



The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (the Alliance) has received multiple comments and questions related to its [Request for Proposals](#) for a Technical Service Provider (TSP) to develop and design plans on select Organic Valley (OV) Coop farms located in Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, and Virginia.

1. As a firm, we do not have full NRCS certification. Since the contract timeframe is multiple years, we would make the investment in that training if NRCS provides the training opportunity to private TSPs. Do you know if that might be a possibility in the future?
 - We would encourage you to put together a competitive application and continue to pursue any necessary certifications as they are available and accessible to your firm.
2. Will all leads for farms in the project be provided by the Alliance / Organic Valley?
 - Yes, all outreach will be done by the Alliance and OV and leads will be shared with the contracted TSP.
3. Is this a true NRCS CNMP (I&E completed by a PE, 590 NMP, NRCS Soil Conservation Plan etc)?
 - Yes, the CNMPs will need to follow NRCS standards. These CNMPs will be used to pursue federal and state funding.
4. What are the anticipated elements in the Regenerative Agriculture Plans?
 - The intent of these plans is to identify climate smart practices that can help reduce or remove greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the farm. We expect that these plans will offer step-by-step plans on how to transition to the implementation of the climate smart practices. Furthermore, it would be expected that these plans can calculate GHG emission baselines and possible reductions through COMET Farm or similar models.
5. Is there a target number of farms, or is the goal primarily to identify 150 climate-smart practices and complete 25 CNMPs and 12 Regenerative Agriculture Plans?
 - The primary target is the total number of climate-smart practices, allowing for multiple practices and plan types on one farm.
6. Can the CNMPs and Regenerative Agriculture Plans be completed for the same farms?
 - Yes, the two plans cover different topics and goals, both plans could be completed for the same farm if it is appropriate for the situation.
7. Do structural BMPs need an I&E development, or do they also require completion of fully developed engineering designs?
 - All structural BMPs will need to have fully developed engineering and design plans that follow NRCS standards. It is likely that federal or state funding will be used to implement these practices.

8. Do projects have full funding for implementation, or do they anticipate the need to apply with farmers for other funding sources? If TSPs are expected to assist in funding acquisition, will that work be funded through this project? Have they considered that timelines and requirements will differ with other funding sources?
 - Under this scope, TSPs are not expected to be directly involved in pursuit or securement of funding for project implementation beyond: providing preliminary plans and assisting the Alliance in responding to technical questions about the projects. Timelines for project implementation will depend on the funding opportunity.
9. How will construction contractor procurement take place? Will TSPs be required to assist with procurement and bidding?
 - Construction contracting is not part of this scope.
10. Are farmers required to sign agreements with the Alliance, TSPs, or Organic Valley? What will these agreements include, and will TSPs be involved?
 - Agreements will be signed between the farmer and the Alliance as well as between the farmer and OV. Such agreements will ensure TSP farm access and outline expectations of engagement, amongst other expectations. Unless individual farmer circumstances necessitate such flexibility, TSPs will not have an agreement with the farmers. A contract will be signed by the selected TSP with the Alliance that will cover all the farm projects.
11. Are construction contractors required to sign agreements with the Alliance, TSPs, or OV? What will these agreements include, and will TSPs be involved?
 - Construction contracting is not part of this scope.
12. Are payments reimbursed for completed work, or are there any opportunities for advanced payment?
 - Payment to the selected TSP will be predominantly made on a reimbursement basis, however, the Alliance may provide an initial upfront payment to the selected TSP for project startup costs.
13. Are TSPs only working with OV farmers, or can the audience/clientele be expanded?
 - Funding through this RFP will only be eligible for OV farms.
14. Are we limited to planning and designing certain BMPs? Is there a list of eligible BMPs?
 - There is a list of eligible BMPs. Currently: silvopasture, riparian forest buffers, alley cropping, windbreaks, manure composting, manure solid-liquid separation. With future BMPs being approved by OV in coming years including grazing and feed enhancements.
15. Will annual practices need to be recorded annually, or is it sufficient to include BMPs in a plan that counts for the life of the plan/project? Will TSPs be required to track implementation? Does the OV/ACB team have a data management system in place for TSPs to track implementation as needed?
 - The Alliance will be tracking all phases of implementation, but will require the selected TSP to provide data associated with the completed scope.

16. Is planning, design, or implementation reviewed by any third-party technical agencies, such as NRCS, Conservation Districts, OV technical staff, etc?
- Depending on the additional funding sources, third-party technical review may apply. Planning, design, and implementation of projects must meet NRCS standards and OV Carbon In-Setting Program goals.
17. We are a certified TSP in one state. Can we submit a bid for just doing work in this state?
- We intend to select one TSP to provide services in NY, PA, MD, and VA. Proposals may include details on TSP intention to include additional subcontractors (such as those operating in other states to cover the entire applicable geography), as well as what subcontractors they would anticipate including.
18. Is a climate smart manure management plan the same as a Manure Management Plan as in Pennsylvania?
- The objective of a climate smart manure management plan is to reduce or remove GHG emissions. If the Manure Management Plan is going to recommend a practice that is not going to reduce emissions, then, it will not be a climate smart manure management plan.
19. Is a grazing enhancement plan the same as a Prescribed Grazing Plan as in Pennsylvania?
- Yes, there may be some variation from state to state - but it is safe to assume that would be a satisfactory plan type.
20. What is a cropland improvement plan? Is it the same as an Ag E&S Plan or Conservation Plan?
- A cropland improvement plan is a plan type currently under development by Organic Valley in an effort to improve the soil health of their partner farms. Organic Valley is in the process of determining best practices and how to measure their capacity for carbon sequestration. Potential practices could include Cover Crop, Reduced Till, No-Till, and Soil Carbon Amendments.
21. I have concerns over the budget ceiling regarding the deliverable of 150 Plans.
- The target of 150 refers to the number of practices that are included in applicable plans. A single established Plan (such as a CNMP) could account for multiple practices that will go into implementation. Multiple Plans may also be established for a single farm. We encourage TSPs to provide their most competitive proposals given the not-to-exceed budget amount.