



DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITY

Transition to Organic

DEFINITION

Conservation Plan Supporting Transition to Organic is a component plan that includes a combination of structural and management practices for an agricultural operation transitioning to become certified organic by USDA.

A site-specific component of a conservation plan. The DIA-140 is developed for a client to address one or more resource concerns on farms transitioning to certified organic production where related conservation activities and/or practices will be planned and implemented. The plan describes how to implement long-term goals through practices that direct farm development to provide for intended future uses.

CRITERIA

General Requirements

A Design and Implementation Activity (DIA) is the planning and implementation of a combination of management and structural practices to treat one or more resource concerns related to transitioning to organic production. The DIA documents the verification of the client's conservation plan, and the development of the implementation requirements for each planned conservation practice.

The TSP will complete Implementation Requirements for structural and nonstructural practices as outlined in each state adopted Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) and Statement of Work (SOW) found in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide for the state in which the practices are being implemented.

The TSP will maintain an ongoing record of DIA related discussions with the client. The TSP will document on a conservation assistance notes form (CPA-6) or other format that includes all components of the CPA-6 (client objectives, dates of assistance, all parties present, notes of significant information, alternatives considered, and decisions reached). Any correspondence between the TSP and the client related to the development of the DIA will be included in the record.

The TSP may use any of the Conservation Practice Documents, such as implementation requirements, templates, Standard Detail Drawings, etc. located in the state's Field Office Technical Guide.

This activity includes one or more conservation practices that applies to all land uses.

The activity will meet the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) planning criteria for one or more of the following resource concerns:

- Soil
- Water (including wetlands)
- Plants (including woodlands and biodiversity)

- Animals (including wildlife and invertebrates)

Technical Requirements

General Risk Assessment

Field evaluation and verification of soil conditions as noted in Web Soil Survey to identify sensitive areas, vulnerable soils (shallow to bedrock/karst; depth to groundwater); surface inlets, concentrated flow paths, surface water, tile outlets and wells.

Erosion Risk Assessment

Planners must use current NRCS nationally approved erosion-prediction technology to assess the risk of erosion and transporting nutrients/pesticides from the field causing off-site degradation due to wind, water, and irrigation induced erosion.

Additional Assessments

Assessments of additional resource concerns should be completed using the current applicable assessment tools e.g. Cropland In Field Soil Health Assessment Guide, Nutrient Risk Assessments, Windows Pesticide Screening Tool etc.

DELIVERABLES

Two copies (hardcopy or electronic) of the DIA must be developed—one for the client and one for the NRCS field office. At the client's request, Technical Service Provider (TSP) can deliver NRCS's copy to the NRCS Field Office. The client's copy must include the implementation requirements, specifications, unless the client requests other documents from this section. The NRCS copy must include all items identified herein. An additional electronic copy of the plan should also be uploaded on NRCS Registry.

1. Cover Page

Cover page reporting the technical services provided by the TSP. Cover page(s) must include the following:

- a. Client information: Name, farm bill program, contract number, and contract item number.
- b. TSP information: name, address, phone number, email, TSP number, TSP expiration date; and county of service.
- c. Farm identification:
 - i. Farm name, owner name, street address, and county/state.
 - ii. Primary phone number of the client.
 - iii. List of all practice and/or scenario designs included in this plan.
- d. Statement by TSP that services provided:
 - i. Comply with all applicable Federal, State, Tribal, and local laws, and requirements.
 - ii. Meet applicable NRCS standards, specifications, and program requirements.
 - iii. Are consistent with the conservation program goals and objectives for which the program contract was entered into by the client.
 - iv. Incorporate alternatives that are both cost effective and appropriate to

address the resource issues.

- e. TSP certification statement: signature and date.
- f. Client acceptance statement:
 - i. A statement that the plans and specifications adequately represent existing conditions and the selected preliminary design alternatives, and the client understands and will abide with the operation and maintenance plans.
 - ii. Signature of the client and date the client received the plans.
- g. Block for NRCS reviewer acceptance (to be completed by NRCS).

2. Conservation Assistance Notes and Correspondence

- a. Conservation Assistance Notes (NRCS-CPA-6) or other format that includes all components of the CPA-6.
 - i. Document the client's objectives.
 - ii. Document each interaction with the client, include notes and results of that interaction, date, and initials of the TSP.
 - iii. Document each site visit, activity in the field, results of each site visit, all parties present, date, and initials of the TSP.
- b. Any correspondence between the TSP and the client relating to the development of the DIA.

3. Maps

- a. Maps to include in the DIA 140 may be incorporated from a CPA-138 or equivalent plan, but not be limited to:
 - i. General location map of the implementation areas
 - ii. Plan base map (this may consist of several maps to account for the entire planning area). This map will specifically include:
 - 1. Boundary lines for the Planning Land Units (PLUs) with labels (name, number, or both). A PLU is a unique geographic area, defined by a polygon, that has common land use and is owned, operated, or managed by the same client or clients. The PLU is the minimum unit for planning.
 - 2. Acreage of each PLU.
 - 3. Location of planned and applied conservation practices, using NRCS map symbols (see Title 170, National Map Symbol Handbook, Part 601).
 - 4. If the planning area includes nonprivate lands, such as Federal or Tribal lands, include a land status map displaying land ownership categories (Private, State Trust, BLM, Tribal, and Territorial, etc.).
 - 5. Resource maps of the PLU
 - (a) Soils maps, and other resource maps as applicable.
 - (b) An existing wetland delineation map, if any.
- b. At a minimum, all maps developed for the DIA will include:
 - i. Title block showing:
 - 1. Map title.
 - 2. Client's name (individual or business).
 - 3. Prepared with assistance from USDA – NRCS
 - 4. Assisted By [TSP planner's name].
 - 5. Name of applicable conservation district, county, and State.
 - 6. Date prepared.

- ii. Map scale.
- iii. Information needed to locate the implementation area, such as geographic coordinates, public land survey coordinates, etc.
- iv. North arrow.
- v. Appropriate map symbols and a map symbol legend on the map or as an attachment.

4. Planning

A record of the preferred alternative for each practice, which includes:

- a. PLU label (name, number, or both).
- b. NRCS practice name and code.
- c. Amount to be applied.
- d. As needed, brief description of the planned practice (practice narrative).
- e. Date the planned practice is scheduled to be implemented.
- f. As needed, applicable "Conservation Practice Overview" sheets or other prepared material.
- g. Operation and maintenance agreements and procedures.

5. Documentation

- a. In-depth resource inventory, assessment, and analysis are used to formulate management alternatives. Use inventory plot data summarized with assessment information incorporated from a CPA 138 or equivalent plan, supplemented as necessary with site-level assessment information. Document findings on resource concerns, existing benchmark conditions, and special environmental concerns and provide descriptions and data summaries along with management recommendations in the Template. Prepare NRCS Implementation Requirements as per State's FOTG for practices identified in the preferred alternative and scheduled within five years from the time of inventory.
- b. If conditions warrant a more detailed description than appears in a CPA 138 (or equivalent management plan). Describe benchmark (existing) conditions, past conditions, and any resource concerns or limitations associated with:
 1. Protected species and cultural resources
 2. Adjacent ownerships that present opportunities or limitations to management options
 3. Recreation uses by the landowner
 4. Access condition of roads, trails, landings, and stream crossings
 5. Soil and site descriptions, including relevant soil interpretations, slope, topography, and aspect
 6. Streams, wetlands, ponds, and lakes
 7. Past management, harvesting, natural disturbances, and/or other land use history that has affected condition and/or growth potential
 8. Grazing practices
 9. Potential for carbon sequestration
 10. Fish and wildlife species and habitat elements
 11. Risk of insect and disease infestation
 12. Noxious and invasive plant species
 13. Agroforestry opportunities
 14. Prescribed burning opportunities
 15. Wildfire risk (surface and crown fires)

16. Other important features as determined by the TSP
17. As applicable, describe how the following activities and environmental protections will be applied: permits needed, Best Management Practices for water quality, and monitoring/maintenance.
18. Develop prescriptions for each practice identified in the preferred alternative and scheduled within a five-year timeframe. Include acres to be treated, and other information needed to select the appropriate payment scenario. Complete relevant portions of the State's Implementation Requirements.

6. Implementation requirements

- a. Implementation requirements will be developed for preferred alternative structural and nonstructural conservation practices. Recordkeeping and operation and maintenance requirements must be clearly stated.
- b. Cost estimates developed for preferred alternative structural and nonstructural conservation practices.
- c. Develop and provide all supporting documentation, including any additional items required by the State Conservationist.

REFERENCES

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National Planning Procedures Handbook
<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=36483.wba>
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Field Office Technical Guide
<https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/>
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National TSP Resources
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/technical/tsp/?cid=nrcseprd1417414>
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National Environmental Compliance Handbook
<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=39467>
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Cultural Resources Handbook
<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=42752>
- USDA Plants Database
[USDA Plants Database](#)
- Regional IPM Centers. A national umbrella site for the regional IPM centers
<http://www.ipmcenters.org/index.cfm/ipm-in-the-us/federal-ipm-coordinating-committee/>
- USDA Organic Regulations
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic>
- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, National Organic Program, National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances