question 13)**
12. The initial funding request is reasonable given the scale and range of work **(Question 14)**
13. Proposal proponents checked the box to confirm review of the CFLRP eligibility criteria; Regional review team concurs given information in pre-proposal, eligibility criteria could be met in a final proposal
14. Proposal had support from Forest(s) unit leadership, as indicated by Forest Supervisor signature
1. <https://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/wyden/index.shtml> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As a reference, per the US Forest Service, National Forest System, Land Management Planning Directive, a “landscape” is *a defined area irrespective of ownership or other artificial boundaries, such as a spatial mosaic of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, landforms, and plant communities, repeated in similar form throughout such a defined area*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Planned treatment of acres in the wildland-urban interface or in public drinking water source areas is not required, but the Infrastructure Law calls for priority to be given to projects that will treat acres that have been identified as having very high wildfire hazard potential and are located in the wildland-urban interface or a public drinking water source area. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Minimum standard for “cross-boundary” is that the CFLRP project is coordinated with a larger cross-boundary strategy. Regional review teams may establish a more detailed definition if needed. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)