

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



State Innovation Grant Program: Tennessee

Tennessee Construction Storm Water Excellence Initiative (2007 Competition)

The State Innovation Grant Program

In 2002 EPA introduced the State Innovation Grant Program to support efforts led by state environmental agencies to test innovative approaches for achieving better environmental results and improved efficiency in permitting programs. Between 2002 and 2007, the State Innovation Grant program competition awarded over six million dollars to support 35 state projects that test permitting innovation for a variety of regulated entities including several small business sectors. A summary of the awards by year appears in the table below.

State Innovation Grant Program Statistics, 2002-2007			
Competition Year	Proposals Submitted	Proposals Selected	Total Program Funding (\$)
2002/2003	29	6	\$618,000
2004	33	9	\$1.425 Million
2005	26	7	\$1.479 Million
2006	25	6	\$1.243 Million
2007	17	7	\$1.611 Million
Cumulative Total	130	35	\$6.376 Million

"Innovation in Permitting" has been the theme of the State Innovation Grant competition since its inception. In the last three competition cycles states received awards for projects in the following three categories:

- **The Environmental Results Program (ERP)** is an innovative approach to improving environmental performance based on a system of the interlocking tools of compliance assistance, self-certification (sometimes, where permissible, in lieu of permitting), and statistically-based measurement to gauge the performance of an entire business sector. The program utilizes a multimedia approach to encourage small sources to achieve environmental compliance and pollution prevention. (See: <http://www.epa.gov/permits/erp/>)
- **Environmental Management System (EMS)** is a system involving a continual cycle of planning, implementing, reviewing and improving the processes and actions that an organization undertakes to meet its business and environmental goals. EMSs provide organizations of all types with a structured system and approach for managing environmental and regulatory responsibilities to improve overall environmental performance and stewardship. (See: www.epa.gov/ems/info/index.htm)
- **Performance Track** is a partnership that recognizes top environmental performance among participating US facilities of all types, sizes, and complexity, both public and private. (See: <http://www.epa.gov/performance-track/>)

NCEI has provided awards also for projects testing watershed-based permitting, and for permit process streamlining in past competitions. For more information on the history of the programs, including information on solicitations, state proposals, and project awards, please see the EPA State Innovation Grants website at <http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants>

Project Background:

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) identified siltation (sedimentation) as the most frequently cited cause of waterbody impairment within the boundaries of many of the state's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), impacting over 5,800 miles of streams and rivers. Excessive sediment loading from storm water run-off due to clearing, grading, and excavating at construction sites is a major ecosystem stressor, and has adversely impacted municipal stream biota, either directly or through changes to physical habitat. One of the most effective and efficient ways to prevent the expansion of water quality impairment related to construction is through the establishment of criteria to qualify MS4s as Qualifying Local Programs (QLP) and determine incentives for MS4s to seek qualification.

TDEC has received a US EPA State Innovation Grant to develop and implement the Tennessee Construction Storm Water Excellence Initiative. The initiative encourages MS4s, through incentives and a formal recognition and awards program, to become QLPs. The QLP option will ensure the improvement of water quality through an efficient implementation of the Construction General Permit (CGP). TDEC has partnered with the University of Tennessee, Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) to provide assistance on this project.

Project Description

TDEC is implementing a Construction Storm Water Excellence Initiative to achieve improved environmental compliance, focusing on outcomes (improved water quality and administrative efficiency) over traditional regulatory outputs (number of inspections and permit issued) to measure performance. The goals of the Initiative are to improve water quality by assisting the construction community with compliance with the CGP; encouraging strong MS4 sediment and erosion control measures; providing incentives and a formal excellence-recognition and awards program for members; and eliminating duplication of the effort between the MS4s



and TDEC.

TDEM's objective is to link the attainment of QLP status to include additional (e.g., beyond those measures required in the existing permit) proactive and remedial measures to control the discharge of sediment into impaired waterbodies, implementation of provisions of approved sediment Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and description of methods to evaluate whether storm water controls are adequate to meet the requirements of approved TMDLs.

Additional information on the Tennessee State Innovation Grant, is available at TDEC's Construction Storm Water Excellence Initiative website at (<http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants/tennessee.htm>).

The work will take four years to complete.

Connection to EPA's Goals

This project supports two of EPA's strategic goals. Excessive sediment loading from land disturbance and construction activities in MS4s is a major ecosystem stressor, and has adversely impacted water quality in many waterbodies in Tennessee. It is fully expected that the implementation of the QLP option by MS4s will result in the improvement of water quality in the long term due to the efficient implementation of the CGP. Therefore, this project supports EPA's Goal 2 – Clean and Safe Water.

It also supports Goal 5 – Compliance and Environmental Stewardship since it will include the development and implementation of incentives and excellence recognition for MS4s that pursue the qualifying status.

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