

**Frequently Asked Questions:  
U.S. Natural Climate Solutions Accelerator**

*ISSUE DATE:* June 3, 2019

**DEADLINE FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION: August 16, 2019 (11:59 PM EST)**

**1. What is the U.S. Natural Climate Solutions Accelerator?**

Through the generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The Nature Conservancy is announcing a request for proposals for two additional rounds of grant funding for projects with potential to substantially increase the use of natural climate solutions through the U.S. Natural Climate Solutions Accelerator program. This grant-funding program is focused on helping kick-start innovative and scalable approaches to capturing greenhouse gas emissions by using natural and working lands in the United States. The program's steering committee approved the first five grants in the fall of 2018 and plans to complete two additional rounds of grantmaking during the next 12 months.

The deadline for the second round of applications is August 16. Applicants can request up to \$250,000 per project. The third application period will be announced in the early 2020. Up to \$1.7M will be awarded in these two rounds of grant making. In addition to financial support, recipients will be offered mentorship, and connection to networks and new partnerships.

**2. Why are Natural Climate Solutions necessary and timely?**

In 2018 a TNC led study found that Natural Climate Solutions—which include reforestation, cover crops, coastal restoration, and other management practices could prevent or sequester more than one-fifth of annual U.S. greenhouse gas pollution—the equivalent of removing the emissions from all U.S. cars and trucks from the road. Or, to frame it another way, the equivalent of the entire annual emissions from Brazil.

While significant investments are now being made in renewable energy and other technologies to decarbonize the energy sector, the Accelerator program seeks to correspondingly increase investment in the oldest, and one of the most cost-effective carbon capture technologies there is—nature. Over time, the Accelerator strives to support and develop a portfolio of proven approaches and mechanisms to deploying natural solutions that landowners, state and federal governments, corporations, and other climate leaders can efficiently implement on a broad scale.

**3. What is 'NCS'?**

'NCS' is an acronym for Natural Climate Solutions

**4. Where can I learn more about NCS?**

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-insights/perspectives/a-natural-path-for-u-s-climate-action/>

**5. What is the funding range and scale of projects that the U.S. NCS Accelerator is looking for?**

The funding range is \$50K-\$250K, but the overall scale of the project can be much larger.

**6. Am I eligible to apply?**

The U.S. NCS Accelerator will consider applications from 501(c)(3) not-for-profits.

## **7. How do I apply?**

You may begin the application by submitting an online application form on the U.S. NCS Accelerator website at [www.nature.org/ncsaccelerator](http://www.nature.org/ncsaccelerator).

## **8. How will winners be selected?**

A steering committee comprised of experts from a range of organizations will evaluate proposals and select projects primarily based on their assessment of:

1. the potential for delivering significant climate change mitigation benefits;
2. likelihood of reaching transformative scale; and
3. the capability of the affiliated organizations to achieve success.

Applications from eligible entities who have completed the application in full prior to the due date will be reviewed, short listed, and then selected by the Steering Committee. The finalization of all awards shall be subject to agreement to terms and signing of a formal grant agreement with TNC.<sup>1</sup>

## **9. Will I be competing against applicants from The Nature Conservancy or other members of the steering committee?**

This is an open grant competition and steering committee members are eligible to participate. That said, the intent of the program is to support a broad portfolio of scalable NCS approaches from different organizations, geographies, and a range of land management practices. The Steering Committee members are required to recuse themselves regarding commenting and voting on any proposals submitted by their organization.

## **10. Are there examples of projects that are eligible for this program?**

First round awardees' pilot projects can be seen in the "Previous Awardees" section of the U.S. NCS Accelerator website [www.nature.org/ncsaccelerator](http://www.nature.org/ncsaccelerator). The Accelerator is open to making awards to a wide range of NCS approaches so long as there is clear roadmap to future investability, scalability, replicability, or leveragability.

## **11. Can you provide more guidance on how to estimate climate change mitigation benefits (Aggregate tCO<sub>2e</sub>) and costs (Average \$/tCO<sub>2e</sub>)?**

To the best of their ability, applicants should estimate the aggregate climate mitigation benefits that could be achieved assuming the project is successful and scaled to the maximum reasonable extent over 30 years. These estimates can be formal (i.e. based on standards, methodologies, and protocols) or more informal "best guesses" depending on the applicant and the type of project being proposed. Either way, applicants should "show their work" and explain key assumptions so that they can be understood and validated. Additional resources can be found in the links below:

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<sup>1</sup> Qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, sex, marital status, religion, ancestry, mental or physical handicap, or age.

U.S. State Mapper from Nature4Climate  
<https://nature4climate.org/u-s-carbon-mapper/>

Comet Planner from U.S. Department of Agriculture / Colorado State University  
<http://comet-planner.com/>

Tools for carbon inventory, management, and reporting from U.S. Forest Service  
<https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/carbon/tools/>

Forest Carbon Map from the Trust for Public Land and American Forests  
<https://dev.tplgis.org/carbonmap/>

Marginal Abatement Cost Tool from NDC Partnership  
<http://ndcpartnership.org/content/marginal-abatement-cost-tool-mactool%C2%A0>

## **12. How far along should a project be?**

Awards will be considered for projects across all stages of development that can demonstrate measurable outcomes during the 18-month grant term with a clear roadmap to get to scale during or beyond the 18-month term.

## **13. Can I apply more than one time?**

Yes, applicants from previous rounds can reapply. In any given round an entity may also submit more than one application to the US NCS Accelerator should they have multiple eligible projects.

## **14. Can supplemental information be attached as an appendix?**

Supplemental documentation (further explanation of the project, organizational charts, etc.) may be provided in additional appendices though these materials may or may not be considered by the Steering Committee.

## **15. How will the progress be evaluated for the selected winners?**

Interim reports will be due at 6 and 12 months with final reports due at the end of 18 months.

## **16. What information will be shared publicly?**

Each awardee and an overview of the project selected for grant funding will be featured on The Nature Conservancy website and in press releases. Awardees will be asked to share concepts, challenges and solutions with other awardees. Awardees will not be asked to share proprietary information.

## **Contact/Help**

Please contact us with any questions by emailing [NCSAccelerator@TNC.org](mailto:NCSAccelerator@TNC.org). We have prepared this FAQ document based on the actual questions received to ensure that we can provide the same responses to

everyone. Please feel free to share any questions and we will respond and update the FAQ to make sure that all aspects of the grant program description are clear.