

## Criteria for Staff Evaluation of Landscape Demonstration Projects Through the Cooperative Funding Initiative

### Evaluation criteria for projects that propose to:

- Type 1 Demonstrate new technologies or unique practices that significantly reduce water use and/or improve water quality.
- Type 2 Educate the audience on Florida-friendly landscaping techniques and other best management practices consistent with the objectives of the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program with the goal of increasing the likelihood that these techniques be implemented, resulting in increased water savings and water quality protection.

Projects will be evaluated for merit, need and available funding. Meeting these criteria does not ensure funding. The following criteria are **required** for projects with budgets exceeding \$5,000:

- Demonstrate the applicant has explored partnerships with other agencies. These may include one or more of the following: utilities, irrigation companies, landscape companies, landscape architects, nurseries, turf producers, manufacturers of the technology, environmental organizations, etc. Partnerships may also include those with other stakeholders including commercial/residential developers, builders, sports/golf facilities, commercial building owners, apartment/condominium owners, hotel owners and others who have significant existing and potential investments in landscaping or in conserving water resources. List those contacted and describe their respective reasons for or against participating in a partnership.
- Demonstrate that the project is consistent with latest science:
  - Demonstrate all phases of the project, from planning and design through maintenance, are not inconsistent with Florida industry (IFAS, FDACS, DEP, etc.) best management practices.
  - Demonstrate all professionals associated with the project, from planning and design phases through maintenance phases, have the appropriate, current certifications from organizations such as FNGLA, FIS, IA, FDACS and/or other associations with industry-recognized water conservation and water quality curricula.
- Justify need for project. The project must not create redundancy with similar sites in proposed area.
- Demonstration site must be open for public access.
- Applicant must propose an education plan that will:
  - Identify the audience targeted and the rationale for choosing that audience.
  - Identify the goals and objectives of the education.
  - Identify the messages that will be conveyed to the target audience.
  - Identify the strategy for reaching the target audience with the selected messages. One required strategy is using the demonstration site as a teaching tool for the target audience. Seeking media promotion of the site is also recommended.

- Identify the methods planned to implement the strategy. One required method is educational signage. All Florida-friendly demonstration sites must display a "Florida-friendly landscaping" sign clearly visible to site visitors. Other signage communicating the educational message will be required as well and determined based on the goals and objectives of the project. Other methods may include workshops, special events, tours and similar programs.
- Identify the method of evaluating the success of the education strategy. For Florida-friendly landscaping demonstration site projects, this evaluation must include follow-up to determine the percentage of people exposed to the demonstration site that incorporate Florida-friendly principles in their landscaping.
- Ensure benefits to District over project life:
  - Estimate the benefits in terms as appropriate (mgd saved, tons of nitrogen loading avoided, people reached, etc.).
  - Provide a plan, to be approved by District staff and incorporated in the funding agreement, to assure the project's long-term viability. This will include a plan for the long-term maintenance of the demonstration site that will ensure a healthy, attractive landscape with legible signs and current information for the target audience. Written commitments to properly maintain the site are required from those responsible for maintaining the property. The cooperator will be required to demonstrate adequate site maintenance to the District's project manager annually through reporting, photos and annual site inspections.
  - Provide a plan, to be approved by District staff and incorporated in the funding agreement, detailing the way the communication/education goals of the project will be met. This includes a long-term plan for communicating the benefits of the new technology or unique practice being demonstrated to the target audience(s). Annual reporting will also include minimum audience members reached per year, reports describing special events (if any), evaluation of educational value based on observational studies, surveys and/or pre- or posttest results.

Additional requirements for Type 1 projects — those that demonstrate new technologies or unique practices that significantly reduce water use and/or improve water quality:

- Project must demonstrate new technology or unique practice that significantly reduces water use and/or improves water quality and is applicable to common water uses within the District:
  - Identify all existing information or demonstrations on the new technology or practice(s) within the county the proposed project will be located, within the District's boundaries and within state boundaries to the extent necessary to avoid redundancy with similar sites in the proposed area.
  - Describe how the demonstration is different from traditional or recommended best management practices.
  - Estimate the potential benefits when new technology or unique practice is transferred to other areas of the District