

South Dakota Conservation Implementation Strategy Projects

SD CIS Template

SD-FS-105

November 2020



This template is intended to serve as an outline of the project proposal for the South Dakota Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS). It is recommended applicants use each item below as a section heading. This will create consistency for our reviewers. You may add appendices as necessary to provide any additional information that you feel is necessary. All maps should be included in Appendix A and labeled so that they can be referenced in the project proposal. The appendix can also include any letters of support from partners.

The SD CIS is set up to be integrated with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). Applicants can include both ACEP Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) in proposals. Budgets should reflect the needed allocation for EQIP, ALE, and WRE separately so that funding for the project can be appropriately allocated. Any questions about these programs, can be answered by the respective Programs Staff at the State Office in Huron, SD.

Most proposals should be a minimum of three years in length and should not exceed five years in length. At the end of the project timeline, an extension of up to two years can be requested if valid reasons for not meeting the timeline exists. The approval of an extension is solely the discretion of the SD Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Leadership Team (LT). A majority of the SD NRCS LT must approve the extension.

Template Outline

- I. **Cover Page:** This page should include the name of the individual or partner submitting the proposal as well as the name of the project. Also, please include the mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number of the primary contact for the proposal.
- II. **Problem Statement:** This section should serve as an executive summary of the project. A brief explanation of the resource concern issue that the proposal looks to address, as well as, a brief statement of how that issue will be resolved. This "Problem Statement" summary is not meant to give a lot of detail, but rather outline the situation with a few statements of how this issue developed and the natural resource issues to be addressed.

- III. **Background:** This section should outline some specifics about the history of the region and the resource concerns in the area. It can include descriptions about land use, topography, and any special physical characteristics. This can be a broad perspective of how the issue came to be over time or a description of the specific event that lead to the resource concern. Include any data collected that supports the existence of the resource concern.
- IV. **Resource Concerns:** List the major resource concerns to be addressed. Please be as specific as possible. This list should align with the information provided in Section II - Background and should be supported by any documentation or data provided in that section. The information provided in this section should validate the need for the core practices listed in Section VIII - Environmental Impacts.
- V. **Desired Conditions:** Describe the final state to be achieved after this project is complete. Please be as specific as you can. Explain how implementing this project plan will address the resource concerns listed and what the condition of those resources will be at the end of the project. This is how success is measured. This will be used as a starting point for the success story after this project is complete.
- VI. **Description of Geographic Region:** Describe why this certain area is being targeted. What data was used to determine how this area is contributing to the resource concern. Include a map in Appendix A showing the target area(s).
 - a. Overall Project Area
 - b. Priority Treatment Areas within the Project Area
 - c. Label the map to identify the location and size of project area
- VII. **Alternatives:** Develop alternatives and describe what happens if no action is taken. Are there National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) considerations? Also, state if partners need NEPA to be completed before funding.
 - a. No Action
 - b. Alternative 1
 - c. Alternative 2



VIII. Environmental Impacts: Include any research or statistics that support the use of the conservation practices listed below. When listing practices, be sure to distinguish between core practices and supporting practices. Also address any requirements for multiple practices that must be implemented to address a resource concern (i.e. Conservation Tillage and Conservation Crop Rotation must be implemented together to address soil health).

- a. Core Conservation Practice List
- b. Supporting Conservation Practice List
- c. Any requirements for the implementation of multiple practices

IX. Outreach/Communication Plan: Attached please find a document titled "Communicating Strategically – a Toolkit for Conservation Planners." The purpose of this document is to help local projects develop a strategy and priority for communicating important information to others about your project. While it is important to reach out to those directly involved internally or externally in the project, local CIS projects also need to develop an action plan to help other key audiences know of their success in protecting our natural resources. This toolkit will help to identify any groups or individuals who may have an interest in the project and its benefits, but perhaps may not be ag producers or close partners; these are the audiences who could be informed up front and become advocates for this project and future projects. The NRCS Public Affairs staff is available to guide people through the toolkit, help define target audiences, and brainstorm ideas. Prior to submitting the project proposal, the goal of this section is for a CIS project to have outlined an efficient, effective, and prioritized communications strategy that conveys the importance of this work to specific target audiences. This strategy should be summarized in the CIS proposal application.

X. Partnerships and Supporting Efforts: List any supporting partners and how they will contribute. Any partner programs that will be used in conjunction with this project can be included here as well. If a partner is providing a letter of support, please attach it in the appendix. Please include any partner contributions whether direct or indirectly supporting this project in Section XIV - Budget.

XI. Prioritizing Assistance: Please develop any needed screening or ranking questions. If you have questions about the validity of a screening or ranking question, please feel free to reach out to the Programs staff for assistance.

- a. Screening Questions
- b. Ranking Questions

XII. Implementation Timeline and Goals: Specify the timeline of the project, beginning and end dates. Remember that most project should be a minimum of three years and a maximum of five. The timeline should line up with your monitoring plan and goals to ensure results are achievable. All of this should allow a success story to be developed in a timely manner. Actual costs should be placed in the budget.

- a. Acres treated by year

- b. Estimated quantity of each core practice needed to address the resource concern

XIII. Measuring and Monitoring Results: Describe how progress will be tracked to ensure the goals and objectives are being met. This should include practice implementation and budget performance. Also include how monitoring improvements in the resource will be tracked and reported. Explain how we will know when the goals are met and the resource concern is alleviated. These results and any supporting data will also be used in any success stories.

XIV. Budget: This section should include specific details on the amount of funding being requested from NRCS by program (EQIP, ALE, WRE) by year. The budget should also include specific details on any partner funds that will be used to support this project proposal. If a partner is providing funding, those funds should be shown in the budget. For example, Partner Name - \$5,000. As well as a description of how those funds will be used to support the project and address the resource concerns. Partner contributions can be in-kind or cash. Partner funds can be for technical or financial assistance.

XV. Appendix A – With your final proposal, please submit a zipped SHP file or KML file. If you need assistance with this process, please contact the South Dakota GIS Specialists: kevin.wegenke@usda.gov

XVI. Appendix B – Attach any additional information as appropriate such as maps and letters of support.

For more information, contact South Dakota NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs Jeff Vander Wilt at jeffrey.vanderwilt@usda.gov or (605) 352-1226