2026 Invasive Species Grant Program
Request for Grant Proposals

Released:
DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED 00, 2026

Grant Applications Due:
By 5:00 p.m. on DATE TBA 00, 2026
Late submissions will not be accepted.

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Rev6-16-26

DRAFT

Contents

About the Program 3
Background 3
Authority 3
Purpose 3
Funding, Duration 4
Priority Funding 4
Eligibility 5
Timeline 5
Technical Assistance Resources 5
How to Submit a Grant Proposal 6
Proposal Review and Evaluation 6
Notification and Feedback 8
Award Process 8
Overview of Grant Management 8
Grant Agreement Execution 8
Requirements and Limitations 8
Executive Order N-6-22 – Russia Sanctions 9
Public Disclosure 9
Grant Regulations 9
Allowable Costs 9
Unallowable Costs 10
Grant Terms and Conditions 11
Payment Process 11
Reporting Requirements 11
Evaluation Criteria 11

About the Program

Background

Invasive species threaten the ~~economic and~~ environmental ***and economic*** vitality of California. California is a biodiversity hotspot home to 650 bird species, 220 mammals, 100 reptiles, 75 amphibians, 70 freshwater fish, 100 marine fish and mammals, and 6,500 taxa of native plants. Additionally, California's $51 billion in agricultural production includes more than 400 commodities and produces approximately 50% of the specialty fruits, vegetables, and nut crops for the United States of America. This unique biodiversity across ecosystems is threatened by emerging and re-emerging invasive species, including land-dwelling and aquatic organisms, that impart a severe environmental and economic impact in the state. Recent and ongoing climate events and increased passenger travel and commerce impact every part of California and creates a favorable environment for the spread of invasive species. Given California's range of geographies and biomes, diverse populations and their needs, and existing infrastructure, invasive species are recognized as a major threat to California's biodiversity and resilience to a changing climate.

Authority

In November 2024, California voters approved a $10 billion General Obligation Bond called the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024. It is also commonly known as the "Climate Bond." This bond allocates $10 billion across state agencies to confront climate change, protect California communities and nature from its impacts, and improve the lives of Californians. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) on behalf of the Invasive Species Council of California (ISCC) is pleased to announce funding availability through the Climate Bond for Invasive Species Grants (ISG) in the amount of $16,450,000.

Purpose

The purpose of this grant program is to support work on minimizing the ~~economic,~~ ecological, ***economic,*** and human health impacts caused by invasive species that have been or are likely to be detected in California. Grants of $250,000 to $1,000,000 will fund invasive species control work throughout California with a~~nemphasis on~~ ***preference for*** projects that restore and protect biodiversity and ecosystem health. Priority shall be given to projects that are species-specific, time-sensitive, new to a geographic region, and likely to prevent the establishment of that species. ***Additionally, projects that increase or develop regional or statewide programmatic capacity will also be prioritized.*** Projects shall minimize the ~~economic,~~ ecological, ***economic***, and human health impacts caused by invasive species and restore and protect biodiversity and ecosystem health, with particular attention to projects providing direct and meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities, severely disadvantaged communities, and vulnerable populations. ***Projects do not***

need to occur in disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities, but applicants should clearly indicate how those communities will benefit.

ISCC will award grants through a competitive one phase application process. Grant proposals will be submitted to CDFA where they will undergo a two-phase review process, including an administrative review by CDFA and a technical review by California Invasive Species Advisory Committee (CISAC). Based on the outcome of the administrative and technical reviews, proposals will be submitted to ISCC for approval and funding. These application guidelines provide an overview of the ISG application process and requirements.

Funding, Duration

CDFA on behalf of the ISCC will award $16,450,000 in Proposition 4 funds for ISG projects within California.

Individual grant awards can range from $250,000 to $1,000,000, and CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount other than the amount requested.

The maximum grant duration is ~~24~~ ***36*** months; awarded projects and all associated expenditures must be completed within ~~24~~ ***36*** months of the agreement start date. Costs incurred before the beginning of the grant agreement will not be reimbursed. ***No-cost time extensions may be considered on a case-by-case basis in compliance with all applicable state contracting rules and regulations***. ~~Extensions will not be allowed.~~

Priority Funding

The Climate Bond language requires that “at least 40 percent of the total funding made available pursuant to this division shall be invested in programs or projects that provide direct and meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities, severely disadvantaged communities, and vulnerable populations.” The following definitions come directly from the bond (PRC Section 90100) and will be used across 2024 Climate Bond programs:

- Disadvantaged community (DAC): A community with a median household income of less than 80 percent of the area average or less than 80 percent of statewide median household income.

- Severely disadvantaged community (SDAC): A community with a median household income of less than 60 percent of the area average or less than 60 percent of statewide median household income.

- Tribe: A federally recognized Native American tribe or a non-federally recognized Native American tribe listed on the California Tribal Consultation List maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission

- Vulnerable population: A subgroup population within a region or community that faces a disproportionately heightened risk or increased sensitivity to impacts of climate change and that lacks adequate resources to cope with, adapt to, or recover from such impacts. (Note: tribes are considered vulnerable populations)

CDFA will evaluate a target population's status as a disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged community using the Climate Bond (Proposition 4) (S)DAC Status tool built for this purpose and give scoring preference to these priority populations. CDFA will evaluate a target population's status as a vulnerable population using the Climate Vulnerability Map in combination with the definition provided and will give scoring preference to these priority populations.

Eligibility

Projects must be based in California and provide direct benefit to California.
Eligible applicants must be a:

1. Public college or university,
2. Federal, state, or local government entities, including Tribal entities,
3. 501(c)(3) Non-profit organization,
4. Special district,
5. Joint powers authority,
6. Mutual water company.

Timeline

Release Request for Grant Proposals	
Webinar	
Grant Proposals Due	
Review Period	
Announcement and Funding Award	

Technical Assistance Resources

To support the development of competitive proposals, CDFA will offer application technical assistance (TA) to eligible applicants for ISG funding. Applicants can request TA by emailing the ISCC at cisac@iscc.ca.gov.

TA providers will support all eligible grant applicants with technical assistance. Application TA activities may include, but are not limited to:

- TA will be provided free of charge.

- Direct application assistance, including clarification of application requirements, financial analysis, review of responses and application coordination;
- Assistance with the compilation/development of all application materials (project proposal, estimated timeline, budget, pre-development documents (if available);
- Identification of project area, integration of projects, and
- Assessment of project readiness.

Important points about application technical assistance:

- Applicants are not required to receive TA.
- Receiving application TA does not guarantee that an applicant will be awarded a grant.

An online workshop will be held <INSERT DATE and TIME> to answer questions about the grant opportunity and the grant submissions process. The workshop will be recorded and available to watch through the deadline for submission of applications.

How to Submit a Grant Proposal

Applicants are required to complete and submit the Invasive Species Grant Program Application using the required application template available [insert where the template will be posted].

The Grant Proposal Application consists of the following sections:

- Cover Page and Proposal Narrative (Template Attached)
- Budget and Budget Narrative (Template Attached)

Grant proposals must be submitted electronically to [insert e-mail address] no later than 5:00 PM PST on XXX. Late proposals will be disqualified.

Files to Upload:

1. Cover Page and Project Narrative. Include a complete project narrative.

2. Budget and Budget Narrative. Include a complete budget table and budget narrative

3. Project Leader(s) Resume(s). Include a two-page resume, including a list of relevant publications. Also include a description of current research/outreach activities; provide information on all current and pending projects, whether or not there is a specific time commitment and how it will impact the proposed project.

4. Collaborator's Statement of Commitment. Include a letter from each collaborator describing their role in the project and statement of agreement to participate in the project.

5. Letters of Support. Include a letter from each supporter explaining the rationale for their support. Scanned copies of letters are acceptable

Proposal Review and Evaluation

Administrative Review

The purpose of the administrative review is to determine whether the grant proposal meets all application requirements, including reviewing the proposal and budget for accuracy and completeness. The administrative review will occur after the application due date.

Technical Review

A technical review will be completed by the CISAC members, who will review the proposals and evaluate their merits. The CISAC will convene a meeting to complete individual reviews and finalize scores for each proposal. Any member of the committee who is connected to a submitted project will be excluded from any discussions or decisions regarding that project. The technical review will be completed using the review criteria established within this document.

The technical review will not factor matching funds into application scores as that practice can disadvantage low-resource organizations in the process of building capacity

The CISAC will make funding recommendations to the ISCC based on the outcomes of the administrative and technical reviews. The ISCC will select proposals for funding.

Disqualifications

The following will result in the disqualification of a grant proposal:

- Incomplete grant proposals, including grant proposals with one or more unanswered questions and/or missing, blank, unreadable, corrupt, or otherwise unusable attachments
- Grant proposals requesting more than the maximum or less than the minimum award amount
- Grant proposals requesting funds outside of the grant term
- Grant proposals with unallowable costs or activities necessary to complete the project objectives
- Projects occurring out of state or with out-of-state project leads
- Proposals from ineligible entities

APPEAL RIGHTS: Any discretionary action taken by the ISCC may be appealed to the CDFA's Office of Hearings and Appeals within ten (10) calendar days of receiving a notice of disqualification from CDFA. Email notification shall serve as the date of service. The appeal must be in writing and signed by the responsible party named on the grant application or their authorized agent. It must state the grounds for the appeal and include any supporting documents and a copy of the decision being challenged. The submission must be sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Hearings and Appeals, 1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 or emailed to CDFA.LegalOffice@cdfa.ca.gov. If

submissions are not received within the time frame provided above, the appeal will be disqualified from consideration.

Notification and Feedback

Grant proposals that are disqualified during the administrative review will be notified by email within three weeks of the grant proposal's due date. All other applicants will be notified by email regarding the status of their grant proposals in [timeframe]. Feedback generated during the review periods will be provided to applicants upon request.

To ensure all communications are received, points of contact listed in the application should add [e-mail] to their email safe senders list, address book, or contact list

Award Process

Overview of Grant Management

Successful applicants will receive a Grant Award Procedures (GAP) Manual with instructions on grant administration. The GAP Manual outlines detailed processes and policies for financial management, performance management, grant beneficiary relationships, and requested changes to the grant agreement.

Grant Agreement Execution

All applicants will be notified regarding the status of their proposal by <insert date>. Applicants whose projects are not funded may request comments from <insert contact name and email> within 30 business days of transmittal of the funding denial.

CDFA Office of Grant Administration will initiate the Grant Agreement process with successful applicants. The process of executing a grant agreement may take several months. Awardees will receive a Grant Agreement package with instructions regarding award requirements, including information on project implementation, reporting, and payment process.

Communication during the grant execution process is done primarily via email. CDFA will provide deadlines for each step in the process. CDFA reserves the right to rescind an award due to lack of response from an applicant selected for award. Once a grant package is selected for funding it may take CDFA’s Office of Grants Administration up to 90 days to fully execute the grant agreement.

Requirements and Limitations

Funding may supplement, but not supplant, existing activities/programs and funding.

- Supplement is defined as adding to existing funds to enhance or expand existing activities.

- Supplant is defined as replacing existing funds for an ongoing activity or funding an already funded activity.

Executive Order N-6-22 – Russia Sanctions

On March 4, 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order (EO) N-6-22 regarding Economic Sanctions against Russia and Russian entities and individuals. “Economic Sanctions” refers to sanctions imposed by the U.S. government in response to Russia’s actions in Ukraine, as well as any sanctions imposed under state law. By submitting a bid, proposal, or application, Bidder/Applicant represents that it is not a target of Economic Sanctions.

Should the State determine Bidder/Applicant is a target of Economic Sanctions or is conducting prohibited transactions with sanctioned individuals or entities, that shall be grounds for rejection of the Bidder’s/Applicant’s bid/proposal/application any time prior to contract/agreement execution, or, if determined after contract/agreement execution, shall be grounds for termination by the State.

Public Disclosure

ISCC is responsible for reporting on the status and use of Climate Bond funds. The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), which administers the Bond, may require ISCC to report any or all the data collected from the program.

ISCC will post summary information about the applications submitted to these programs, the projects awarded, and outcome information, including project final reports.

Data associated with these grant programs are subject to public disclosure through the California Public Records Act (CPRA). The CPRA states that every citizen has the right to inspect and/obtain a copy of any public record. Certain records are exempt from disclosure under the CPRA. The CDFA Legal Office shall determine if a record is exempt from disclosure.

Grant Regulations

All awarded projects are subject to the Grant Administration Regulations set forth by CDFA at: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Regulations/General/FinalGrantAdminRegs-Text.pdf

Allowable Costs

Allowable costs include those costs necessary to complete the grant objectives and include, but are not limited to the following

1. Salaries and fringe benefits for staff conducting work on the project.
2. Operating expenses for items required to complete work on the project.

3. Supplies must be used exclusively for the project.
4. Travel necessary to complete the work of the project.
5. Equipment necessary to complete the work of the project.
6. Contractor expenses associated with subawards identified in the agreement for completion of work associated with the project.
7. Attendance at meetings or conferences in alignment with the work project.
8. Outreach and communications costs associated with the project.
9. Training necessary to complete the project.
10. Indirect costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be specifically identified with a particular project.

Please see the guidance from the Climate Bond for details on the four acceptable indirect cost rates. See page 3 of the ISG Budget Template for more details.

Unallowable Costs

Unallowable costs will not be reimbursed and include the following:

Unallowable Items of Cost

1. Expenses for delta conveyance facilities.
2. Costs associated with compliance with California Environmental Quality Act
3. Costs of promotional items, memorabilia, gifts, souvenirs, and similar items.
4. Costs of advertising and public relations that are not directly related to the purpose or objectives of the grant program or grant award.
5. Costs of alcoholic beverages.
6. Costs for overtime. ***(may be allowable with prior approval from CDFA)***
7. Costs incurred for contributions and donations from the recipient to other entities.
8. Costs for entertainment, amusement, diversion, or social activities, including any associated costs.
9. Costs resulting from the recipient's failure to comply with grant program requirements, grant award terms and conditions, or applicable laws.
10. Costs associated with fundraising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts, donations, and bequests, and similar endeavors to raise capital or obtain contributions.
11. Costs associated with applications for patents, copyrights, or trademarks.
12. Costs associated with lobbying.
13. Costs such as incorporation fees, business license fees, and other costs related to organizing a business or similar entity.
14. Pre-award costs.
15. Lease-to-own costs.
16. Costs of selling and marketing any products or services.
17. Costs of sponsorships.
18. Costs that accrue due to the negligent or willful failure of the recipient to prevent such costs.

Grant Terms and Conditions

If awarded a grant from CDFA, the grant recipient will be expected to sign an agreement abiding by certain terms and conditions, including but not limited to:

- Submission of semi-annual, annual and final performance reports. (samples attached)
- The grant recipient understands that CDFA may conduct site visits at any time during the grant period.
- Grantee is required to establish project signage and share videos or press releases about the project.
- Grantee and or cooperators may be asked to provide project updates at ISCC and/or CISAC meetings, in-person or virtually.

Payment Process

If awarded, recipients will be subject to all applicable State regulations. Recipients are required to submit invoices at least quarterly, but no more frequently than monthly for reimbursement of actual expenses incurred to support approved project activities. Invoices must include documentation to support reimbursement requested. Recipients may be eligible to receive an advance payment to cover anticipated project expenditures. Advance payments may not exceed 25 percent of the total award and will need to be submitted to CDFA for approval. Ten percent of the total amount of the award will be withheld until receipt, review, and approval of the ***final report*** ~~Final Performance Report~~.

Reporting Requirements

Reporting requirements include a semi-annual and annual report each year and a final report after the project is completed.

- ~~The s~~ ***S***emi-annual***s*** report will cover the first 6 months of the project year 1, ~~and~~ 2 ***and 3 and are*** ~~is~~ due no later than 60 days after the end of the 6-month period.
- ~~The annual~~ ***Annual*** report***s*** will cover the second 6 months of the project year 1 *and 2* and ***are*** ~~is~~ due no later than 60 days after the end of the 6-month period.
- A final report will be due no later than 120 days after the end of the grant.
- The principal investigator or other key personnel may be asked to present updates or outcomes of the project at CISAC or ISCC public meetings. The presentation will provide information about project goals, objectives, and results.

Evaluation Criteria

All applications will be evaluated based on the criteria detailed below.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Max points
Project Merit	**40**
Justification ● Need and Beneficiaries: – The defined problem poses an actual or imminent significant threat to California's economy, environment, or human health. – The defined problem poses an actual or imminent threat across a large geographic scale (regional/statewide level). – Proposed project indicates potential contribution to long-term problem resolution. – For research proposals, new information to be generated is a logical next step based on the previously conducted related research or efforts described in the proposal. ● Alignment with Priorities: – Addressing the defined problem aligns with the goals of the grant, including o Projects to restore and protect biodiversity and ecosystem health. o Project will advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion across diverse communities. o Project provides direct and meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities, severely disadvantaged communities, and vulnerable populations. – Proposed project will benefit California across multiple sectors (agriculture, environmental, human health). – Proposed project aligns with documented state priorities (department, agency, governor's).	15
Objectives ● The proposed objectives effectively address the stated problem. ● The proposed objectives align with grant goals. ● The proposed objectives align with state priorities.	10
Tasks and Methods ● The proposed tasks and methods are appropriate to fulfill the objectives.	15

Project Team and Resources	**30**
Team • Leaders + collaborators: The project leaders have complementary and integrated expertise, and their leadership approach/governance and organizational structure is appropriate for the project. • The project proposal has strong support from relevant organizations/individuals.	20

Resources • The organizational and institutional support, equipment, and other physical resources available to the project leaders are adequate for the project proposed. • The project will benefit from the unique features of the scientific, cultural, environment, and/or collaborative arrangements.	10
Feasibility	**30**
• ***Implementation*** • The project objectives are achievable within the proposed timeline. • The overall strategy, work and analysis methodology are well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the objectives of the project. Potential problems, alternative strategies and benchmarks for success are included. • Data will be managed and shared in a reasonable timely manner per CDFA guidelines. • Measures to evaluate the project are sound.	15
• ***Budget Justification*** • The project objectives are achievable within the proposed budget. • The proposed budget is clear, reasonable, and justified and all budget tables are included. • If the project includes collaborators (optional), the proposed budget reflects efforts across collaborators and distribution of funding among collaborators is commensurate with their efforts. • If there is a cost share (optional), the proposed budget explains how resources are shared across entities.	15
Total Points	100