

The Local Innovation Fund

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Innovate: to introduce something new; make changes in anything established.¹

A Call for Innovation

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board seeks funding proposals to its Local Innovation Fund. Details about The Local Innovation Fund and the application process are described below.

Local Innovation Fund Goals

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) has established The Local Innovation Fund to support creative, innovative initiatives that benefit and provide connections between the local watershed, economy, and community. The goal of the fund is to encourage projects that operate within the nexus between watershed, social, and economic health. Projects should work to reduce perceived conflicts between the environment, economy, and community, and provide benefits to all three. Desirable projects should address one or more of the following objectives:

- **Supporting and fostering innovative business enterprise that accomplishes watershed restoration over the long term**
- **Improving and sustaining local quality watershed restoration jobs**
- **Supporting economic viability for private landowners through sustainable watershed stewardship practices**
- **Increasing community capacity to develop and implement a sustainable vision for the community**

For examples of the kind of projects the Local Innovation Fund seeks, please log on to our website at www.oregon.gov/OWEB and click on the link to the Local Innovation Fund.

OWEB's Mission

OWEB's mission is to help create and maintain healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies. OWEB's programs support the restoration and protection of healthy watersheds through a competitive grant program that funds on-the-ground restoration and protection of habitat, project technical assistance, education, and monitoring. The Local Innovation Fund takes a different approach. Rather than funding projects solely for their watershed benefit, the Local Innovation Fund seeks projects that make explicit connections between environmental restoration activities and social and economic needs. Through this approach, OWEB seeks to further its mission by effectively “leveraging” conservation investments for positive outcomes in the community and economic spheres.

¹Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1971).

Call for Innovation Timeline

OWEB's Local Innovation Fund will provide funding for both project development and project implementation costs, in two different funding cycles. A project is not required to seek project development funding in Phase I to be eligible to apply for project implementation funding in Phase II.

Phase I: Project Development Funding Cycle

The first funding cycle will provide grants to support the development phase of innovative projects benefiting the watershed, economy, and community. The development phase of a project should not be longer than 18 months. Applicants must submit a short funding proposal to the Board by December 1, 2005. The OWEB Board will award two to four project development grants of up to \$15,000 in late January 2006.

October 14, 2005	Call for Innovation (Request for Proposals)
December 1, 2005	Short project descriptions due to OWEB
January 24-25, 2006	OWEB Board selects proposals for project development funding awards

Phase II: Project Implementation Funding Cycle

The second funding cycle will provide project implementation funding for projects that will begin within the following 6 months. The only limits on funding amounts requested and the number of projects that will be funded in Phase II are OWEB's 2005-07 Biennial Budget, and competing funding proposals in all of OWEB's grant programs. The Board encourages applicants to discuss the feasibility of funding requests with OWEB staff, and to seek a diversity of funding partners in addition to the Board to cover aspects of a proposed project that may not qualify for OWEB funding.

May 15, 2006	Call for Innovation (Request for Proposals)
June 30, 2006	Full project proposals due to OWEB
July-August 2006	Evaluation of full proposals by OWEB staff for recommendation to OWEB Board
September 19-20, 2006	OWEB Board selects projects for project implementation funding awards

Application and Selection Process

This competition is designed to be flexible, and to encourage innovation and creativity. The only requirement is that a project provide explicit benefits to and connections between the local watershed, economy, and community. Additional information about The Local Innovation Fund, including evaluation criteria, can be found at www.oregon.gov/OWEB/Local_Innovation_Fund.shtml.

Phase I: Project Development Funding Cycle

Applicants to the Phase I funding cycle must submit a short project development funding request, limited to 6 pages, to OWEB by 5:00 p.m. on December 1, 2005, that includes the following:

1. The environmental, economic and community values addressed by the project, and how these are linked.
2. The project's innovative approach – why is this approach new or different?
3. The goals of the project, including explicit benefits of the project to the watershed, economy, and community.
4. How results will be measured – what does success look like?
5. Implementation strategy, including project goals, and planned activities.
6. Partners in the project and evidence of diverse community and stakeholder involvement.
7. A preliminary project development budget and timeframe, including other funding contributions expected or sought.

Applications may be mailed to Allison Hensey, Local Innovation Fund Manager, OWEB, 775 Summer Street NE Suite 360, Salem, OR 97301290, or emailed to allison.hensey@state.or.us with “Local Innovation Fund” in the subject line. Faxed applications will not be accepted. Short project development descriptions will be evaluated based on the information described above by a peer review panel with expertise in watershed restoration and protection, economic development, and community development. Evaluation criteria are described on OWEB's website. Further information about the Project Implementation grant cycle will be available in April 2006.

Funding Limitations

OWEB's primary funding source is state lottery profits dedicated by citizen ballot initiative in 1998 to protect and restore native salmonids, fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and watersheds. The funds provided by OWEB through its Local Innovation Fund must be used for these purposes. Applicants should be aware of the restrictions on the use of OWEB funds, and have a diversity of funding sources for their project in order to fully leverage positive outcomes in the economic and community spheres.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants to The Local Innovation Fund are: any person, business, non-profit or community group, tribe, watershed council, soil and water conservation district, educational institution, or local or regional government. State and federal agencies may only apply as a co-applicant with an eligible applicant listed above.

Contact Information

For more information about the Local Innovation Fund and the application process, please contact Allison Hensey, Local Innovation Fund Manager, at allison.hensey@state.or.us, or (503) 986-0186.