# GFO-23-701

**California’s Fifth Climate Change Assessment**

**Tribal Research Grant Program**

**Questions and Answers**

**November 14, 2023**

1. **If traditional tribal knowledge is being used in a project, does that have to be disclosed as part of the grant deliverables as a data source? Or can that be held as confidential?**
   1. Tribes will be able to hold traditional knowledge in confidence if they wish. The California Energy Commission (CEC) strongly recommends that applicants only propose to include confidential information in a project deliverable (aka a “Product”) if it is imperative for the project. However, if it is absolutely necessary for culturally sensitive or confidential information to be submitted to the CEC, then the Tribe may request a Data Sharing Agreement (see Attachment 10) to specify confidential information in Products which will not be subject to disclosure if the CEC receives a Public Records Act request for the Product. If a Data Sharing Agreement is requested, CEC, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR), and the grant Recipient will attempt to negotiate and execute a Data Sharing Agreement and the grant agreement will be conditional upon execution of a Data Sharing Agreement that is satisfactory to all parties. Please see Section II.B of the solicitation manual and Attachment 10–Data Sharing Agreement Template for more information.
2. **Data sovereignty and data ownership of all data after the project’s completion: Does the awarded Tribe retain the data that is created afterwards or does the State require ownership?**
   1. Data or information contained within project deliverables (aka “Products”) (please see Attachment 4–Scope of Work) will become property of the CEC pursuant to Section 5.a of the Terms and Conditions (Attachment 11). Products are any tangible items specified for delivery to the CEC in the Scope of Work, such as reports, data, summaries, memos, etc. This only applies to deliverables specifically specified for delivery in the Scope of Work. The awarded Tribe will retain data ownership of all data that is not specified for delivery to the CEC in the Scope of Work (Attachment 4).
3. **Are Tribes able to exclude culturally sensitive information from public information requests (i.e., FOIA or CA version of FOIA)?**
   1. Yes. See answer to Q1.
4. **What are the project periods, and how long can a project go? I just want to check on periods of performance, and again confirming when the projects would start and their end dates.**
   1. We anticipate agreements to be finalized around April 2024 and to end around January 2026 or before. Please see the table on page 10 of the solicitation manual for information on the Program Timeline. The solicitation manual is posted on the grant program website at [GFO-23-701](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2023-09/gfo-23-701-californias-fifth-climate-change-assessment-tribal-research-grant).
5. **Could I ask for more detail about that process of working more closely with the Fifth Climate Assessment once the agreement is in place?**
   1. Participation in the Fifth Climate Assessment is optional, but highly encouraged. If you do choose to participate, you will work closely with OPR’s Tribal Program Manager and the Fifth Climate Assessment Author Team(s) to determine how you would like to be involved. There are many levels of authorship for the overall climate assessment. One option is to be a contributing author for the Tribal and Indigenous Communities Report by submitting a project or including a case study. If you wish to participate more on the Author Team, please contact the Tribal Research Program Manager, Patricia Kennedy at [patricia.kennedy@opr.ca.gov](mailto:patricia.kennedy@opr.ca.gov) for more information. See the table on page 10 of the solicitation manual for more information on the timeline for participating in Fifth Climate Assessment collaborations.
6. **One thing the tribe is looking at is based on severity of recent climatic events in the areas of wildfire and severe storms that we had over last winter. Maybe proposing a project where the tribe is going to be researching kind of worst-case scenarios. A lot of data we look at, especially from a planning perspective, looks at those benchmarks that are established by various agencies, whether it's 100-year floodplain or 500-year flood events. If we were to propose researching that kind of aspect regarding projects that could possibly impact tribal resources in our area but on a more global or a higher severity scale, is this something that might be eligible under this funding scenario?**
   1. This type of project is eligible for funding under this solicitation. We encourage projects to use data that the Fifth Climate Assessment has produced. The Fifth Assessment is producing new downscaled Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 (CMIP6) climate projections using Weather Research and Forecasting (WRF) and Localized Constructed Analogs (LOCA) as well as hydrologic simulations, hourly sea level rise projections, and long-term wildfire risk projections\*. However, we understand this might not always be possible and therefore are not restricting the use of other data. While taking lessons learned from a global scale is eligible, research must be focused in California.

(\*In support of California’s Fifth Climate Change Assessment, CEC-funded research grants are developing climate projections and scenarios for wildfire and hydrologic impacts. The climate projections include a suite of nearly 200 possible climate futures across a range of the latest IPCC climate models and emissions scenarios at 3-km grid, daily resolution for precipitation, temperature and relative humidity (daily maximum and minimum), precipitation, vector wind and wind speed, and ground-level, incoming solar radiation; as well as a much smaller set of projections that have broader spatial domain and include higher temporal resolution of select variables. Wildfire scenarios include projections portraying fire presence (3-km grid), fire size, number of fires, fire severity, and smoke emissions. Hydrologic scenarios will represent a suite of hydrological variables (e.g., runoff, evapotranspiration, snow water equivalent) driven by at least 19 climate projections. Additionally, hourly sea level rise—which represents both impacts of global warming and short-term storms and tides—will be available at nine tide gauge stations along the California coast. For more information, see the website for the [California Energy Commission Climate Data and Analytics Working Group (C-DAWG)](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/meeting/2023-09/california-energy-commission-climate-data-and-analytics-working-group-c-dawg).)

1. **Could it be more landscape based in our project proposal? Or is it more specific to a project area, for example, the coast versus the inland of Sonoma County, or the Bay side of Sonoma?**
   1. Landscape scale proposals are eligible for funding under this solicitation.
2. **Is there a limit on Group 2 funding?**
   1. Funding levels are not tied to project group or project type. The funding level categories are small, medium, large, and collaborative, ranging from small grants up to $20,000 to collaborative grants up to $400,000 per project. There is no limit on funding regarding the number of grants that may be awarded for Group 2. See Section II.C. pages 7–9 of the solicitation manual.
3. **I missed the pre-application workshop – was that recorded?**
   1. Yes. The slides and recording are posted on the [GFO event website](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2023-09/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-701-californias-fifth-climate-change).
4. **Is this the first hour session** **where people ask questions, or were there some sessions prior to this one?**
   1. There have been office hours sessions on September 21st and 28th and October 5th, 12th, and 19th. All office hour recordings are posted on the [GFO event website](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2023-09/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-701-californias-fifth-climate-change).
5. **Is there a recording on that first office hour session? Or a website where we could go to listen?**
   1. Yes. The office hour recordings are posted on the [GFO event website](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2023-09/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-701-californias-fifth-climate-change).
6. **Are you doing these office hours every week or is it every other week?**
   1. Office hours are now concluded. The office hour recordings are posted on the [GFO event website](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2023-09/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-701-californias-fifth-climate-change).
7. **Can two** **applicants partner, be like co-applicants, or does it need to be like one lead with a sub-contractor for this opportunity?** 
   1. One lead and that lead must be a California Native American Tribe, Tribal Serving NGO, or Tribal Organization. Any partners the lead enters into an agreement with for performance of the grant project would be the lead’s sub-contractors and are not restricted to the above entities.
8. **If I'm the main applicant, I will put my time in salary, fringe, and then travel expenses.** **And then, when my co-applicants submit a reimbursement for their time and trouble,** **should I plan to put that in salary, fringe and travel, or just as contractual?** **Are they considered** **contractual in terms of the budget that we have to submit?**
   1. If you are the grant awardee, then each entity you enter into an agreement with for performance of the grant project would be your sub-contractors. Sub-contractors that are budgeted to receive $100,000 or more of grant funds or 25% or more of the total grant funds requested must complete their own budget sheets. If a sub-contractor is budgeted to receive less than those amounts, that sub-contractor does not need its own budget sheets and can just be included on the lead’s budget under the sub-contractors tab. Any fees, salaries or consultation fees should be included in the individual budget of each sub-contractor. See the Instructions tab in the Budget (Attachment 5) for more information.
9. **One of the things that we've been wanting to do** **but haven't had a good opportunity, or the right funding** **match, is coming up with an equitable access plan** **by working with the city and partners to come up with a plan to solidify that connection** **where the tribes could** **restart some of these old practices that used to happen,** **and bring more of that history and the stories of the place** **with the human connection back** **in the public view. The other idea is** **helping to** **coordinate a climate assessment, or carbon sequestration, or wildfire risk assessment on maybe one of the reservations.**
   1. Those are all projects that are eligible for funding under this GFO. Please see “Section II.C. Applicant Eligibility and Requirements” in the solicitation manual for more information.
10. **I am looking through the materials and having a difficult time pinpointing something. I am wondering how it is determined whether we qualify to apply for a small, medium, or large grant. We are a federally recognized tribe, considering applying to fund a climate assessment.**
    1. The small, medium, or large funding category is up to you to decide based on what amount of funding best fits your needs for the project that you have in mind. This includes factors like the size of the geographic area that you want to include in your climate assessment, staffing needs, tools and equipment, and other budgeting needs. The collaborative category is the only one that has a requirement and that is for there to be at least one collaborative tribe partner involved.
11. **Are there admin cost caps? My** **tribe’s federally negotiated indirect cost rate is above 35%. Admin caps are a barrier to us applying.**
    1. There is no cap. However, please note that per Section V. Technical Evaluation Criteria, Criterion 5, applications will be evaluated on whether the personnel rates/costs, operating expenses, and indirect rates/costs are reasonable for the proposed work and consistent with the experience of the project team. If you are a federally recognized tribe with a pre-negotiated indirect cost rate with the federal government, we recommend you include that paperwork with your application. Please also see the Instructions for Indirect Costs on the Indirect Costs & Profit tab in the Budget (Attachment 5).
12. **In the Technical Evaluation Criteria on page 19 of the solicitation manual, in the Budget and Cost Effectiveness criterion #5. With respect to indirect rates where it says “…indirect rates/costs are reasonable for the proposed work…”, are tribal indirect rates going to be considered reasonable? I’m hoping we won’t be dinged for our federally negotiated indirect cost rate that we have to comply with.**
    1. See answer to Q17.
13. **What are the general reporting requirements? Will your staff need to review our timesheets and other internal documents?** 
    1. Minimum reporting requirements will consist of virtual online calls or meetings at regular intervals; this is required so CEC staff may provide support if needed. Another requirement is submission of project deliverables, which are also called Task Products; this is a built-in reporting aspect for the project. See Attachment 2–Project Narrative Form, Item #5, Reporting Requirements and Attachment 5– Scope of Work, Item #5 Administrative Tasks, for more information.

Typically, regular reporting will not require timesheets or documentation of general expenditures, and will rely on your reported numbers on the submitted invoice. All expenses must be actual expenses and must be in accordance with the information in the Budget (Attachment 5). The Commission Agreement Manager may ask to see invoices, receipts, or other documentation to prove expenditures before reimbursement is approved, especially for large expenditures such as equipment. However, you should keep records of everything in case your awarded grant agreement or this program as a whole is selected for an audit. See Attachment 11– Grant Terms and Conditions, section 8 Payment of Funds and section 11 Recordkeeping, Cost Accounting, and Auditing for more information.

1. **We are a tribal-serving non-governmental organization (NGO) and are proposing a project to do a general climate vulnerability need assessment with Native American Tribes in Orange County, CA, as no one has ever collected this data, written reports, or established climate vulnerability baselines for Tribes in Orange County. Is this an eligible project?**
   1. Yes, this is an eligible project. Information and application materials can be found at the [GFO website](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2023-09/gfo-23-701-californias-fifth-climate-change-assessment-tribal-research-grant). Project group descriptions and examples begin on page 5 of the solicitation manual.
2. **We’re thinking of doing a prescribed cultural burn. Would this be eligible for funding?**
   1. Yes, this type of project is eligible for funding under this solicitation. Information and application materials can be found at the [GFO website](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2023-09/gfo-23-701-californias-fifth-climate-change-assessment-tribal-research-grant). Project group descriptions and examples begin on page 5 of the solicitation manual.
3. **I see that on October 20th, the written questions are due. Are those** **found in the project narrative form? Or is there a pre-application written question document that I'm not seeing on the website?**
   1. This is referring to any questions that you may have on this solicitation. Any programmatic questions were due by October 20. But any nontechnical questions, for example help with application submission, can be submitted any time before the due date at 5:00 pm on November 17.
4. **Would it be possible to fund soil testing for 15 years of site monitoring after a cultural burn?**
   1. All funds need to be spent by January 2026. Funds from this solicitation would be able to support monitoring and evaluation until January 2026, but not beyond that date.
5. **We’ll need equipment, PPE particularly, and materials. Are those types of equipment and materials eligible under this grant program?**
   1. Yes, they are eligible.
6. **We don't have any previous project experience on climate work yet. How do I bolster my application?** **I have no idea how much** **it's going to cost to contract with someone that does climate assessment work.**
   1. Showing prior project experience is not required and this grant program is supporting communities and projects in all stages. One suggestion for obtaining subcontractor cost information is to reach out to tribes near you for information on costs and quotes regarding partnering with a subcontractor for a vulnerability assessment.
7. **Can you give examples of types of projects that you see as being fundable?**
   1. Please see “Section II.C. Applicant Eligibility and Requirements” in the solicitation manual for more information on the project groups and examples of eligible projects.
8. **I'm thinking of something along the lines of the effects of sea level rise on the sacred sites. Would something like that be eligible for funding?**
   1. Yes, this is eligible for funding.
9. **We are a non-profit organization. Can we partner with a California recognized tribe if the tribe doesn’t have a nonprofit section and is not associated with a nonprofit organization? They have a tribal corporation, so could the tribal corporation get the money, even though it's not nonprofit?**
   1. California Native American tribes, California tribal organizations, and tribal-serving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are eligible to be the applicant under this solicitation. California Native American tribes include federally and non-federally recognized tribes on the Native American Heritage Commission list. A California tribal organization is a corporation, association, or group controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by a California Native American tribe that is subject to its laws, the laws of the State of California, or the laws of the United States. A tribal-serving NGO is a non-governmental organization that serves tribes. If your non-profit organization meets any of these definitions, it can be the applicant and could partner with the tribe, with the tribe as the sub-contractor. The tribe itself does not need to be a non-profit.
10. **If an application is submitted early, will it be screened administratively so that an applicant will know if it is complete?**
    1. No. All applications are processed at the same time after the due date.
11. **Does the grant software inherently check to see if an application is complete during the submission process?**
    1. The electronic Grant Submission System will send applicants a confirmation email after all required documents have been successfully uploaded. However, the system is not able to verify that all required information within each document has been submitted. It is, therefore, up to the applicant to ensure all required information in each document has been submitted.
12. **The policy drivers behind the authorizing legislation for funding grants sometimes don’t necessarily mesh with tribal interests. Just an encouragement that in reviewing the applications, that the scoring criteria favorably and flexibly interpret the alignment of the policy directives for the program with the tribal interest, which can sometimes be difficult and sometimes gets diffused when applying other objectives to a tribal interest.**
    1. Thank you for your comment. Those are matters that this grant program has given a lot of thought to when we were creating the program and hopefully this is reflected in the scoring criteria and the overall solicitation.
13. **Does the project implementation category require a research component given that this is a tribal research grant, or can it be strictly on the ground work?**
    1. A research component is not required. Project group descriptions and examples begin on page 5 of the solicitation manual. Group 3, Project Implementation, is not research, it is on the ground work.
14. **The narrative contains the background information, and the scope of work contains more detailed, specific methods on how we’re going to do things?**
    1. Yes, that is correct.
15. **Can a tribe submit more than one application, and if they do can they be funded for more than one application?**
    1. Yes, applicants may submit more than one application, to either the same project group or different groups. If an applicant submits more than one application to the same project group, each application must be for a distinct project (i.e., no overlap with respect to the tasks described in the Scope of Work).

However, if a Grant Round is oversubscribed, only one grant per applicant will be able to be awarded. If a single applicant is proposed for more than one grant award, the applicant will be allowed to identify their priority project that they want funded. See “Multiple Applications” on page 3 of Attachment 1–Application Form.

1. **Is there an opportunity to identify which project is a priority for funding, if we submit more than one application?**
   1. Yes, see answer to Q34.
2. **If I have two projects that may not be linked very well, could I include them both and be ranked well as long as both are tied to legitimate climate needs? Or do I really need one cohesive project? Do they need to be submitted as separate applications, or can they be grouped together into one application and still be viable for funding?**
   1. If you can tie two tribal objectives into one cohesive plan, that will be acceptable.
3. **Has anyone seen a preference proposed by anybody regarding the terms indigenous knowledges in the plural, traditional knowledge, ecological knowledge, ITEK, and others?** 
   1. For the purposes of the Fifth Climate Assessment, it was decided to use indigenous knowledge(s) and the intention of this term will be explained in the Fifth Climate Assessment Report.
4. **I’m looking at the Technical Evaluation Criteria. Is there any requirement to have a climate change plan, an adaptation plan, or a climate resiliency plan?**
   1. No. The word “plan” in the Technical Evaluation Criteria #2. Climate, Resilience, and Energy Goals, on page 19 of the solicitation manual, is referring to the applicant’s proposed project, or proposed plan, as described in the applicant’s proposal submission.
5. **For purposes of the California Fifth Climate Assessment, in evaluating the applications, it would be good to have statewide coverage of grant awards.**
   1. Thank you for your comment. We agree that statewide coverage is important and we recognize this need.
6. **Is there a document or location where we can find a list or description of items that tribes will need to supply in order to finalize the grant agreements post-award (e.g., tribal resolutions, letters, other documentation or information, etc.)? Because sometimes obtaining these items can take several weeks so having a list to reference in advance would be very helpful. Anything that might come after award, posted in template form – is this available anywhere in advance?**
   1. The information supplied by the applicant in the GFO Attachments will be used to finalize the grant agreements with awardees. Environmental assessment documentation required by the National Environmental Policy Act or Tribal law, if either are applicable, may also be needed after award.
7. **Will you be using Senate Bill 901 to accept NEPA for CEQA? My understanding is that S.B. 901 is applied to prescribed fire thinning and fuel reduction projects taking place on federal lands, so it’s limited to wildland fire events but not all encompassing.**
   1. This is likely acceptable, as long as the NEPA documentation is thorough enough to meet the requirements for CEQA.
8. **I see there is an online portal for the grant application. Hopefully the compliance, reports and closeout function for the award is not going to be overly burdensome to learn and use.**
   1. Thank you for your comment. For this grant, awardees will not be interacting with online portals. Invoicing and submission of project deliverables will be submitted via email.
9. **Referring to the Terms and Conditions, is #25 how your agency is handling the issue of not requiring a Waiver of Sovereign Immunity? It doesn’t say what court for dispute resolution? It seems like #25 covers a lot of the fiscal concerns that people would have.**
   1. The Commission Remedies for Recipient’s Non-Compliance term is standard language the California Energy Commission includes in almost all of its grant agreements and does not have any connection to not requiring a Waiver of Sovereign Immunity under this program.
10. **We are preparing our grant applications and have questions about the support letter requirement. We have plenty of Tribal supporters who will submit letters for the grant but wonder what more you might need from them. The capacity of other tribes varies, as their resources and technical abilities are often limited. The answer to this question will help us attach letters from Tribal groups who have capacity to fulfill further obligations beyond sending a letter of support. It appears that the letters of support *may* be the only obligation required by CEC from other tribes, unless the tribes are involved in the project.**
    1. Instructions regarding letters of support can be found in Attachment 8–Letter of Support. Yes, the letters of support are optional. However, applicants are highly encouraged to include at least one support letter from participating tribes, that is, tribes that will be served by the project and/or will be involved in the project. Awardees will need to provide a more formal commitment from the participating tribe(s) before the grant can be finalized. We are not asking for letters of support from non-participating tribes; however, these can be submitted in support of an application if the applicant would like to include them.
11. **Do you have a template for the letter of support?**
    1. No, we do not have a template for the letter of support, so there is flexibility in the format and structure of the letter as long as it contains the information requested in Attachment 8–Letter of Support.