U.S. EPA
GOAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM FUNDING PROGRAM

GUIDANCE MANUAL FOR FUNDING PROCESS, DEVELOPING PROJECTS, AND MANAGING CONTRACTS

FY 2021

July 2021

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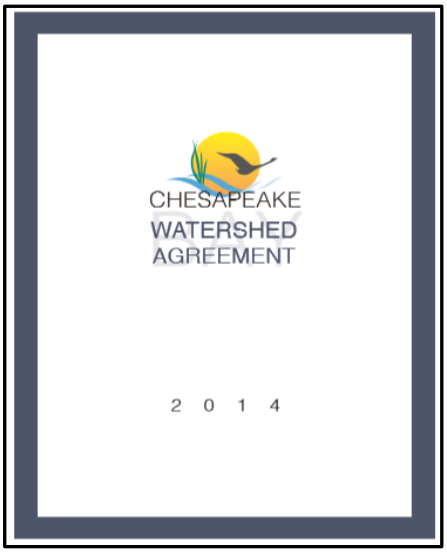
1 OVERVIEW

1.1 Program Background



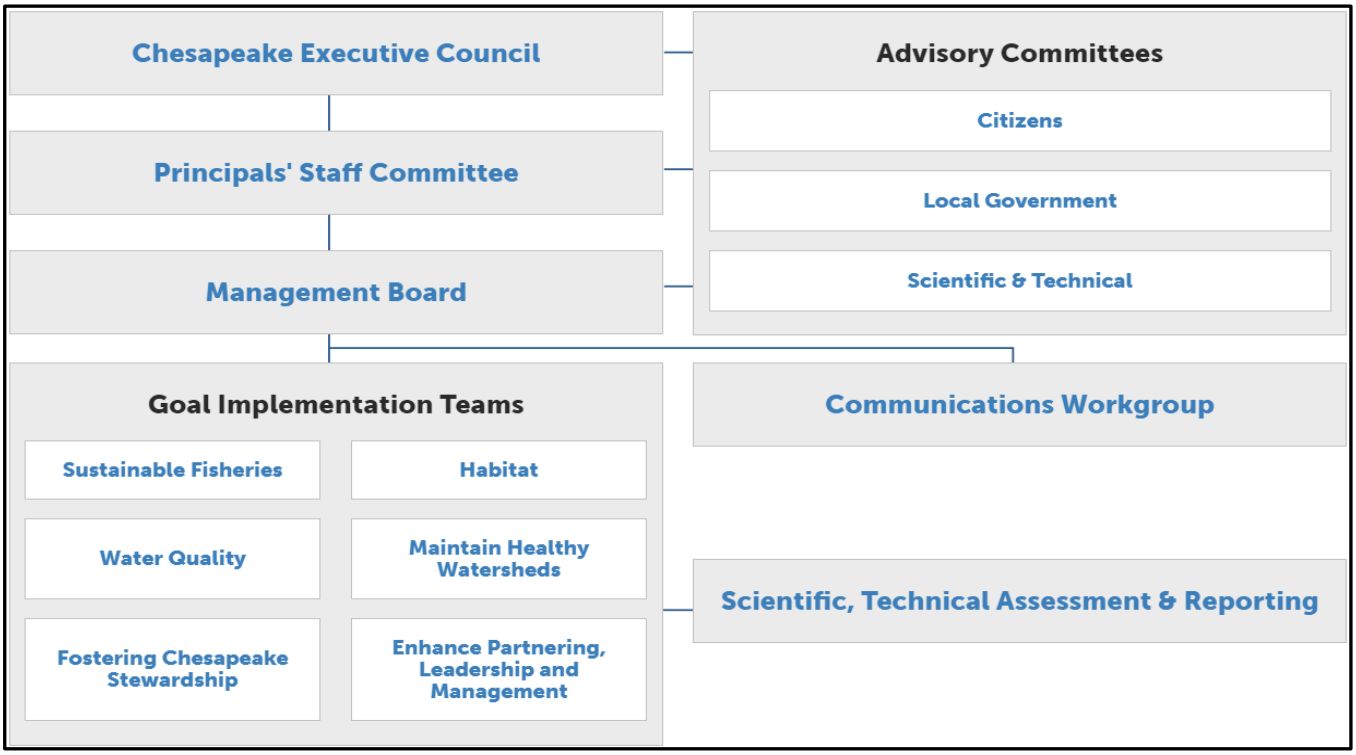
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) provides supplemental funding annually to help meet responsibilities, targets, *Outcomes* and goals under the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (Watershed Agreement, as amended on 24 January 2020). The Watershed Agreement establishes 10 goals supported by 31 specific *Outcomes*. The funds are used to advance specific *Outcomes* from the Watershed Agreement that have been identified as top priorities to address across the EPA Goal Implementation Teams (GITs).

Each GIT has designated Work Groups and Action Teams that are the primary organizations responsible for coordinating CBP activities under the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. This includes the development of management strategies for reaching programmatic goals and *Outcomes*. The management strategies require data collection and analysis, metrics development, measurement, economic analysis, meeting facilitation, and other types of work. The work funded under the EPA GIT Funding Program supports the seven watershed jurisdictions and other non-federal partners. The seven watershed jurisdictions include Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust) has been designated to receive federal funds from the EPA as part of the *EPA GIT Funding Program* to meet the goals and *Outcomes* of the Watershed Agreement. The Trust administers an open competitive process for all projects.

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. The CBP partnership is guided at the direction of the Chesapeake Executive Council (Executive Council). The Executive Council sets the policy direction for the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed and uses its leadership to rally public support for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection. The Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) acts as the senior policy advisor to the Executive Council and provides policy and program direction to the Management Board. The Management Board (MB) provides strategic planning, priority setting, and operational guidance through implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, accountable implementation strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program. Management Board directs and coordinates the GITs and their respective workgroups. ***There are six GITs and the Scientific, Technical Assessment & Reporting (STAR) team (see Figure 1 below)***:

- Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (GIT 1)
- Habitat Goal Implementation Team (GIT 2)
- Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (GIT 3)
- Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4)
- Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship Goal Implementation Team (GIT 5)
- Enhance Partnering, Leadership and Management Goal Implementation Team (GIT 6)
- Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Team

Figure 1. Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership



The STAR team works to coordinate the monitoring, modeling and analysis needed to explain and communicate the health of and changes in the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. The six GITs and STAR are comprised of federal and non-federal experts from throughout the watershed. Each of the 31 *Outcomes* of the Watershed Agreement is to be attained through the implementation of management strategies developed by each GIT's designated Work Groups and Action Teams (see Table 1). The management strategies inform the specific projects and efforts that the CBP partnership believes are necessary to achieve the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement *Outcomes*, and each management strategy includes specific metrics by which progress toward the outcome is to be evaluated. In considering the management strategies and other work areas for which they have responsibility, the GITs will determine which projects require support and will provide detailed project and deliverables descriptions to the recipient for use in a competitive award process.

Table 1. Outcomes, Work Groups, and Action Teams by Goal Implementation Team (GIT)

GIT (# of *Outcomes*)	Outcome	Work Group or Action Team
GIT 1 (5)	Blue Crab Abundance Outcome	Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee
	Blue Crab Management Outcome	Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee
	Forage Fish Outcome	Forage Fish Action Team
	Oyster Restoration Outcome	MD/VA Interagency Oyster Team
	Fish Habitat Outcome	Fish Habitat Action Team
GIT 2 (6)	Wetlands Outcome	Wetlands Workgroup
	Black Duck Outcome	Wetlands Workgroup
	Stream Health Outcome	Stream Health Workgroup
	Brook Trout Outcome	Stream Health Workgroup
	Fish Passage Outcome	Fish Passage Workgroup

	SAV Outcome	SAV Workgroup
GIT 3 (7)	Forest Buffer Outcome	Forestry Workgroup
	Tree Canopy Outcome	Forestry Workgroup
	2017 WIP Outcome	GIT 3 level
	2025 WIP Outcome	GIT 3 level
	Water Quality Standards Attainment & Monitoring Outcome	GIT 3 level
	Toxic Contaminants Research Outcome	Toxic Contaminants Workgroup
	Toxic Contaminants Policy & Prevention Outcome	Toxic Contaminants Workgroup
GIT 4 (3)	Healthy Watersheds Outcome	GIT 4 level
	Land Use Methods & Metrics Development Outcome	Land Use Workgroup
	Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome	GIT 4 level
GIT 5 (7)	Citizen Stewardship Outcome	Stewardship Workgroup
	Diversity Outcome	Diversity Workgroup
	Protected Lands Outcome	Protected Lands Workgroup/Chesapeake Conservation Partnership
	Public Access Site Development Outcome	Public Access Workgroup
	Student Outcome	Education Workgroup
	Sustainable Schools Outcome	Education Workgroup
	Environmental Literacy Planning Outcome	Education Workgroup
GIT 6 (1)	Local Leadership Outcome	Local Leadership Workgroup
STAR (2)	Climate Adaptation Outcome	Climate Resiliency Workgroup
	Climate Monitoring and Assessment Outcome	Climate Resiliency Workgroup

SOURCES: Chesapeake Bay Program Website: http://www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page
2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement:
https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/FINAL_Ches_Bay_Watershed_Agreement.withsignatures-HIres.pdf

1.2 Purpose of Manual

This document provides the background and description of the annual GIT funding process, the process to develop projects, and overall guidance to obtain successful deliverables and final products from EPA GIT Funding Program projects.

This manual is envisioned to be a *living document* that will be updated annually to adaptively respond to the needs of the EPA, the CBP, and the GITs.

1.3 Eligible Participants

The six GITs and the STAR team (including the associated Action Teams and Workgroups under each GIT) are responsible for completing their Management Strategies and Logic and Action Plans are eligible to participate in this process. The Communications Team and the GIT 6 Budget and Finance Workgroup are also eligible when they have project proposals that support the GITs broadly in achieving specific and recurring elements of CBP Management Strategies and Logic and Action Plans.

1.4 Eligible Projects

Projects that are eligible for this funding source should be focused on filling key gaps that address important factors affecting goal and outcome attainment as articulated in the GIT Management Strategies and Workplans.

- Project requests should explicitly demonstrate how the proposed project would support, directly or indirectly, the achievement of one or more related *Outcomes*.
- This funding is not intended to support long-term implementation of restoration, protection, or stewardship projects, but rather it is to support tools or analyses that will make restoration, protection, and stewardship more effective in the future.
- Implementation of pilot projects is acceptable but long-term monitoring or operating projects are not eligible.
- Eligible projects can improve or expand upon or update past projects and can have phased projects that build upon each other (Phase 1/Phase 2).
- Projects should be unique and not duplicative; proposers must demonstrate how the project is new or explain how it is unique.

1.5 Summary of Overall Steps and General Timeline

The overall GIT funding process includes Phase 1 (Development of Project Ideas -Table 1), Funding Selection for Project Ideas, Phase 2 (Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work - Table 2), and Phase 3 (Advertisement and Awarding of Contracts; Project Management of Contracts; Final Deliverables and Information Sharing). These steps are described in more detail in the sections below.

1.5.1 Phase 1: Development of Project Ideas (Table 1)

Phase 1: Development of Project Ideas	
Each of the eligible groups begin Phase 1 by soliciting Project Ideas from their Goal Team, Workgroups, Action Teams, Coordinators, and Staffers for eligible projects that meet the defined criteria. Extensive cross-GIT idea sharing and coordination with CBP functional areas such as GIS, web/creative and communications is required. **One (1) project idea per Watershed Agreement Outcome** may be submitted to the Trust's online portal. The Trust reviews and provides comments.	**Purpose: to articulate a project idea that can be evaluated CBP stakeholders.** **This phase utilizes Table 1 in the Trust's online portal**

1.5.2 Funding Selection for Project Ideas

Phase 1: Funding Selection	
The Phase 1 Project Ideas are scored and ranked by GIT leaders (e.g., Staffers, Coordinators, Co-Chairs, Chairs) using developed criteria that are updated annually. The GIT Chairs facilitate consensus-focused discussions and ultimately propose the projects to be funded based upon collective scores and input from those involved in scoring The EPA CBPO Director, with input from other EPA managers, completes final review and approval of projects to be funded. For Phase 1 Project Ideas that are to be funded, the Phase 1 preparer is invited to move forward to Phase 2 through communication from the EPA and the Trust.	**Purpose: to choose Phase 1 Project Ideas to fund within the approved budget for the current fiscal year.**

1.5.3 Phase 2: Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work (Table 2)

Phase 2: Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work	
The GIT Lead Preparer and other GIT Preparers refine the Phase 1 Project Idea into a detailed Scope of Work described as Phase 2 and known as the Table 2 process. This step builds upon the Phase 1 content by adding project milestones, enhancing content, and adding project details that ultimately become the language for the individual Scope of Work that will be included in the Request for Proposals (RFP). The additional details for Table 2 are submitted to the Trust's online portal.	**Purpose: to define the project's scope of work in detail; this content will be included in the Request for Proposals** **This phase utilizes Table 2 in the Trust online portal**

1.5.4 Advertisement and Awarding of Contracts

Phase 3: Advertisement and Awarding of Contracts	
The Trust advertises one RFP through a competitive bidding process for all Phase 2 GIT Funding Scopes of Work in a fiscal year to seek applicants. The Trust formally opens the online application on the Trust website and keeps the solicitation open for at least 30 days. The Trust pulls the submitted applications from the online portal and sends a request for subject matter expert reviewers, including GIT Team reviewers for each project. The Trust compiles scores and comment submitted to the online portal and may schedule conference calls as needed with technical reviewers to determine winning applications and discuss rationale for choice. The Trust writes the awards letters as either grants or contracts and sends to winning applicants.	**Purpose: to solicit potential applicants to submit a proposal and ultimately award one contract for each scope of work to a qualified and winning bidder.**

1.5.5 Project Management of Contracts

Phase 4: Project Management of Contracts	
Each EPA GIT Funding project requires sustained long-term project management by the GIT Technical Lead to monitor progress and determine the acceptability of deliverables from the contractor. The general project duration for projects is 12 to 24 months.	**Purpose: to guide and manage the contractor through the project duration to stay on schedule and ultimately deliver successful final deliverable(s).**

1.5.6 Final Deliverables and Information Sharing

Final Deliverables and Information Sharing	
Deliverables are required for each project milestone and final deliverables are required to be submitted and approved by the GIT and Trust teams to successfully meet the terms of the contract. Final deliverables include a range of project team reviewed and approved products and can include tools, white papers, data layer, models, workshops, and any other tangible items that are created to achieve the Outcomes of the project. All final deliverables a saved in the Trust's online portal and shared on the EPA GIT webpage here: cbtrust.org/grants/git.	**Purpose: to obtain the successful final deliverable(s) and provide these final products to others.**

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 GIT Chairs

GIT Chairs are responsible for coordinating with the CBP Management Board (MB) on strategic plans for achieving high-priority restoration *Outcomes* as well as periodically providing updates to the MB on progress and roadblocks. The MB works closely with GIT leaders while also empowering them to have the greatest discretion possible over short-term adjustments to execution of strategic plans to allow quick adaptations to changing internal and external circumstances. In the GIT Funding Program, the Chairs are responsible for reviewing and agreeing to the details of the annual funding process, ensuring that outcome-oriented project ideas are timely, valid and represent high priority needs, ensuring that the Technical Lead is qualified and has sufficient time to manage the project, helping to facilitate resolution of technical or management issues that arise, identifying the single highest priority from the GIT and ensuring the project outputs are utilized for adaptive management and captured in the CBP strategy review system.

2.2 GIT Technical Lead

Projects selected for funding will be assigned a GIT Technical Lead by the GIT Chair during Phase 1, who will work with the Trust to prepare the selected projects for the contracting phase and overseeing the project through to completion. The GIT Technical Lead may be the individual who submitted a project idea or another individual that is technically competent as assigned by the GIT Chair. The GIT Technical Lead will have the following responsibilities over the course of the project:

- Develops the Table 1 content (if involved at this point) and Table 2 details with input from other GIT Preparers and ultimately works with the Trust to refine and finalize a detailed scope of work.
- Identifies at least three potential bidders and at least three proposal reviewers.
- Serves as a reviewer for all proposals submitted in response to their specific scope of work.
- Recommends a winning contractor for the project.
- Manages the technical aspects of the awarded project and interfaces directly with the contractor throughout the project life, takes part in progress calls or meetings, reviews and approves deliverables, and monitors performance of the contractor to ensure project stays on schedule.
- Provides support in succession planning in cases where a GIT Technical Lead relinquishes their position before closure of the project.
- Shares information, lessons learned and/or final deliverables across the CBP.
- Coordinates with the Trust to identify and help resolve issues, as necessary.
- If a GIT Technical Lead is no longer able to serve as a project lead until its closure, it is the responsibility of the GIT Technical Lead to work with their team leads in succession planning as it relates to the project.

Avoiding a Conflict of Interest: GIT Technical Leads cannot have conflicts of interest or financial interest in the project, including reimbursement of any expenses incurred to participate in the project. A GIT Technical Lead is not permitted to have a conflict of interest with any organizations that respond to the RFP. GIT Technical Leads cannot be a part of the bidding team or financially be involved in the project. Should a GIT Technical Lead be conflicted with any bidders, he or she will be replaced at least for the duration of the bid phase. A GIT Technical Lead cannot manage a contract that is awarded to their "affiliated" organization (2 CFR § 180.905 - *Affiliate*).

2.3 GIT Coordinators and GIT Staffers

A Coordinator and Staffer (C/S) supports each of the GITs and STAR. The CSs provide leadership and administrative support that are essential to the work of the teams. Staffers serve a three-year appointment to a GIT (or STAR). GIT C/Ss play key roles in the EPA GIT Funding Program including announcing the annual process and call for project ideas, ensuring the eligible groups stay on schedule with vetting ideas leading to the entry of no more than one idea per outcome into the Trust's Online Grants Management System Portal (online portal), communicating with the GIT membership on process, ensuring that deliverables and related learning are reflected in the SRS quarterly reviews and used to inform management strategies and logic and action plans.

Avoiding a Conflict of Interest: If a GIT Coordinator or Staffer supported the preparation of a project during the Phase 2: Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work, the organization affiliated with the GIT Coordinator or Staffer cannot submit a bid for a project.

2.4 GIT Preparers and GIT Applicants

There are two main phases for GIT Preparers and GIT Applicants to undertake. The first is Phase 1, which is the Development of Project Ideas that utilizes the process known as "Table 1" and the second is Phase 2, which is the Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work that utilizes the process known as "Table 2."

GIT Preparers include the authors that develop content for the Phase 1 (utilizes Table 1 in the Trust's online portal for Project Ideas) and the Phase 2 (utilizes Table 2 in the Trust's online portal) and include: a *GIT Lead Preparer* and *Other GIT Preparers*. GIT Preparers can include GIT Chairs, Vice Chairs, Co-Chairs, Technical Lead, Coordinators, and/or Staffers. One GIT Lead Preparer is identified as the main point-of-contact for the Trust regarding questions and clarification in the Trust's online portal. The GIT Lead Preparer refers back up to the GIT Technical Lead to answer any detailed and technical questions about the project. Other GIT Preparers are also identified that support Phase 1 and Phase 2 and ultimately develop the scope of work for their project. A GIT Applicant is selected to submit the applications to the Trust for the Table 1 Phase and the Table 2 Phase. The GIT Applicant is generally a GIT Staffer that is supporting the GIT Technical Lead.

Avoiding a Conflict of Interest: A GIT Preparer or GIT Applicant cannot submit a bid for a project; an organization affiliated with a GIT Preparer(s) and/or GIT Applicant cannot submit a bid for a project. Under EPA Financial Assistance COI policy, if an organization drafts the project content, this organization would be excluded from bidding on the project because this would constitute a COI, as it creates a situation that equates to an unfair competitive advantage (2 CFR § 200.112 - *Conflict of interest*).

2.5 The Trust

The Trust has been designated to receive federal funds from the EPA as part of the CBP GIT Funding Program to advance specific *Outcomes* from the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. The Trust establishes and manages EPA GIT contracts in compliance with Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200 and the terms of the federal funding by the United States EPA (CFDA# 66.466) through the Cooperative Agreement. Chesapeake Bay Trust Staff Contract Officer contact information:

Sarah Koser, (410) 974-2941 ext. 106, skoser@cbtrust.org

3 PHASE 1: DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT IDEAS (TABLE 1)

Each of the eligible groups begin Phase 1 by soliciting project ideas from their GITs, Workgroups, Action Teams, GIT Coordinators, and Staffers for eligible projects that meet the defined criteria. One of the first steps is to attend the annual ***Project Idea Brainstorming and Collaboration Meeting.*** The purpose of this meeting is to provide a space for cross-collaborate and sharing of project ideas as well as ensure that duplicate projects are not proposed to move forward. Defined criteria for proposed projects are divided into three steps: required criteria, preferred criteria, and annual weighting factors. ***One (1) Project Idea can be submitted for each of the 31 CBP Watershed Agreement Outcomes.*** The outcome-specific project ideas that are submitted require concurrence by the GIT Chair(s) that the ideas are valid, justified and a high priority need. During the Table 1 review process, it is expected that reviewers add information through the on-line portal including helpful links to materials, other projects, ongoing work or links to research they are aware of that could inform or improve the proposed work. The detailed steps for Phase 1 are included in Appendix A.

EPA GIT Funding Phase 1: Project Idea requests should explicitly demonstrate how the proposed project would support, directly or indirectly, the achievement of one or more of the 31 existing *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* outcomes. This funding is not intended to support long-term implementation of restoration, protection or stewardship projects, but to support tools or analyses that will make restoration, protection and stewardship more effective. Implementation of pilot projects is appropriate, but long-term funds for monitoring or operating projects are not eligible. Project ideas can improve or expand upon or update past projects and/or can have phased projects that build upon each other (i.e., Phase 1/Phase 2) and/or show leverage. Projects should be unique and not duplicative of previously completed projects or work currently underway (must demonstrate how the project is new or explain how it is unique). There are three scoring tiers describes as steps for the Phase 1: Project Ideas, and described in more detail in the sections below:

- Step 1 - Criteria Required for Project Idea ("Yes/No" checkboxes in Trust portal)
- Step 2 - Recommended and Numerically Evaluated Criteria (numerical scoring in Trust portal)
- Step 3 - Annual Weighting Factors ("BONUS" points added in Trust portal)

3.1 Criteria and Annual Weighting Factors

3.1.1 Required Criteria (Step 1)

The following ***criteria are required*** for the Phase 1 Project Idea:

- Must address components of the Outcome's management strategy and logic and approved two-year Logic & Action Plan by responding to identified needs, gaps, factors, planned actions or barriers that have been identified.
- Must include a defined deliverable with a clear end-use that can serve as a catalyst for expanded or future action.
- Must be a unique project that has not been previously undertaken or is currently underway to avoid duplication. (Prior GIT Funding project descriptions and deliverables are available at https://cbtrust.org/grants/git/)
- Must consult in advance with appropriate CBP technical teams if the proposal contains a component or product related to GIS, Communications, Data Center or Web/Creative.

3.1.2 Numerically Evaluated Criteria (Step 2)

The following criteria are evaluated numerically for the Phase 1 Project Idea:

- Cross-outcome Value - Project incorporates cross-outcome value (more than one outcome would benefit from and use the final product/deliverable).
- Adaptive Management - Project completes or makes progress toward a component of the adaptive management framework by helping better understand the results of actions and improve outcome progress based on the learning. Examples: developing a monitoring plan for metrics, establishing criteria for measuring progress toward the expected response, synthesizing the science and the learning so your team can learn and adapt future actions. This reflects the last three columns in the Logic & Action Plan to close the loop on adaptive management.
- Project Goals - Project goals are clearly defined and feasible.
- Justification - Project justification is valid and project need is clearly demonstrated for new projects, or projects that will improve, expand upon or update past projects.
- End-User - Project has a fully described target audience or end-user (e.g., regulators, Workgroup members, Action Team members, Steering Committee members, federal/state/local governments, practitioners) and demonstrates an understanding of end-user needs and priorities.
- Final Deliverable - The final product/deliverable described has demonstrated transferability that will make restoration, protection and stewardship more effective in the future.

3.1.3 Annual Weighting Factors (Step 3)

Each year, annual weighting factors will be described, depending upon current program needs. In FY21, the following annual weighting factors are described for the Phase 1 Project Idea:

- Project addresses a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) need.
- Project addresses a Climate Change need.
- Project addresses a Local Engagement need.
- GIT Priority Project (one priority project identified per GIT).
- Projects that address outcomes that are lagging in outcome attainability.

3.1.4 Scoring Guidance for Project Ideas

The scoring guidance for the three scoring tiers in Phase 1: Project Ideas are described in more detail in Table 2 below. The scoring rubric and associated Language for Recommended Criteria in Step 2 is described in more detail in Table 3 that follows.

Table 2. Scoring Guidance for Project Ideas (Table 1)		
Scoring Tiers	**Scoring Guidance for Each Tier**	**Description or Scaling**
Step 1 - Criteria Required for Project Idea [Checkboxes in Trust Portal]	• 1A. Must address components of the outcome's management strategy and logic and action plan by responding to identified needs, gaps, factors, planned actions or barriers that have been identified. • 1B. Must include a defined deliverable with a clear end-use that can serve as a catalyst for expanded or future action. • 1C. Must be a unique project that has not been previously undertaken or is currently underway to avoid duplication (*review Trust database of previous projects here:* https://cbtrust.org/grants/git/) • 1D. Must consult in advance with appropriate CBP technical teams if the proposal contains a component or product related to GIS, Communications, Data or Web.	• "Yes/No" checkboxes • Must check "Yes" to all questions to advance to Step 2
Step 2 – Recommended Criteria* [Numerical Scoring in Trust Portal]	• *2A. Cross-outcome Value:* Project incorporates cross-outcome value (more than one outcome would benefit from and use the final product/deliverable).	Scale of 1 – 5
	• *2B. Project Goals:* Project goals are clearly defined and feasible.	Scale of 1 – 5
	• *2C. Justification:* Project justification is valid and project need is clearly demonstrated for new projects, or projects that will improve, expand upon or update past projects.	Scale of 1 – 5
	• *2D. Adaptive Management:* Project completes or helps progress toward a component of the adaptive management framework by helping better understand the results of actions and improve outcome progress based on the learning. Examples: developing a monitoring plan for metrics, establishing criteria for measuring progress toward the expected response, synthesizing the science and the learning so your team can learn and adapt future actions (review the last three columns in the Logic & Action Plan for adaptive management progress)	Scale of 1 – 5
	• *2E. End-User:* Project has a fully described target audience or end-user (e.g., regulators, Workgroup members, Action Team members, Steering Committee members, federal/state/local governments, practitioners) and demonstrates an understanding of end-user needs and priorities.	Scale of 1 – 5
	• *2F. Final Deliverable:* The final product/deliverable described would be useful and has demonstrated transferability that will make restoration, protection and stewardship more effective in the future.	Scale of 1 – 5

Table 2. Continued		
Scoring Tiers	**Scoring Guidance for Each Tier**	**Description or Scaling**
Step 3 - Annual Weighting Factors ["BONUS" Points added in Trust Portal]	• 3A. Project clearly addresses a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) need. **Use best professional judgement to make the decision**	Yes = 1 point
	• 3B. Project clearly addresses a Climate Change need. **Use best professional judgement to make the decision**	Yes = 1 point
	• 3C. Project clearly addresses a Local Engagement need. * **Use best professional judgement to make the decision**	Yes = 1 point
	• 3D. GIT Priority **one priority project idea will be identified per GIT **	Yes = 1 point
	• 3E. Projects that address outcomes that are lagging in outcome attainability **Use best professional judgement and the most recent Chesapeake Progress and/or the published Bay Barometer results for "progress" located here: https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/* https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Bay_Barometer_2019-2020_Web.pdf*	Yes = 1 point
Step 4 - Total Score [Must have "Yes" checked for all Criteria 1 + total score from Criteria 2 and Criteria 3]		**Maximum of 35 points**

*The scoring rubric and associated Language for Recommended Criteria in Step 2 is described in more detail in the Table 3 on the following page.

3.1.5 Next Steps after Scoring Meeting

After the *Project Ideas Scoring Meeting,* all GIT Chairs, Coordinators and Staffers score each project idea using a scoring rubric and instructions described in the section above. All scores are submitted into the Trust's online portal and results are provided to the GIT Chairs. The GIT Chairs will collaborate to form a consensus set of prioritized projects based on available funding levels and will submit a list of proposed projects for funding to the CBPO Director for approval. Finally, the GIT Project Officer (Greg Allen) informs the Trust of the finalized list of projects approved for funding and the maximum funding levels. For each submitted project idea, the Trust sends notification via email to all GIT Technical Leads, Applicants, and Preparers informing whether the project ideas were approved or declined for funding. For project ideas that are approved for funding, the next step is *Phase 2: Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work*, described in the sections that follow.

Table 3. Scoring Rubric Language for Recommended Criteria in Step 2					
Criterion	**Score of 5** **Exemplary**	**Score of 4** **Well Demonstrated**	**Score of 3** **Adequate**	**Score of 2** **Needs Improvement**	**Score of 1** **Insufficient Evidence**
2A. Cross-Outcome Value	More than one outcome would clearly benefit from the project and use the final product and/or final deliverable	More than one outcome would likely benefit from the project and use the final product and/or final deliverable	More than one outcome likely would benefit from the project, but final use has not been clearly described	Weak presentation or vague argument that more than one outcome would benefit from project	Unconvincing or no evidence that more than one outcome would benefit from the project
2B. Project Goals	Project goals are clearly articulated and feasible within the proposed budget and time	Project goals are well-defined and would likely be completed within the proposed budget and time	Project goals are adequately defined and may be completed within the proposed budget and time	Project goals are vague, unclear, and are unlikely to be completed within the proposed budget and time	Project goals are unclear and not feasible within the proposed budget and time
2C. Project Justification	Strong rationale and significance of proposed project. Addresses a specific need that is clearly described; project is well thought-out with an extremely high likelihood of success	Good rationale described for proposed project and addresses a described need; project is well-conceived and thoroughly developed with a high likelihood for success	Rationale or significance of project is either too general or too specific, but overall argument and need is valid; evidence indicates a good chance for success;	Weak presentation of need or vague argument for ability of project to address the need; some potential for effectiveness and success but missing important evidence, information, or clarification	Unconvincing or no evidence of need presented, or proposed project does not address stated need; limited potential with a low likelihood of success
2D. Adaptive Management (ADM)	Project completes at least one component of an outcome's ADM framework	Project progresses towards at least one component of an outcome's ADM framework	Project will likely make some minimal progress toward completing one component of an outcome's ADM framework	Project may progress towards one component of an outcome's ADM framework, but rationale is unclear	The project will not complete or make progress towards one component of an outcome's ADM framework
2E. End-User	Project has a fully described target audience or end-user of the final product; there is a clearly demonstrated need by the end-user for the final product/deliverable	Project has a well-demonstrated target audience or end-user; there is a potential need by the end-user for the final product/deliverable	Project describes a target audience or end-user, but there is not a clearly demonstrated need by the end-user for the final product/deliverable	Project partially describes a target audience or end-user but is missing important evidence, information, or clarification about the use of the final product/deliverable	Project does not describe a target audience or end-use and there is no need defined for the final product/deliverable
2F. Final Deliverable (Final Product)	Final product/deliverable is fully described extremely developed, and has both a demonstrated and transferable use by more than one Work Group/Action Team	Final product/deliverable is well-demonstrated and thoroughly developed and has either a demonstrated or transferable use by more than one Work Group/Action Team	Final product/deliverable is adequately described but not fully developed and has either a demonstrated or transferable use by one Work Group/Action Team	Final product/deliverable is partially described, is missing key information, and does not have a clearly demonstrated or use by a Work Group/Action Team	Final product/deliverable is weak, unclear, or missing key information, including lack of demonstrated use by a Work Group/Action Team

3.2 Annual Timeline

The following table presents the annual schedule of the detailed steps for EPA GIT ***Phase 1: Development of Project Ideas*** step, the responsible party, duration, as well as proposed (draft) begin and end dates.

EPA GIT Phase 1: Development of Project Ideas (~3 months)

Description of Task	Duration	Start and End Dates (updated annually)
FY21 FUNDING LEVELS CONFIRMED (EPA)	--	5/27/21
Release GIT Process Manual & Call for Project Ideas (EPA)	--	8/1/21
Begin Collaboratively Developing Project Ideas (GITs)	1 month	8/1/21 to 9/1/21
Phase 1 Project Idea Training Meeting (Webinar by Trust) **optional and recorded**	½ day	8/16/21
Project Idea Brainstorming and Collaboration Meeting (EPA) **GITs and chairs invited**	½ day	9/1/21
Draft Project Ideas Drafted and Due into Trust Portal (GITs) **GITs submit at most, one project per outcome**	1 week	9/15/21 to 9/22/21
Provide Comments to Phase 1 Project Ideas (Trust)	1 week	9/22/21 to 9/29/21
Develop Final Table 1 Ideas & Address Trust Comments (GITs)	10 days	9/27/21 to 10/11/21
Final Table 1 Ideas Due (GITs)	--	10/11/21
GIT leadership (Chairs, Staffers, Coordinators) review final Table 1 Ideas in preparation for Scoring Meeting	5 days	10/11/21 to 10/18/2021
Project Ideas Supportive Refinement and Scoring Preparation Meeting (EPA)	½ day	10/18/21
After Meeting, Preparers revise Project Ideas for final scoring	1-2 days	10/18/21 to 10/20/21
Submit Final Scores for all Project Ideas in Trust Portal **all-inclusive scoring approach**	1 day	10/20/21
Final Decision-Making of Projects to Fund **GIT Chairs select the projects to fund by considering scores above**	2 weeks	10/21/21 to 11/04/21
GIT Chairs Submit Final list of Proposed Projects to Fund **List sent to CBP Director for final approval**	1 week	11/04/21-11/11/21
Table 1 Ideas Approved/Declined in Trust portal (Trust)	--	11/11/21

BOLD TEXT = VIRTUAL MEETING

3.3 Required Coordination

The CBP functional areas that must be consulted early in project formulation include the Communications Workgroup, the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Team, the Information Technology (IT) Team, the Web/Creative Team, and the Science Prioritization Team.

- The Communications Team facilitates cross-jurisdictional communication among Bay Program partners by providing a collaborative forum to discuss communications issues, needs, strategies and shared messages. The Communications Team also provides communications advice and recommendations to Chesapeake Bay Program staff and partners where needed, which can include support toward communications-related management actions. The Communications Team

provides professional guidance to the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership Communications Office in support of its mission to use consistent messaging, expanded media coverage and effective stakeholder outreach to provide accurate and timely reporting of watershed protection and restoration.

- The GIS Team is responsible for coordinating, conducting and communicating the results of geospatial projects addressing the Goals and Outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.
- The IT Team maintains the CBP computing infrastructure both LAN and specialized applications.
- The Web/Creative Team directs the development of all Chesapeake Bay Program web products.
- The Science Prioritization Team can verify whether a project fits an identified science priority.

Project idea preparers must ensure that if the project involves components that require input from the functional areas, communication and coordination by the GIT Lead Preparer occurs at the Phase 1 step with the applicable functional area leads. Functional area leads are encouraged to attend the Project Idea Brainstorming and Collaboration meeting to provide input. Current contact information for each of the functional areas is included in the Table 4 below. Functional areas are not part of the scoring rubric; however, coordination must occur. In Phase 1, there is a checkbox in Table 1 that confirms that the GIT Lead Preparer has coordinated with the appropriate functional areas (Yes or No response to document that coordination has occurred). Additionally, the GIT Lead Preparer should also coordinate with their GIT Chair prior to submitting a Phase 1 Project Ideas in Table 1 to confirm in the table whether the project idea is the GIT priority project for the year.

Table 4. Current Contact Information for EPA CBP Functional Areas

Web/Creative Team Director of Development: Guy Stephens University of Maryland (410) 295-1316 gstephens@chesapeakebay.net	IT Team Data Center Manager: Brian Burch Environmental Protection Agency (410) 267-5736 burch.brian@epa.gov	GIS Team Leader: John Wolf U.S. Geological Survey (410) 267-5739 jwolf@chesapeakebay.net
Communications Team Coordinator: Rachel Felver Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (410) 267-5740 rfelver@chesapeakebay.net	Science, Technical Analysis and Reporting (STAR) Chairs Bill Dennison UMCES dennison@umces.edu Scott Phillips, USGS swphilli@usgs.gov Strategic Science and Research Framework (SSRF)	GIT Funding Staffer (general questions): Caroline Johnson Chesapeake Research Consortium (410) 267-5721 Johnson.Caroline@epa.gov

3.4 Required Components for Phase 1 Project Ideas (Table 1)

The Phase 1 Project Ideas will be submitted through the Trust's online portal here: https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35447.

See Appendix A for detailed instructions on creating a Project Idea and using the Trust's online portal. The Phase 1 Development of Project Ideas required components are described in the Table 5 below:

Table 5. Required Components of the Phase 1 Development of Project Ideas (Table 1)		
Goal Implementation Team (GIT)	As defined by the Chesapeake Bay Program and described below: • Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (GIT 1) • Habitat Goal Implementation Team (GIT 2) • Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (GIT 3) • Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4) • Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship Goal Implementation Team (GIT 5) • Enhance Partnering, Leadership and Management Goal Implementation Team (GIT 6) • Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Team • Communications Team	
Proposed GIT Technical Lead	A GIT Technical Lead should be identified at the time the Table 1 is submitted. If this project idea is selected to move forward for funding, the person identified as the GIT Technical Lead will work with the Trust to refine the project idea into a detailed scope of work (Table 2). GIT Technical Leads provide overall management of the project, from the idea phase in Table 1 to ultimately overseeing the project through to completion. GIT Technical Leads cannot be a part of the bidding team or financially be involved in the project. Provide the following for the GIT Lead: 1) First and Last Name, 2) Organization, and 3) email address.	
Annual Weighting Factors to Consider	Each year, annual weighting factors will be described, depending upon current program needs. In FY21, the following annual weighting factors are described for the Phase 1 Project Idea: 1. Project addresses a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) need. 2. Project addresses a Climate Change need. 3. Project addresses a Local Engagement need. 4. GIT Priority Project (one priority project identified per GIT). 5. Projects that address outcomes that are lagging in outcome attainability. Describe the extent to which the project addresses: 1. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice; 2. Climate Change, and/or 3. Local Engagement ; 4. describe if your project is a GIT Priority, and 5. Describe if your project addressees an outcome lagging in attainability.	
CBP Functional Areas (Yes or No)	Does this project involve components that require input from the following functional areas: Web/Creative, GIS, Communications, IT, and/or Science Prioritization Teams? If yes, have you communicated the project idea with the applicable functional areas and incorporated input (Yes or No)?	
Preparers	List names of all parties who were part of developing the content of this table; list first the lead preparer (the point of contact for questions/clarification). These entities will not be allowed to bid on the scope of work during the Request for Proposals (RFP) stage. Provide the following for each Preparer: 1) First and Last Name, 2) Organization, and 3) email address.	
Project Title (10 words or less)	The title should be short and give a high-level view of what the project is trying to accomplish. Creative and catchy is fine only if it also captures the real purpose of the work. (Recent examples from previously funded GIT projects include *Development of Cost-Effective Methods to Measure Site-Specific Denitrification Rates for the Proposed Oyster Restoration Best Management Practices*; *Cultivating and Strengthening Partnerships with Underrepresented Stakeholders*; *Synthesis of Shoreline, Sea Level Rise, and Marsh Migration Data for Wetland Restoration Targeting*).	
Example Project Type (Describe the type of project submitted)	<u>Metric Development and Tracking Projects:</u> Support for science needed to develop metrics Metric/indicator development Performance measure development Monitoring/tracking program development Data collection program development	<u>Logic and Action Plan Implementation Projects:</u> Economic modeling Database development Policy research and recommendations Training

	Assessments of data to evaluate metric progress Modeling support Other (please describe)	Mapping, lands assessment Baseline analyses Environmental monitoring/demonstration Other (please describe)
Proposed Project Outcomes	Project outcomes are the changes you expect to see as a result of the work being completed. Examples of Project *Outcomes* could be increased knowledge around how fish are changing habits/will change habits due to climate change; future fish ladders will be more successful due to readily available improved design standards; future fish passage policies will be reflective of resulting research.	
Project Justification (500 words or less)	This is the elevator speech - why is this work important to the over-arching goals? Why is it important to the other GITs? How does this work build on previous work? Be succinct in the answer.	
Proposed Project Steps and Timeline	List all the steps required to accomplish the project goals. Make sure to include any meetings with GIT teams and other relevant stakeholders (try to quantify number of meetings anticipated); a step to review draft deliverables by relevant stakeholders; and a step for the contractor to refine the deliverables after draft review. Indicate whether the methods by which a contractor will be expected to undertake the work are well known or whether you intend for the bidders to propose the methodology; assume work will start in June 2022.	
Estimated Costs	Provide an estimate of the project cost (generally $25,000-$100,000). Estimating accurate budgets can be a challenge. Some tips to improve budget accuracy: to start, estimate number of the hours and other costs like supplies and travel that it would take to accomplish each of the steps identified above. Contractors can range from approximately $50 to $150 per hour (when indirect costs are factored in). Include the time it would take for the contractor to attend any meetings. Finally, account for contractor time to revise final products to incorporate stakeholder feedback.	
Cross-Outcome Benefits	List any cross-outcome or cross-goal benefits succinctly (Appendix A includes detailed examples).	

3.5 Avoiding a Conflict of Interest

Phase 1 includes the development of Table 1 ideas. During this initial stage it is acceptable for any team member to suggest a project idea. However, after Phase 1 is complete, a GIT Preparer must step aside if either: the GIT Preparer's organization will submit a bid for the project idea OR an organization affiliated with a GIT Preparer(s) will submit a bid for the project idea. Additionally, a GIT Coordinator/Staffer must step aside if an organization affiliated with a GIT Coordinator/Staffer(s) will submit a bid for the project idea.

3.6 Funding Process to Select Projects

After the *Project Ideas Scoring Meeting*, all GIT Chairs, Coordinators and Staffers score each project idea using a scoring rubric and instructions described in Appendix B . All scores are submitted into the Trust's online portal and results are provided to the GIT Chairs. The GIT Chairs will collaborate to form a consensus set of prioritized projects based on available funding levels and will submit a list of proposed projects for funding to the CBPO Director for approval. Finally, the GIT Funding Program Project Officer (Greg Allen) informs the Trust of the finalized list of projects approved for funding and the maximum funding levels. For each submitted project idea, the Trust sends notification via email to all GIT Technical Leads, Applicants, and Preparers informing whether the project ideas were approved or declined for funding. For project ideas that are approved for funding, the next step is *Phase 2: Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work*, described in the sections that follow.

4 PHASE 2: REFINEMENT OF PROJECT IDEAS INTO SCOPES OF WORK (TABLE 2)

Once the project idea has been approved for funding, the GIT Lead Preparer GIT Lead Preparer and Other GIT Preparers refine the Phase 1 Project Idea into a detailed Scope of Work. This Phase 2 step builds upon the Phase 1 content by adding project steps and details that ultimately become the language for the individual Scope of Work that will be packaged together into one RFP. The project details required in Phase 2 Scope of Work step are the basis for the content provided in the RFP and will be used to procure a contractor. The more specific and detailed the project details are, the more closely the responding entity can match their scope of work, data gathered, deliverables, timeline, etc. to meet the project goals. The Trust requests this detailed information to assure that thorough proposals from potential contractors are received and awarded contractors deliver products that meet project needs. Before drafting the RFP, the Trust will review the draft Table 2 content, provide feedback, and/or schedule conference calls with the project preparers in order to develop final Table 2 documents that will be rolled into robust RFP language for each scope of work. Similar to Phase 1, Phase 2 process will also be completed through the Trust's online portal here: https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35447.

The maximum bid amount should also be finalized and adjusted in the Phase 2 step. The maximum bid amount describes the level of funding needed to complete the Scope of Work. Developing the budget is an iterative process and the maximum funding amount cannot be exceeded but can be decreased as the Project Idea is refined into the Scope of Work in Phase 2.

Now is the time to adjust content in the Table 1 idea and begin to develop project details for Table 2 by refining the Phase 1 Project Idea into a descriptive Scope of Work!

4.1 Annual Timeline

The following table presents an example project schedule of the detailed steps for the annual EPA GIT ***Phase 2: Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work*** step, the responsible party, duration, as well as proposed (draft) begin and end dates:

EPA GIT Phase 2: Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work (~2 months)

Description of Task	Duration	Start and End Dates (updated annually)
Begin Phase 2: Refining Project Ideas into Scopes of Work (GITs)	--	11/10/21
Phase 2 Development Training (Trust) **recorded webinar**	--	11/15/21
Draft Phase 2 Scopes of Work Due (GITs)	--	12/10/21
Trust Reviews and Comments on Table 2s (Trust)	1 week	12/10/21 to 12/17/21
Trust sends out Phase 2 Scopes of Work Comments (Trust)	--	12/20/21
Develop Final Phase 2 Scopes of Work (GITs)	1 month	12/21/21 to 1/27/21
Final Phase 2 Scopes of Work Due (GITs)	--	1/27/21

BOLD TEXT = VIRTUAL MEETING

4.2 Required Components for Phase 2: Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work (Table 2)

The Phase 2 Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work will be submitted through the Trust's online portal here: https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35447. See Appendix A for instructions on using the Trust's online portal. The Phase 2: Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work required components are described in the Table 6 below:

Table 6. Required Components of the Phase 2 Refinement of Project Ideas into Scopes of Work (Table 2)

Item	Guidance
Goal Implementation Team (GIT)	As defined by the Chesapeake Bay Program and described below: • Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (GIT 1) • Habitat Goal Implementation Team (GIT 2) • Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (GIT 3) • Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4) • Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship Goal Implementation Team (GIT 5) • Enhance Partnering, Leadership and Management Goal Implementation Team (GIT 6) • Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Team • Communications Team
Proposed GIT Technical Project Lead	This person will review and approve the selected contractor's work for the duration of the project. GIT technical leads cannot be a part of the bidding team or financially be involved in the project, including receipt of reimbursement for any expenses. Provide the following for the GIT Lead: 1) First and Last Name, 2) Organization, and 3) email address.
Preparers	List names of all parties who have been a part of developing the content of this table; list first the lead preparer (the point of contact for questions/clarification). Prepares of this scope of work will not be allowed to bid on the scope of work during the RFP stage. Provide the following for the Preparers: 1) First and Last Name, 2) Organization, and 3) email address.
Project Title (10 words or less)	The title should be short and give a high-level view of what the project is trying to accomplish. Creative and catchy is fine only if it also captures the real purpose of the work. (Recent examples from previously funded GIT projects include *Development of Cost-Effective Methods to Measure Site-Specific Denitrification Rates for the Proposed Oyster Restoration Best Management Practices*; *Cultivating and Strengthening Partnerships with Underrepresented Stakeholders*; *Synthesis of Shoreline, Sea Level Rise, and Marsh Migration Data for Wetland Restoration Targeting*).
Outcomes	This is the elevator speech - why is this work important to the over-arching goals? Why is it important to the other GITs? How does this work build on previous work? Be succinct in the answer.
Maximum Bid Amount	List all steps required to accomplish the project goals. Make sure to include any meetings with GIT teams and other relevant stakeholders (try to quantify meetings); a step to review draft deliverables by relevant stakeholders; and a step for the contractor to refine the deliverables after draft review. Indicate whether the methods by which a contractor will be expected to undertake the work are well known or whether you intend for the bidders to propose the methodology. Assume that work will start May 2022.
Project Steps and Timeline	Provide an estimate of the project cost (generally $25,000-$75,000). Estimating accurate budgets can be a challenge. Some tips to improve budget accuracy: to start, estimate number of the hours and other costs like supplies and travel that it would take to accomplish each of the steps identified above. Contractors can range from $50-150 an hour (when indirect costs are factored in). Include the time it would take for the contractor to attend any meetings. Finally, account for contractor time to revise final products to incorporate stakeholder feedback.

Stakeholders and/or Participants	List all stakeholders that will be consulted during each phase of the project. Include names of working groups, steering committees, etc. Provide the following: 1) First and Last Name, 2) Organization, and 3) email address.
Deliverables	List all deliverables to be derived from the successful bidder's work. Deliverables are the tools/information/workshops/tangible items/etc. that are created to achieve the *Outcomes*. Examples of deliverables include fish ladder design standards, a workshop for a targeted audience to disseminate key findings; a white paper about fish ladder project case studies; analyzed results from a fish ladder public opinion survey; an educational curriculum; etc. Make sure to include a final report as a separate deliverable.
QAPP Requirement (Yes or No)?	Will a QAPP be required? If the project will generate environmental data, a QAPP may be required. Visit the Chesapeake Bay Quality Assurance Program website for more details at http://www.chesapeakebay.net/about/programs/qa.
Qualifications of Bidder	List skills and experience required of a qualified bidder. Be specific here - ask for expertise in applicable knowledge areas, familiarity with specific software, models, and experience with certain project types. Examples of qualifications include demonstrating experience of completing three fish ladder design projects in the past five years or demonstrating experience of creating two advanced educational curriculums in past five years.
Bidders List	Due to federal procurement guidelines, project ideas MUST be open to competitive bidding. These bidders must not have been involved in the development of the project idea or scope of work. The Trust will then provide the RFP to these groups as well as other bidders per the federal procurement guidelines. GIT leads should also send the RFP, when open for bids, to their networks and specific entities they think would be a good fit for their scope of work. Provide at least three entities for the bidders list and include: 1) Organization Name, 2) Organization Contact Name and 2) Organization Contact email address.
Reviewers List	Provide contact information for potential reviewers beyond the GIT Technical Lead. These reviewers should be experts in the field. In addition, these reviewers should not have a conflict of interest with the potential bidders, such as a financial stake in the potential bidder company, be on the staff of a potential bidder, or assist the potential bidders with their proposal. The Trust will reach out to the reviewers to complete reviews in order to select the most qualified bidder and report the results to CBPO. Provide at least three reviewers and include: 1) First and Last Name, 2) Organization, and 3) email address.

4.3 Avoiding a Conflict of Interest

A GIT Preparer of the Phase 2 process cannot submit a bid for a project and an organization affiliated with a GIT Preparer(s) cannot submit a bid for a project. Organizational conflicts of interest, or OCIs are defined in 2 CFR § 200.318(c)(2) - *General procurement standards* as: "Organizational conflicts of interest means that because of relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the non-Federal entity is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization." The definition of affiliate in 2 CFR § 180.905 - *Affiliate*, states that person are affiliates of each other if, directly or indirectly, either one controls or has the power to control the other or a third person controls or has the power to control both. Two factors used in this determination are *shared facilities and equipment* and *common use of employees*. So, an organizational conflict of interest could occur if two organizations share employees OR if they share facilities (like office space) and have a fiscal relationship.

***Avoiding a Conflict of Interest*:** Preparers and others privy to Table 2 discussions and preparation of Phase 2 cannot bid on the work. Under 2 CFR§ 200.319 - *Competition*, "in order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements."

5 ADVERTISEMENT AND AWARDING OF CONTRACTS

5.1 Steps and Timeline

5.1.1 Advertisement of the RFP

The Trust advertises one RFP to encompass all Phase 2 Scopes of Work in a fiscal year to seek bidders. The Trust formally opens the online application on the Trust website and keeps the solicitation open for at least 30 days. The Trust advertises the RFP on the Trust Website, the Chesapeake Network, and via email to potential contractors and the full GIT team. As part of the Table 2 process, the Trust requests a bidders list for each project in the Table 2 phase, but ultimately the Trust advertises the RFP well beyond the bidders list. The advertised RFP includes language that encourages the participation of minority/ disadvantaged/women business enterprises (MBE/DBE/WBE) who meet the qualifications to respond to the RFP. Both the Trust and bidding contractors must demonstrate that Good Faith Efforts were used to engage MBE/DBE/WBE by reaching out to MBE/DBE/WBE firms to obtain estimates or bids. The Trust directly solicits MBE/WBE/DBE firms to apply by sending every RFP to contacts at MBE/WBE/DBE firms in the Chesapeake Watershed. The Trust completes an MBE/WBE/DBE search for potential contractors through the following: developing a focused keyword search that covers the content of each scope being advertised, searching the DBE database of all seven states/districts in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, creating a distribution/contact list, and keeping a record of the MBE/WBE/DBE outreach. Table 7 describes the websites used to identify MBE/DBE/WBE/ firms in all seven states/districts within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Table 7. DBE Databases of States/Districts in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

State/District	DBE Website
DC	https://dslbd.secure.force.com/public/
DE	https://deldotcivilrights.dbesystem.com/FrontEnd/searchcertifieddirectory.asp
MD	https://mbe.mdot.maryland.gov/directory/
NY	https://ny.newnycontracts.com/frontend/searchcertifieddirectory.asp?
PA	http://www.dgs.internet.state.pa.us/suppliersearch
VA	https://www.sbsd.virginia.gov/directory/
WV	http://apps.sos.wv.gov/business/corporations/searchadvanced.aspx

In addition to soliciting MBE/WBE/DBE firms, The Trust directly solicits diverse academic organizations to apply by sending every RFP to appropriate contacts (depending on the scopes of work) at all18 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the Chesapeake Watershed, which include the following academic organizations:

- Delaware State University
- Howard University
- Howard University College of Medicine
- Howard University School of Law
- University of the District of Columbia
- Bowie State University
- Coppin State University
- Morgan State University
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- Cheyney University of Pennsylvania
- Lincoln University
- Norfolk State University
- Virginia State University
- Hampton University
- Virginia Union University
- Virginia University of Lynchburg
- Bluefield State College
- West Virginia State University

After the Trust has compiled the bidders list for each project in the Table 2 phase, the list of all past applicants to applicable Trust Grant Programs, the contacts at all 18 HBCUs, and the contacts through the MBE/WBE/DBE database searches, the RFP is sent out to the full list of contacts. Table 8 provides an example of the number of contacts that were sent the FY20 RFP in 2020.

Table 8. Example of Focused Advertisement for the FY20 RFP	
Description of Focused Advertisement	**Number of Contacts Sent the FY20 RFP**
GIT-Lead identified bidders for 12 Scopes in Table 2:	66
Past Trust applicants in applicable Trust Grant Programs:	138
HBCU contacts:	37
District of Columbia DBEs (MBEs+WBEs) contacts:	17
Delaware DBEs (MBEs+WBEs) contacts:	214
Maryland DBEs (MBEs+WBEs) contacts:	1,678
Virginia DBEs (MBEs+WBEs) contacts:	158
West Virginia DBEs (MBEs+WBEs) contacts:	24*
New York DBEs (MBEs+WBEs) contacts:	414
Pennsylvania DBEs (MBEs+WBEs) contacts:	93
TOTAL CONTACTS SENT RFP:	**2,815**

**WV does not provide contact information for DBE organizations.*

During the open advertisement (RFP) period, the Trust responds to questions and provides answers (Q&A) to potential applicants. The Trust communicates and coordinates directly with the GIT Technical Lead to answer technical questions from potential applicants during the open RFP period. The Trust posts the Q&As online at regular intervals throughout the RFP advertisement period, so all potential applicants are privy to the same information. The Trust sends reminders to the full distribution list during the RFP advertisement period prior to the RFP closing to the full distribution list. The table below provides the annual project schedule for the ***Advertisement, Request for Proposals, and Awarding of Contracts*** step.

Advertisement, Request for Proposals, and Awarding of Contracts (~5 months)

Description of Task	Duration	Start and End Dates (updated annually)
Pull Final Phase 2 Scopes of Work from Portal (Trust)	--	1/28/22
Draft RFP Due (Trust)	1 week	1/31//22 to 2/7/22
Finalize Scopes of Work in RFP (Trust + GIT Preparers)	2 weeks	2/7/22 to 2/24/22
Final RFP Due (Trust)	1 week	2/28/22
RFP Open Advertisement Period - at least 30 days (Trust)	30 days	3/1/22 to 4/11/22
Pull Applications from Portal (Trust)	1 week	4/12/22 to 4/19/22
Reviewer Scoring Period (Trust)	2 weeks	4/22/22 to 5/06/22
Schedule Meetings/Calls to Determine Winners (Trust)	1 week	5/6/22 to 5/13/22
Write Contracts for Winning Bidders (Trust)	2 weeks	5/18/22 to 6/1/22
Send out Awards (Trust)	--	6/6/22
CONTRACTORS BEGIN WORK		**6/15/22**

An example RFP from FY21 is included in Appendix E.

5.1.2 Reviewing Submitted Applications

The Trust formally closes the online application on the Trust website and cannot accept late applications. The Trust pulls the submitted applications from the portal and reviews all submitted applications. The Trust sends a request for subject matter expert reviewers, including GIT Team reviewers for each project. All proposals are evaluated by a review committee composed of technical experts and facilitated by the Trust. The evaluation and scoring of the submitted application are made on the basis of the evaluation criteria included in the RFP. Each EPA GIT Project has a GIT Lead that was defined at the beginning of the proposal process. At least 3 independent reviewers for each project that are experts in the subject matter field were invited to review the applications; USEPA is always invited to score all proposals as well. So, there are generally between 4 and 6 reviewers for each project and each reviewer scores all proposals for a particular project. All reviews are completed independently and anonymously through the Trust's online portal; reviewers cannot see other scores. The Trust compiles and averages scores and pulls comments from each of the independent reviewers. The review process is both fair and rigorous. Scoring follows the RFP sections exactly – scores based on the following criteria on a scale of 1-10 for a total of 50 points:

Table 9. Example Scoring Criteria, Description, and Guidance per Criterion From the RFP

Criterion #	Scoring Criteria	Description & Scoring Guidance	Scoring
1	Proposed Team	• The proposed team's (specific individual(s) responsible for performance of contract) qualifications to carry out the work and meet deliverables. • Evaluate the qualifications, reputation, and compatibility with needs of the Trust and the Project of the individual or individuals who will perform the Contract.	Scale 1-10
2	Proposed Approach	• Evaluate the work to be performed to accomplish the goals outlined in the Scopes of Work in the RFP.	Scale 1-10
3	Experience of Offeror	• Evaluate the quality and quantity of the proposed team's experience and expertise in the areas proposed, supported by references.	Scale 1-10
4	Capacity	• Evaluate the proposed team's ability and commitment to meet the timeline for the project.	Scale 1-10
5	Cost Effectiveness/ Budget	• Evaluate the hourly rate and number of hours to be devoted to the project. Budget line items and associated costs per line item must: a) support the scope of work and b) be appropriate and cost-effective. • Evaluate whether federal procurement guidelines are followed (federal funds will support this work), e.g., Title 2 CFR 200 must be followed & all contractual work must be secured by attaining at least three estimates or by using a competitive bid process and 2) DBE/MBE. If an applicant subcontracted services, did they demonstrate compliance with Good Faith Efforts to engage Disadvantaged Business Enterprises? • Cash and in-kind match are not required but leveraging funds to make a project more robust can result in higher scores.	Scale 1-10
Total Maximum Score Possible			**50**

The Trust allows approximately 4 weeks for reviewers to complete the online reviews of each project through the Trust's online portal. The Trust compiles scores, comments, and the full reviews for all applications. If more than one application per project has similar, high scores, th*e Trust schedules conference calls with the GIT Technical Lead and other reviewers to discuss the pros and cons of the top applications* and to determine a winning application. The Trust may engage in further discussion directly with the applicant if it might be beneficial to the review team. For example, the Trust can call and check references provided in the application and can request one-page memos to respond to reviewer questions. *The GIT Technical Lead and other reviewers do not directly communicate with the applicant until after award is made.* The Trust coordinates directly with the GIT Technical Lead and other reviewers and directly with the applicant as a neutral third-party. During conversations to choose winning contractors, the Trust takes notes to record the rationale for winning applications. This rationale is important and is summarized by the Trust during feedback debriefs for declined applicants.

5.1.3 Awarding Contracts

The Trust develops award letter language, including any contingencies for the award. Draft award contingencies are sent to the GIT Technical Lead for their review and approval. The Trust sends award letters to winning contractors via email and GIT leads are cc'd as a record.

Awarded projects must adhere to federal requirements regarding contracting, including contracts with consultants and the purchase of supplies and equipment. For example, contractors shall obtain multiple estimates/bids for subcontracted services over $3,000 and use good-faith efforts to engage DBEs, including MBEs, WBEs, and SBEs.

Award Letters can be written as grants or contracts. *For grants, the Trust writes the award letters, contingencies, and requests final approval from GIT Technical Lead*. Each GIT grant is awarded as a not-be-exceeded dollar value. *For contracts, the Trust writes the award letters, contingencies, and deliverables-payments schedule and requests final approval from GIT Technical Lead*. Each GIT contract is awarded as a Firm-Fixed-Price Contract for a specified dollar value, usually between $25,000 and $100,000. Each contract award letter includes a deliverables-payments schedule that describes the deliverable to be submitted, the date to be submitted, and the total invoice dollar value. *The Trust sends award letters to winning applicants via email and GIT Technical Leads are carbon copied (cc'd) on this communication for their records.* The award letter includes a requirement that the contractor initiate, organize, and schedule a mandatory project initiation meeting. Appendix F includes an example grant award and an example contract award.

The Trust sends declined letters to applicants that were not chosen to receive a grant or a contract. The Trust responds to requests for feedback from declined applicants and provides debriefs, if requested.

5.2 Avoiding a Conflict of Interest

A GIT Technical Lead cannot manage a winning contractor that is from their same or affiliated organization. EPA policy states the non-Federal entity should use the definition of affiliate at 2 CFR § 180.905 - Affiliate, which states that person are affiliates of each other if, directly or indirectly, either one controls or has the power to control the other or a third person controls or has the power to control both. Two factors used in this determination are shared facilities and equipment and common use of employees. So, an organizational conflict of interest could occur if two organizations share employees

OR if they share facilities (like office space) and have a fiscal relationship. Additionally, Preparers of Table 2 cannot be party to any financial gain from these projects once advertised and awarded.

6 PROJECT MANAGEMENT OF CONTRACTS

6.1 GIT Technical Lead and Trust Roles

The Trust has been designated to receive federal funds from the EPA as part of the CBP GIT Funding Program. The Trust is the grants administrator and accepts all submittals such as deliverables and invoices via the Trust's online portal. *The GIT Technical Lead manages the technical aspects of this contract and is the subject matter expert* that guides the Contractor through the project process from beginning to long-term success at the project end. After the Award Letter is sent to the winning Contractors, the GIT Technical Lead begins managing the Project and Contractor, starting with the required Project Initiation Meeting. The GIT Technical Lead can then schedule a subsequent Project Kickoff Call or Meeting with other partners or stakeholders, as applicable. After the Project Initiation Meeting and the Project Kickoff Call, the *GIT Technical Lead works closely with the Contractor* to ensure that all necessary materials or references are provided to the Contractor and ensures the Contractor submits all deliverables as outlined in *Table 1. Project Deliverables and Timeline* of the Award Letter. The Trust sends the GIT Technical Lead the deliverables and invoices (that were submitted via the Trust's online portal) for review and approval to make payment. Throughout the project management process, the Trust provides support to the GIT Technical Lead and can provide guidance and options to resolve any Contractor-related issues. These steps are included in more detail in the sections that follow.

6.2 Project Initiation Meeting

The award letter includes a requirement that the contractor initiate, organize, and schedule a *mandatory project initiation meeting with the Trust point of contact, the GIT Technical Lead,* any subcontractors, and any other relevant project partners. At the project initiation meeting, the following content is generally discussed: 1) the award letter total and project duration, 2) submittal requirements to the Trust portal, 3) project deliverables, a description of the deliverables, and timeline for delivery, and 4) the experimental design or project Scope of Work. Changes to the schedule and the content can be discussed and approved or denied at the Project Initiation Meeting. A sample agenda is included below:

<u>Sample EPA GIT Funded Project Initiation Call Meeting Agenda:</u>

I. Congratulations and Introductions (Trust and GIT Technical Lead)
II. Discuss Funding Source and Project Roles (Trust)
III. Discuss Project Purpose, Need, and Outcomes (GIT Technical Lead) and
IV. Review Award Letter (Trust)
V. Discuss Deliverables/Payment Table and Due Dates (All)
VI. Review Trust Portal Requirements and Submittal Logistics (Trust)
VII. Discuss QAPP Procedure and Sample Documents (Trust)
VIII. Open Floor for Technical Questions (Contractor and GIT Technical Lead)
IX. Close Meeting by Reviewing Short-Term/Initial Action Items (All)

6.3 Quality Assurance Project Plant (QAPP) Process

The Contractor takes the lead on writing the QAPP and obtaining approval through EPA CBP's QA Officer. *The GIT Technical Lead provides support and answers any technical questions about the Project*

throughout the QAPP drafting process. The Trust reviews the QAPP process with the contractor and the GIT Lead during the project initiation meeting and provides the contact information for the QA Officer as well as sample QAPPs to the contactor, if requested. The contractor should submit the Draft QAPP directly to the EPA CBP's QA Officer and allow 30 days for review (the GIT Technical Lead can review the draft QAPP prior to submittal but is not necessary). The contractor responds to and addresses the EPA edits to the Draft QAPP and finalizes the QAPP for signature by resubmitting a Final QAPP to EPA.

6.4 Deliverables Review and Approval for Payment

The original contract award letter describes all deliverables, due dates, and payments (Appendix F). The Trust receives all contractor deliverables and associated invoices through the Trust's online portal. The Trust sends the deliverables and invoices directly via email to the *GIT Technical Lead for review and approval prior to making payment.* The GIT Technical Lead must respond via email that the invoice is okay to pay for the Trust to make payment. *The Trust does not pay the Contractor until the GIT Technical Lead accepts the submitted deliverables.*

6.5 Guidance and Options for Resolution of Issues

In rare cases, the EPA GIT Projects do not run smoothly for any number of reasons. If issues occur and if the GIT Technical Lead and the project team/partners need help navigating issues associated with the contractor, schedule, or deliverables, the Trust can act as the liaison or the mediator for resolution. If a Project requires a meeting to determine a path forward to resolution, the Trust can schedule the meeting, develop the agenda, and facilitate the meeting. Past issues that have required resolution include the below:

- The Contractor submitted an incomplete deliverable, but fully requested payment.
- The Contractor submitted a deliverable that was not acceptable or was not envisioned by the GIT Technical Lead and project team.
- The Project was severely behind schedule and the GIT Technical Lead needed support and leverage to get the project back on track.
- The Contractor was hesitant to make necessary changes to the Project that the GIT Technical Lead and project team agreed would result in long-term project success.

Options for resolution can be a video or audio meeting facilitated by the Trust, the Project can be cancelled, or a stop-work order can be sent by the Trust to pause work while the Project is modified and adjusted to ensure long-term project success. Any changes to the original Project require communication with and approval by the Contractor and then submittal of the project change request, as stated in all original award letters: "Significant scope and/or deliverable changes require approval from the Trust's point of contact. A "significant change" is defined as one that substantively modifies the project's goals, objectives, milestones, and/or deliverables. Requests for approval of changes must be made by completing the Award Revision Request form within the Trust's online portal. Significant scope and/or deliverable changes require approval from the Trust and the GIT Technical Lead.

7 FINAL DELIVERABLES AND INFORMATION SHARING

All GIT Projects require submittal of final deliverables and sharing requirement of the data or information generated.

7.1 Review and Approval of Final Deliverables

Final deliverables are required to be submitted and approved by the GIT Technical Lead (and the Trust) to successfully meet the terms of the contract. Final deliverables include a range of final products that are created and can include tools, information, workshops, and any other tangible items that can be summarized, analyzed, or documented. The Project Deliverables will help achieve the *Outcomes* described in the original RFP and will ultimately be used by a defined audience.

By signing the Award Agreement, the Contractor agrees that "Project Deliverables" will be produced as listed in *Table 1 Project Deliverables and Timeline* of the Award. Examples of final Project Deliverables can vary widely and can include the below examples:

- Generated data (analysis, models, etc.)
- Mapping of sampled sites/GIS data files
- White paper with annotated bibliography
- Literature Review and Recommendations
- Presentation or Webinar
- Training Video or Educational Module
- Instructional Manual
- Final report in Word Format
- Final Survey Results
- Final report in Word Format
- Excel spreadsheet of Collected Data
- GIS data, metadata, code, toolboxes and read.me files
- Website development
- Flyer or factsheet
- Final Survey Results
- Marketing Materials

After the final Project Deliverables are submitted to the Trust's online portal, the Trust shares the deliverables with GIT Technical Lead for final review and approval. If the GIT Technical Lead approves the deliverables, the Trust makes the last payment, and the project is considered "closed" in the Trust's online portal.

Success is defined as an end-product that was vetted, provided as expected, made available for others to use, and can be understood by the end-users and defined audience.

7.2 Information Sharing Requirements

After the final Project Deliverables are submitted and approved, the information and data need to be shared to ensure the end-user and audience ultimately have access to the deliverables generated. All final deliverables a saved in the Trust portal and shared on the EPA GIT webpage located here: https://cbtrust.org/grants/git/ and summarized in Appendix E. The purpose of final deliverables and information sharing is to obtain the successful final deliverable(s) and provide these final produces to others. The CBP may also share the final deliverables on their individual EPA GIT webpages and during Working Group and Action Team Meetings. The GIT Technical Lead will work with the Contractor to produce a one-page fact sheet that describes the project, including goals, methods, results. The Trust will send the EPA CBP Communications Team the one-page factsheet and notification that the EPA GIT webpage was updated to use for a blog or other information sharing such as posting on LinkedIn. All public communications and promotion including press releases, print publications, signage, online messaging, etc. must acknowledge the program funding partner, EPA. The Chesapeake Bay Program's logo and the Trust's license plate logo must also be included and is available online here at https://cbtrust.org/logos/.

Overall project success is defined as properly communicating the project and/or the story to another audience to ensure knowledge is shared through at least one platform.