

This is a summary of the feedback received from applicants after the 2023 Open Grant Solicitation. The second page of this document contains open-ended feedback and responses from applicants. Out of 74 applications, 29 applicants completed the feedback survey.

Application Instructions and Recommendations

- 1. Did the application instructions provide sufficient information and guidance?**
 - Yes: 86.1%
 - No: 13.9%
- 2. Would you recommend this application to others?**
 - Yes: 75.9%
 - No: 24.1%

Scoring Based on a Scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)

- 1. The program effectively communicated throughout the process.**
 - 1: 0%
 - 2: 0%
 - 3: 6.9%
 - 4: 24.1%
 - 5: 69.0%
- 2. The application process was clear and easy to follow.**
 - 1: 0%
 - 2: 0%
 - 3: 6.9%
 - 4: 31.0%
 - 5: 62.1%
- 3. I received timely and useful feedback during the application process.**
 - 1: 0%
 - 2: 0%
 - 3: 10.3%
 - 4: 27.6%
 - 5: 62.1%
- 4. The evaluation criteria were transparent and fair.**
 - 1: 0%
 - 2: 0%
 - 3: 6.9%
 - 4: 20.7%
 - 5: 72.4%
- 5. How user-friendly and accessible was the online application system?**
 - 1: 0%
 - 2: 0%
 - 3: 6.9%
 - 4: 17.2%
 - 5: 75.9%

The following are summaries of open-ended feedback and responses from the applicants.

1. General Feedback on Application Process

- First application attempt went better than expected, similar to other programs.
- Lengthy and repetitive application process, discouraging for asking smaller amounts of money due to time investment.
- Concerns over providing landowners' contact information and email addresses; suggestion to request this information post-award instead.
- Recommendations for PDF fillable forms and a clearer set of requirements for attachments.

2. Technical and Interface Issues

- Objectives and deliverables table in the online format was difficult and time-consuming to complete.
- Interface glitches, such as form-fill problems and repetitive questions.
- Issues occurred with multiple file uploads replacing initial uploads.
- Space limitations for uploads and character limits in text boxes.
- Issues with file size limitations and the functionality of the "Project Deliverables" section.
- Problems with collaborative access and saving progress.
- Recommendation for additional file upload options and automated word limit restrictions.

3. Application Structure and Content

- Difficulty tracking application progress; suggestion to divide into sections.
- Suggestion for a more streamlined flowchart for navigation and clear instructions.
- Need for clear guidance on Appendix M (Template Monitoring Plan) and reducing redundancy.
- Suggestions for more efficient bundling and labeling of required documents.
- Streamline the application and eliminate duplicative questions.

4. Application Timing and Process

- Application deadline during the holiday season posed a significant constraint.
- Four-year project term seen as problematic due to increased costs.
- Inability to edit submitted applications before the deadline.

5. Budget and Indirect Costs

- Issues with the budget as an Excel file; recommendation for a fillable form.
- Concerns over the indirect cost policy and its impact on project funding.
- 10% indirect cost policy; suggestion to align with other funders' standards.