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Guidance for Writing Project Implementation Plans

Applicants who are selected to receive Nonpoint Source Funding through the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) Section 319 program will receive an award letter. Prior to starting the project and claiming reimbursements, the project sponsor will need to complete a detailed Project Implementation Plan (PIP). This document provides guidance on how to complete the PIP, and the information which should be included.

What is a Project Implementation Plan (PIP)?

The Project Implementation Plan or 'PIP' is an outline of the work, goals, and expected outcomes of a nonpoint source project awarded through NDEQ. Project sponsors should be able to take their Section 319 application and turn it into a PIP.

Why do we have to do this?

All nonpoint source funding awarded through NDEQ originates with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Clean Water Act Section 319 program. As part of our requirements to obligate funding through the program, NDEQ is required to submit a PIP for each project to EPA for review (with the exception of small grants, less than \$15,000). Though typically the review process is straight forward and timely, EPA has the authority to question and comment on the contents of the PIP. Once the PIP is approved by EPA, an award contract will be forwarded to the project sponsor for signature.

What should you include in a PIP?

The PIP should be directly related to the Section 319 activities included within the project. If the Section 319 project is part of a larger project with several funding sources, the PIP should focus on only the practices being implemented with Section 319 funding and the required match. Typically, a PIP includes the following 11 sections:

1. Title Page
2. Introduction/Background
3. Project Description –Including Goals and Objectives
4. Proposed Management Practices
5. Pollutant Sources
6. Load Reduction
7. Communications
8. Schedule
9. Milestones
10. Monitoring and Evaluation Criteria
11. Budget

The types of information contained within these sections are discussed in further detail in the following template. When writing a PIP, remember to **BE REALISTIC** and **BE CONCISE**.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TEMPLATE

Title Page

“Project Title”

- Project Sponsor:** Include Sponsor Name, Address, Phone and E-mail.
- Project Partners:** Include Partners who will be contributing funding and/or technical, educational or other assistance. Describe what the partners will be providing.
For Example:
- Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality: Funding through the EPA Section 319 for collection of baseline nitrate studies, demonstration project sites and installation of conservation practices.*
- Project Area:** Include Hydrologic Unit Code(s).
- Section 319 Funds:** Give the amount of 319 Funds, as given in the Award Letter. Give the dollar amount only - more details will be needed in the Budget Section.
- Non-Federal Match:** Give the amount of required non-federal match, as stated in the Award Letter. Give the dollar amount only - more details will be needed in the Budget Section.
- Project Duration:** Give the estimated start and end dates for the project period. While there are exceptions, most projects are expected to be completed in two years and in no more than three years.

Introduction/Background

This section should provide the necessary background information, introduce the basic goals of the project, and outline why you're proposing the project for 319 funding. Be realistic and concise. Examples of information to provide are outlined below.

- Provide relevant background information of the waterbodies/watersheds to be addressed.
 - Drainage Area – What is the geographical extent of the project?
 - What is the land used for?
 - Does the waterbody/watershed provide recreational or other benefits to the surrounding community?
 - Have there been any similar projects in the area?
 - Is this proposal a result of other work? For example are you seeking to implement a watershed management plan? If the PIP is implementing a subsequent phase of an ongoing project, the current status and any accomplishments of the previous project phase(s) should be briefly summarized.

- Tell us the story behind the project development.
 - What problems are you trying to tackle?
 - What factors are contributing to the problems?
 - What do you hope to achieve?
 - If this is a communication project (i.e. outreach, information and education), tell us why the communication is necessary.
- Provide a statement indicating what you hope to achieve specifically with the Section 319 funded portion of the project, particularly if it is only part of a larger project.

Project Description

This section should outline the purpose of the project and what specifically is going to be done during the project to address the problems outlined in the Introduction/Background section. It should include major goals, and specific quantified objectives that you intend to achieve. Be sure to include the following information.

- Describe the purpose of the Section 319 project (e.g. “The purpose of this project is to reduce runoff and promote infiltration within Red Run Park”).
- Describe all activities funded through Section 319 and required match funds.
- Projects whose major purpose is communication should clearly identify the target audience and the mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the activity.
- **Include specific goals and objectives in this section.** The goals and objectives listed in the PIP will be used for reporting in the semi-annual and final project reports. Examples of goals and objectives are outlined below:

Goal 1 - Increase Infiltration in Red Run Park

Objective 1: Construct 2 infiltration basins.

Objective 2: Install 5,000 square feet of pervious pavement in the parking lot.

Objective 3: Install 26 rain gardens in the surrounding watershed.

Goal 2: Communication

Objective 1: Install signs explaining the benefit of the installed management practices.

Objective 2: Conduct three (3) public meetings to outline the benefits of the project.

- Describe the anticipated products or results (i.e. outputs) from the accomplishment of project activities.

Proposed Management Practices

This section should expand on the proposed management practices that were outlined as objectives in the Project Description. For each management practice you should:

- Provide a brief description of what each management practice is.
- Provide an estimate of the benefit that can be expected from each management measure. Literature estimates or removal efficiencies are acceptable.
- Identify any specific areas that are being targeted for each management measure.
- If the project is primarily a study or monitoring project, state this fact.

For example, the Infiltration Basin which was outlined in the example given for project description could be described here as:

Infiltration Basin

An infiltration basin using native soils amended with compost will be constructed at the north side of Red Run Park to decrease stormwater flows and increase infiltration. It will detain 3.1 acre feet of runoff and will be capable of removing up to 90% of sediments from the stormwater.

Pollutant Source

This section should outline the sources of the water quality problem which are being addressed by your project. If you need assistance in determining or quantifying the sources of pollution, your NDEQ project manager can provide assistance. You should:

- Identify the causes and sources of the water quality problems within the watershed. Examples of these could be:
 - Acres of agricultural land in need of nutrient/sediment management.
 - Miles of stream bank in need of stabilization.
- If specific pollutants are being addressed, provide an estimation of the existing pollutant loading. Examples of this could be:
 - Pounds of phosphorous/nitrogen originating in the agricultural land.
 - Tons of sediment being washed downstream from the eroding banks.
- If no pollutants are being addressed, or the goal of the project is communication, state this fact. For example: *"This project does not directly address pollutant sources, its goal is to educate the public on...."*

Load Reduction

This section should outline the reductions in pollution which are expected through implementation of your project. If you need guidance on how to determine these loading reductions, contact your NDEQ project manager. In this section you should:

- Estimate load reductions expected from implementing the project management measures. Literature can provide removal efficiencies for almost all Best Management Practices (BMPs).
- Pollutant removal should be quantified in the same units we were provided within the Pollutant Source section of the PIP.
- If this project is a study or has a purpose other than load reductions, state this in this section. (For example: *There are no load reduction goals associated with this project; rather, this project will determine...".*)

Communication

All Section 319 projects require a communication (information and education) component of the project. In cases of communication projects, this component might comprise the entirety of the project. In BMP installation projects, this component might be installing educational signage or providing educational brochures. In this section you:

- Describe the communication methods that will be used to enhance public understanding of the project and encourage participation in implementing and sustaining BMPs.
- List and describe *briefly* outreach products and activities such as demonstrations, presentations, news releases, mailings and public meetings.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This section should outline the monitoring and evaluation of the proposed management measures outlined in the PIP. If *any* environmental data is being collected as part of your project, a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) must be developed and approved prior to data collection. If you are unsure if a QAPP is required, check with your NDEQ Project Manager. This section of the PIP should include the following:

- Describe what data, if any, is being collected as part of the project. If no data is being collected, please state, "*There are no monitoring activities associated with this project*".
- Describe what you plan to do with any collected data.
- Describe how the effectiveness of any BMPs being installed will be evaluated through the establishment of a baseline for measuring the results of the project. Describe how this evaluation will be used to determine whether the project resulted in environmental improvement (i.e. current condition, new condition).
- Describe how any BMPs will be maintained.

Schedule

This section describes an estimated schedule or timeline for implementing management, education, monitoring, reporting or other activities being implemented:

Activity	Year		
	2014	2015	2016
Communication Activities			
Conduct public meeting #1	X		
Conduct public meeting #2		X	
Information Gathering and Assistance			
Solicit homeowners for cost share programs	X	X	X
Implement cost sharing for rain gardens & barrels		X	X
Complete cost share activities			X
Construction Activities			
Select contractor		X	
BMP construction		X	X
Complete construction			X
Other			
Complete project and submit final report			X

Milestones

This includes the interim milestones and end point of the groups of activities mentioned in the schedule. For example, the following lists the milestones for all education activities.

Milestone	% Completed	Date
Complete Communication activities	100	02/2016
Complete Cost Share activities	100	02/2016
Complete Construction	100	08/2016
Complete project and submit Final Report	100	09/2016

Budget

The budget should clearly break down each source of funds and describe specifically the use of funds for both Section 319 and non-federal match. Place any items within the five categories listed below, adding extra lines within a category as needed.

In addition to the budget table, include a budget narrative. The narrative should describe the purpose and types of any travel, explain and justify any equipment (cost per unit \$5,000 or more) and describe any contracts, including the scope of work or services to be provided.

Example Budget Table:

Activity	Section 319	NET*	NRD*	Landowner*	EQIP**	Total
Personnel						
Salary	\$72,310	0	\$13,690	0	0	\$86,000
Benefits @ 26%	\$25,406	0	\$4,810	0	0	\$30,216
Travel						
Mileage	\$5,560	0	0	0	0	\$5,560
Conference/Training Expenses	\$1,500	0	0	0	0	\$1,500
Operating Costs						
Office Supplies	\$2,500	0	0	0	0	\$2,500
Contractual						
Engineering Services, Design	\$8,000	0	\$4,500	0	0	\$12,500
BMP Cost-share	0	\$18,000	0	0	0	\$18,000
BMP Implementation						
BMP Installation	\$75,000	0	\$29,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$134,000
Communications (I & E)						
Advertising/Printing	\$2,000	0	0	0	0	\$2,000
Demonstration Sites	\$37,724	\$68,320	0	0	0	\$106,044
TOTAL	\$230,000	\$86,320	\$52,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$398,320

*Non-federal match

**Note: EQIP funds cannot be used for matching.

Additional PIP Requirements for the use of Watershed Project Funding

When PIPs are being developed for implementation projects in areas covered under an approved Watershed Management Plan (WMP), the following information is required:

- Reference to the appropriate WMP, its date of completion/approval by NDEQ, revision or updates, and a description of what components or phases of the WMP are being implemented by the PIP.
- Identification of the HUC-12(s) and smaller watersheds where implementation will occur.
- A PIP designed to protect unimpaired waters is based on either a 9-element WMP or an approved alternative plan to protect unimpaired surface and/or groundwater and should directly address priorities for water quality protection outlined in the state NPS Management Plan. Surface waters addressed in the protection-based PIP are assessed and included in the State Integrated Report.