



FOCUSED INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS (FIPs)

FIP APPLICATION LAND ACQUISITION GUIDANCE 2023-2025

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Background

Land acquisition is an eligible grant type in Focused Investment Partnership initiatives. This guidance is provided to clarify how land acquisition applications are included and processed within FIPs since they operate somewhat differently than other application types.

Land Acquisition Application Requirements for FIP

For FIP initiatives that include land acquisition projects in their proposed Work Plans, the following attachment must be submitted at the time of initiative-level application for Biennium 1, and at the time of progress reporting (in January of odd-numbered years) for Biennia 2 and 3:

Work Plan Attachment: A summary of each proposed land acquisition project, including the proposed transaction approach and timing, lead organization, restoration objectives, and how the restoration objectives align with the proposed FIP ecological outcomes.

Rationale:

- The work plan submitted with the initiative-level application is the only opportunity for the OWEB Board to consider these perpetual investments.
- Clearly identified projects assist OWEB with appropriately planning for staff workload associated with land acquisition transactions each biennium. This allows staff to provide a higher level of service to grantees.
- Implementation of land acquisition projects are highly dependent upon OWEB's Land Acquisition Coordinator and the capacity of other OWEB staff. A land acquisition project typically requires two or more years from the time the application is submitted to the time the transaction is completed. OWEB staff carefully manage their time to provide grantees with the quick turnaround necessary for real estate transactions. Unanticipated transactions through the FIP program create uncertainty in staff capacity and hinder the ability of staff to respond to grantee requests in a timely manner. Agency staffing issues are addressed through the state budgeting process each biennium. This process is not nimble enough to respond to the fluctuating need of staff to manage unanticipated transaction workload.

Additional Guidance: Despite the FIP context, land acquisition transactions are not assured of funding until the FIP partner has met all the funding conditions in the project-level grant agreement.

Rationale:

OWEB cannot determine the acceptability of a proposed transaction until the grantee has met all the funding conditions for the project. Once a transaction is complete, it is difficult or impossible to change certain aspects of the transaction, and the grantee may be in the position of being unable to meet any remaining funding conditions. Therefore, FIP partners who complete transactions before meeting all funding conditions for the project do so at their sole risk.

Technical Review Team (TRT) Review of Land Acquisition Projects

All land acquisition projects proposed for FIP funding shall be reviewed by the TRT at a scheduled TRT meeting. The applicant shall provide the information listed in #1 above to the Initiative's FIP Coordinator in advance of the TRT meeting, which will then be provided to the TRT. The TRT review shall consist only of determining whether the proposed project is consistent with the FIP ecological outcomes as described in the awarded FIP Initiative application. If a proposed project is determined to be consistent with the FIP, then a Land Acquisition application shall be submitted and reviewed in accordance with standard land acquisition review practices, including a pre-application consultation with the OWEB Land Acquisition Coordinator. If a proposed project is determined to be inconsistent with the FIP ecological outcomes, the Land Acquisition application shall be eligible to apply to the Open Solicitation Land Acquisition grant offering.

Land acquisition projects not included in work plans at the time of the initiative-level application for Biennium 1, or at the time of progress reporting (in January of odd-numbered years) for Biennia 2 and 3, may be submitted for FIP funding consideration at a scheduled Technical Review Team (TRT) meeting as described above.

Rationale:

OWEB acknowledges that land acquisition projects that advance the ecological goals of a FIP may emerge after the initial FIP application or biennial reporting periods. This process seeks to create a funding pathway for emerging projects by allowing the TRT to evaluate the project's consistency with FIP ecological objectives.