



DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Division of Ecological Restoration

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REQUEST FOR RESPONSE (RFR)

Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration
Regional Restoration Partnerships Program
Department of Fish and Game

RFR ID: DER 2021-03

Date: June 28, 2021

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Table of Contents

i.	Summary of Request for Response (RFR)	1
ii.	Definitions	2
I.	Grant Opportunity	3
II.	Performance and Contract Specifications	10
III.	Instructions for Preparing and Submitting an Application	13
IV.	Deadlines and Procurement Calendar	16
V.	Miscellaneous	17

i. Summary of Request for Response (RFR)

The Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) seeks applications from nonprofit organizations and Regional Planning Agencies to develop, lead, and support Regional Restoration Partnerships (Partnerships) that work to restore degraded aquatic ecosystems and increase climate change resiliency. Selected applicants (Lead Organizations) will commit to building the capacity of their Partnership members to plan and carry out ecological restoration actions over a three-year Partnership term (with options to extend for a total term of up to five years). DER will provide grant funding and technical assistance to support this work in fiscal year 2022, with anticipated future grant awards in each subsequent year of the Partnership term.

DER grants will support Lead Organization staffing costs to coordinate the Partnership as well as implementation work that advances Partnership priorities. DER will also provide direct and/or contracted technical assistance to support Partnerships as they plan and carry out restoration activities. Fiscal year 2022 grants are intended to support the Lead Organization in hiring a staff person (or transitioning an existing employee) to serve as a Restoration Coordinator who will convene and develop the Partnership. The Restoration Coordinator will also work collaboratively with local and regional Stakeholders to develop Partnership planning documents and prepare for implementation of restoration activities in future years.

Partnership grants will be administered by DER's Regional Restoration Partnerships Program (Partnerships Program). The goal of the Partnerships Program is to increase the pace and scale of ecological restoration in Massachusetts by building the capacity of local and regional organizations to collaboratively advance restoration work. Throughout the Partnership term, Lead Organizations will be expected to actively contribute feedback through structured input opportunities to help improve the Partnerships Program and inform future Program structure and administration.

DER recognizes that many partnerships are already operating successfully throughout Massachusetts. The Partnerships Program seeks applications under this RFR to support both existing and newly developing partnerships.

ii. Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this RFR and are defined as follows:

Annual Workplan - A plan developed each fiscal year of the Partnership term that is used to document and track the tasks, milestones, deliverables, and performance of the Restoration Coordinator and Lead Organization. Annual workplans will align with DER's fiscal year (July 1 through June 30).

Lead Organization - The RFR applicant, grantee, Partnership leader, and employer of the Restoration Coordinator.

Cooperative Agreement – A non-binding agreement developed between the Lead Organization and DER that establishes the high-level roles, responsibilities, and commitments of each party during the Partnership term. These agreements will have a three-year term with two, 1-year options to extend, for a maximum potential agreement term of five years under this RFR.

Grant Contract – A binding contract between DER and a Lead Organization under this RFR that specifies the award amount and includes a scope of work with deliverables. Grant contracts are anticipated to be negotiated and awarded each fiscal year of the Partnership term.

Partnership Plan – A plan that is developed in cooperation with Stakeholders under the leadership of the Lead Organization and its Restoration Coordinator that articulates the vision, goals, and priorities of the Partnership over a Partnership term.

Partnership Region – A geographic area within Massachusetts where the Partnership activities take place, as defined by the Lead Organization. The minimum area for a Partnership Region is 75 square miles. A Partnership Region must be located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. DER cannot fund overlapping Partnership Regions.

Stakeholders – The regional and local partners who participate in the Partnership; contribute guidance, funds, and/or in-kind support for the Partnership; and work collaboratively to develop and implement restoration projects and activities that advance Partnership priorities. Stakeholders may include representatives from nonprofit organizations, municipalities, state or federal agencies, and other groups.

Regional Restoration Partnership – A group of people—and the organizations they represent—who work collaboratively to identify and advance a Partnership’s vision, goals, priorities, and actions within a Partnership Region. The Partnership members include a Lead Organization, Stakeholders, and DER.

Restoration Coordinator – A qualified professional employed by a Lead Organization who leads and coordinates the Partnership and its work.

I. Grant Opportunity

a. Program Overview and Goals

DER’s Partnerships Program supports the work of Lead Organizations and the Partnerships they coordinate to restore aquatic ecosystems within Partnership Regions. Successful Partnerships build lasting capacity among regional and local partners to initiate, fund, and manage aquatic restoration activities. Funding and technical assistance provided by DER under this RFR will enable selected Lead Organizations to hire a Restoration Coordinator, lead and coordinate a Partnership, and collaborate with Stakeholders to plan and implement restoration activities. Lead Organizations will help DER refine and improve the Partnerships Program by providing structured feedback throughout the Partnership term.

b. Applications Sought

DER seeks applications from eligible Massachusetts-registered 501(c)(3) organizations and Massachusetts Regional Planning Agencies to lead, coordinate, and support a Regional Restoration Partnership. DER seeks Lead Organizations that can demonstrate a strong commitment to building restoration capacity within their proposed Partnership Region and that have enduring and productive relationships with Stakeholders who can work collaboratively to advance Partnership priorities. DER is looking for applications that contain the following elements:

- Describe the applicant organization, including its mission, priorities, structure, governance, staff, resources, and relationships with regional and local groups, as they relate to the goals of this RFR. Include information that demonstrates the qualifications and capabilities of the applicant to serve effectively as a Lead Organization.

- Describe how participation in the Partnerships Program will strengthen the applicant's capacity to lead and support restoration at the regional and local levels.
- Propose a plan to either hire a Restoration Coordinator or transition an existing qualified staff member to fill the role. Specify the anticipated weekly hours the Restoration Coordinator will work, (see attachment 2 for information on calculating the full-time equivalent (FTE) of the proposed position).
- Identify a Partnership Region with a defined geographic boundary and a justification of why the region is appropriate for one Restoration Coordinator to serve effectively.
- Propose a Partnership model and a plan to engage Stakeholders (see examples in attachment 1). Explain the vision for how the Restoration Coordinator will lead the Partnership and how the roles and contributions of the Stakeholders will successfully advance Partnership priorities.
- Provide details about how the applicant currently identifies and prioritizes aquatic ecosystem stressors and restoration needs and opportunities (if applicable). Include details about how Stakeholders are involved in this process and whether a formal partnership for restoration, climate resiliency, and/or other environmental goal is already established.
- Identify the types of ecological stressors and aquatic restoration projects and activities that the applicant anticipates the Partnership will address and pursue with DER funding.

DER recognizes that many partnerships are already operating successfully throughout Massachusetts, and the Partnerships Program seeks applications to support both existing and new partnerships. Applicants should propose their own vision for an effective Partnership model and Partnership Region. Existing partnerships that support climate resiliency and/or other environmental goals may propose an expansion of their scope and capacity to include ecological restoration (if not already included) as defined in this RFR. DER seeks Partnership models that successfully support the following functions:

- Ensures that a range of local and regional Stakeholders are regularly convened to contribute technical expertise, relationships, and other forms of support and guidance toward the Partnership's success.
- Collaboratively develops and pursues a strategic restoration vision for the Partnership Region with clearly articulated goals, priorities, and outcomes. Effectively coordinates the efforts of diverse Stakeholders to advance Partnership priorities.
- Records potential projects and activities in written Partnership planning documents and updates these plans as projects and activities are implemented.
- Leverages DER and other restoration funding to increase overall investments in aquatic restoration within the Partnership Region.
- Promotes, and helps community leaders and the public understand, the social, economic, and environmental values and benefits of ecological restoration.

A selected Lead Organization may hire a new employee or transition an existing qualified staff person to fill the role of Restoration Coordinator. The Restoration Coordinator position may be staffed anywhere between 0.5 to 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE), and the FTE level may change during the Partnership term. For example, an applicant may propose to transition an existing employee into the Restoration Coordinator role starting at 0.5 FTE and then increase hours to a higher FTE level at a specified point in the future. DER and the Lead Organization will negotiate the terms of the Cooperative Agreement and grant contract to specify FTE levels and any variability.

Applicants should specify the FTE level for the Restoration Coordinator in their RFR applications, including any proposed variability. Staffing the Restoration Coordinator position at less than 0.5 FTE is not allowed during the Partnership term, except for transition periods when hiring for the position. See attachment 1 for more information about the Restoration Coordinator position.

c. Eligible Applicants

This solicitation is open to Massachusetts-registered tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations and Massachusetts Regional Planning Agencies.

d. Eligible Costs and Activities

Funding will be allocated to the Lead Organization for the following purposes:

1. to fund a Restoration Coordinator position and related Lead Organization expenses,
2. to fund landscape-scale restoration planning,
3. to fund assessment, planning, and implementation of ecological restoration projects and other activities within the Partnership Region, and
4. to fund other needs and expenses that DER determines are necessary to support the Lead Organization and its Partnership work.

DER will provide funding to the Lead Organization for some or all of the above purposes in FY22 and anticipates providing future funding each year of the Partnership term. All funding awards are subject to DER's annually approved budget and satisfactory contract performance by the Lead Organization. Lead Organizations will be expected to seek additional funds from other sources to support Partnership implementation work.

Eligible Restoration Activities

Selected Lead Organizations will work collaboratively with Stakeholders to identify restoration projects and other activities that effectively address the aquatic ecological stressors identified within the Partnership Region. DER expects that all implementation activities will meet the following definition of ecological restoration: Ecological restoration is “the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed” ([SER Primer, 2004](#)). To assist the recovery of a natural system, activities should seek to identify and remove, or meaningfully reduce, anthropogenic stressors using a scientifically-sound, process-based

approach. By repairing natural processes, activities increase ecological function and allow natural systems to adjust over time, thus enhancing ecosystem resilience.

DER seeks to fund an integrated approach to restoration based on an understanding of the aquatic ecosystem stressors present in each Partnership Region. Examples of eligible restoration activities include but are not limited to: restoration assessment and planning at landscape and site-specific scales, coastal and freshwater wetland restoration, dam removal, culvert replacement, water quality restoration, floodplain restoration, hydrology and streamflow restoration, and urban river revitalization. More information on these restoration practices is available on the [DER website](#). All projects should help communities and nature become more resilient and adapt to climate change.

All proposed activities and associated expenses will be negotiated with selected Lead Organizations during contracting and throughout the Partnership term. DER will work with Lead Organizations to ensure that the final terms and scopes of work approved in Cooperative Agreements, grant contracts, and Partnership planning documents meet funding eligibility requirements.

DER-funded restoration activities may take place on private, municipally owned, or public/conservation lands. All projects and activities must be located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. DER will only reimburse for restoration activities and costs that are incurred during a grant contract term and that directly support Partnership goals, priorities, and activities as outlined in approved Partnership planning documents.

Innovative Restoration Techniques

DER may approve the use of Implementation funding for proof-of-concept or to demonstrate feasibility for innovative restoration techniques. Applicants do not need to submit details about proposed innovative restoration activities with their application; these activities will be identified and evaluated for eligibility during the Partnership planning process. See attachment 1 for more information on Partnership planning.

Voluntary Restoration Support Requirements

DER grants and other assistance awarded under this RFR may only be used to support voluntary, proactive restoration projects that have no direct connection to compensatory mitigation and/or have no independent prior obligation to perform restoration/mitigation pursuant to statute, regulation, ordinance, consent decree, judgment, court order, permit condition, contract, enforcement order, or other requirement of law. Dam removal projects conducted in cooperation with dam owners who have been issued an order by the MA Office of Dam Safety are an exception to this requirement and are eligible for support using DER funding.

Ineligible Discrete Activities:

Discrete activities that do not meaningfully reduce or eliminate primary stressors that cause impaired ecological processes are not eligible for funding (i.e., activities that address the symptoms, not the causes, of impairment).

The following are examples of ineligible discrete activities under the Partnerships Program:

- River/Stream bank armoring
- Habitat management, maintenance, or aesthetic projects
- Invasive species management
- Trash cleanups
- Pond dredging
- Lake and pond treatments with alum or other chemicals
- Lake drawdowns
- Fish ladder construction or maintenance
- Trail maintenance
- Stream crossing retrofits (e.g., replacing in-kind, or sliplining, an existing culvert, resulting in the same or reduced hydraulic capacity)
- Removal of beaver dams and other natural aquatic habitat features

Some of the listed Ineligible Discrete Activities may be eligible for funding if they enhance or help sustain the benefits of an eligible restoration activity or if they are necessary to mitigate impacts caused by an eligible restoration activity. For example, riverbank armoring may be an eligible activity when necessary to prevent river scour from damaging adjacent infrastructure after a dam removal. The DER Partnerships Specialist will provide guidance to Lead Organizations on specific eligible activity questions that may arise during the Partnership term. This is not an exhaustive list and DER reserves the right not to fund any activity or expense that DER deems ineligible. Selected Lead Organizations and their Stakeholders may engage in any activities they choose; however, they may not use DER Implementation funding to support ineligible activities and costs.

Ineligible Restoration Coordinator Activities and Expenses:

DER will only reimburse for Restoration Coordinator activities and associated costs that are incurred during the grant contract term and that directly support Partnership goals, priorities, and activities as outlined in grant contracts and approved Partnership planning documents. Examples of ineligible Restoration Coordinator activities and costs include:

- Political activities or lobbying
- Participation in administrative appeals or other legal actions, unless such actions are directly associated with an approved Partnership project or activity, and with prior written approval by the DER Partnerships Specialist
- Providing or communicating support for, or opposition to, an existing or proposed project, program, petition, initiative, law, regulation, or permit application, unless

specifically approved in a Partnership contract or planning document, or otherwise in writing by the DER Partnerships Specialist

- Costs or activities that do not directly support a Partnership
- Costs associated with ineligible activities
- Work that occurs outside of a grant contract term

This is not an exhaustive list, and DER reserves the right not to fund any RC activity or expense that the Division deems ineligible. Selected Lead Organizations and their Stakeholders may engage in any activities they choose; however, they may not use Restoration Coordinator funding to support ineligible activities and costs.

e. Application Deadline

Applications are due by **4:00 pm on July 23, 2021**. See additional detail in Section IV, *Deadlines and Procurement Calendar*.

f. Funding Availability

DER anticipates selecting up to three Lead Organizations under this RFR. Each Lead Organization will enter into a three-year Cooperative Agreement and execute a FY22 grant contract with DER. The maximum value of any technical services or direct funding awarded to each Lead Organization will vary according to the contract scope of work, annual implementation activities, and the availability of DER funding each year of the Partnership term. Anticipated annual grant funding will be subject to DER's annually approved budget.

Restoration Coordinator Funding

Funding is available to support salary and fringe benefits costs for one Restoration Coordinator at a 0.5-1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for each selected Lead Organization. Funding will be provided for a maximum of 75% of the base salary for a 1.0 FTE Restoration Coordinator position with an annual base salary range of \$55,000 - \$75,000. Applicants that propose less than a 1.0 FTE may request a maximum of 75% of the annual base salary that is prorated to reflect the reduced FTE level. The maximum fringe rate that can be requested is 30% of the portion of the base salary funded by DER.

FY22 grants will only cover a portion of annualized salary costs; contracts will be executed and funding is estimated to be available in November 2021. See budget worksheet in attachment 2 for more information on calculating Restoration Coordinator salary and fringe costs.

Funding will be negotiated and approved annually. DER will consider any salary adjustment requests when annual grant contracts are negotiated.

A 25% match for requested salary + fringe funding is required (see Match Requirements in section g, below).

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are limited to a maximum of 15% of the total amount requested for the Restoration Coordinator position, including fringe. See budget worksheet in attachment 2 for more information on calculating indirect costs.

Direct Costs

Lead Organizations may request funding for direct costs that are necessary to support the Restoration Coordinator carrying out their job duties. Examples of direct costs may include, but are not limited to: fees for meeting space to host Stakeholder meetings, travel expenses for the Restoration Coordinator, and the purchase of supplies or equipment needed to support the Restoration Coordinator position. DER will negotiate and approve reasonable and allowable direct costs on an annual basis.

Implementation Funding

The FY22 grant funding for implementation activities is anticipated to be up to \$20,000 per Lead Organization. In future years of the Partnership term, funding for implementation activities will be negotiated annually. The maximum value of Implementation funding is anticipated to range from \$50,000-\$200,000 annually.

Total amount of funding available is subject to DER's annually approved budget and authorized spending for the Partnerships Program.

g. Match Requirement

Applicants must provide a 25% match for funding that is requested to support the Restoration Coordinator position (salary + fringe). For example, if \$40,000 in DER funding is requested annually, the applicant must provide \$10,000 in match value annually that directly supports Restoration Coordinator employment expenses and/or directly supports the Restoration Coordinator carrying out their job duties. Match may be met with state or federal funding, cash, and/or in-kind contributions that directly support the Restoration Coordinator position. Examples of eligible matching contributions include:

- Expenditures by the Lead Organization for supervisor time to onboard, train, and manage the Restoration Coordinator.
- Indirect costs rate: DER will allow the difference between the Lead Organization's actual indirect cost rate and the indirect amount charged to the DER award to count toward the required match. For example, if the Lead Organization's actual indirect cost rate is 25%, and DER pays for 15%, then the Lead Organization may apply the remaining 10% as match. Lead Organizations that do not request any DER funding for indirect costs may apply their full indirect rate toward the required match. DER will negotiate during contracting for reasonable and allowable indirect costs to be applied toward match, as they relate to the Restoration Coordinator position.
- Other direct expenditures made by the Lead Organization specifically to support the Restoration Coordinator position.

Examples of ineligible matching contributions include:

- Funds spent by Stakeholders to advance restoration actions (such as consultant fees to assess potential projects).
- Stakeholder staff time contributions.
- In-kind donations of tangible goods or technical expertise made by Stakeholders or other professionals.

Costs incurred outside of an executed Partnership contract period are not eligible as match, except in the case of a DER administrative contract delay or similar. All match is subject to DER approval. DER reserves the right to deny match sources or amounts.

No match will be required for awarded Implementation funding. However, DER funding is anticipated to only meet a portion of the needs for Partnership implementation activities. Lead Organizations and Stakeholders will be expected to seek additional funds for Partnership implementation work. Applicants should specify both secured and anticipated Implementation funding sources in their applications, if relevant.

h. Total Anticipated Duration of Grant

The initial year-1 grant contract will be for a portion of state fiscal year 2022 (anticipated to be November 2021 through June 30, 2022). Additional funding beyond FY22 is anticipated to be awarded and contracted annually each fiscal year of the Partnership term, pending satisfactory performance and availability of DER funding. Under this RFR, Lead Organizations will enter into a Cooperative Agreement with DER with a commitment to participate in the Partnerships Program for a period of three fiscal years (a portion of FY22 and FY23-24). This timeline may be extended by mutual agreement between DER and the Lead Organization for up to two 1-year extensions for a maximum Partnership term of five years under this RFR, through FY26. Extension requests will be considered by DER near the end of FY24 and FY25, as applicable. Selection as a Lead Organization does not guarantee the award of funding beyond FY22, as funding is subject to annual DER budget appropriations, successful negotiation of future-year grant contracts, and satisfactory performance.

i. Applicable Procurement law

Grants MGL c. 7A, § 7; St. 1986 c. 206, § 17; 815 CMR 2.00

II. Performance and Contract Specifications

a. Scope of Services and Commitments

During the three-year Partnership term, Lead Organizations are expected to plan and implement restoration actions directly and to coordinate and support the restoration work of local and regional partners. Selected applicants will sign non-binding Cooperative Agreements with DER to enter the Partnerships Program as Lead Organizations for a three-year term. Each fiscal year of the Partnership term, Lead Organizations will sign binding DER grant contracts that include a defined scope of work, budget, and grant deliverables.

Partnership Three-Year Cooperative Agreement

The purpose of this non-binding agreement is to establish the high-level roles, responsibilities, and commitments of the two parties over the three-year Partnership. The agreement will be developed collaboratively by DER and the Lead Organization after DER issues award notices under this RFR. The agreement will have a three-year term with two, 1-year options to extend, for a maximum potential agreement term of five years under this RFR. See attachment 3 for a summary of the anticipated components of the Cooperative Agreement.

FY22 Partnership Year-1 Grant Contract

Upon execution of a Cooperative Agreement, DER will work collaboratively with each Lead Organization to prepare and execute a binding grant contract specifying the funding awarded and work to be completed in FY22. A final FY22 grant award is subject to successful negotiation of an agreed upon contract scope of work, budget, and deliverables. Selection under this RFR does not guarantee that any contracts or technical assistance will result from this RFR or that any amount of funding will be awarded. It is anticipated that awarded FY22 grant funds will be available in November 2021 after DER issues a Notice to Proceed.

DER reserves the right to fund a portion, to modify or amend the scope, and/or to add or delete tasks and deliverables of any RFR application in coordination with the applicant to more closely meet the goals of the Partnerships Program. Selected applicants will have the option of rejecting the grant award if the revised scope of work does not meet their goals.

Partnership Coordination and Capacity Building

Each Lead Organization is expected to coordinate a Partnership that helps to build lasting capacity among regional and local partners to initiate, fund, and manage aquatic restoration activities. A Partnership should, at a minimum, regularly engage a group of Stakeholders to contribute technical expertise, relationships, and other forms of support and guidance toward the Partnership's success. Lead Organizations will be eligible to receive funding to support a Restoration Coordinator staff position to help advance Partnership priorities, and to support Partnership facilitation.

See attachment 1 for more information on Partnership development, Stakeholder functions, and the Restoration Coordinator position.

Partnership Planning

All Lead Organizations will develop Partnership planning documents that:

- assess Partnership capacity-building needs,
- document the Partnership's restoration vision, goals, and priorities, and
- identify specific restoration projects and activities that the Partnership will advance.

See attachment 1 for more information on Partnership planning activities.

Implementation of Restoration Work

Each Lead Organization will advance aquatic restoration priorities and activities that are appropriate given the ecological stressors identified in their Partnership Region during the Partnership Planning process. Lead Organizations will be eligible to receive implementation funding to collaboratively advance the identified restoration priorities and actions.

See attachment 1 for more information on implementation and the goals of the Partnerships Program.

Partnerships Program Improvement

All Lead Organizations will be expected to provide structured feedback on Partnerships Program templates, processes, workflows, and overall Partnerships Program operations to help DER identify successes and opportunities to improve the Program. More information about this feedback cycle can be found in attachment 1.

b. DER Technical Support for Lead Organizations

In addition to grant funding, applicants selected as a Lead Organization will be eligible to receive support that includes: (1) technical assistance from DER staff; and (2) technical services from consultants under contract to DER to advance Partnership priorities.

DER will support Lead Organizations and Restoration Coordinators with various tools, trainings, and other resources to enhance learning and sharing of best practices for successful Partnership operations and administration. This training and support will be provided through the DER Partnerships Specialist. See attachment 1 for details.

DER may also provide advisory input to Lead Organizations and others advancing Partnership priorities on a variety of technical restoration topics.

DER may contract directly with pre-qualified consultants to provide technical services that support Partnership priorities being led by Lead Organizations and others.

DER reserves the right to modify the types and amounts of technical support made available at any time during the Partnership term. All technical support is subject to DER staff capacity, division priorities, and availability of funds.

c. Reporting

Quarterly reporting will be required to document progress advancing Lead Organization goals and priorities, progress advancing RC workplan activities, and progress advancing Partnership implementation activities. Reporting requirements will be detailed in grant contracts.

d. Invoicing

Grants resulting from this RFR will be paid on a reimbursement basis. Funds cannot be disbursed until there is a fully executed grant contract. Only the tasks and/or deliverables identified in the grant contract scope of work will be eligible for reimbursement. Expenses

incurred prior to full execution of the grant contract, or after grant contract expiration, are not eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursement is made within 45 days of the receipt of a correctly submitted invoice. All invoices must provide expense and deliverable documentation. No reimbursements shall be made for Massachusetts sales tax.

III. Instructions for Preparing and Submitting an Application

a. Submission Instructions

Application and Attachments (Required)

Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements described in Section I(c) and submit an application within the open dates of this RFR. Applicants must submit a completed application using the online submission portal. Applicants will provide information for the proposed Partnership in the online submission portal and then upload the application form and required application attachments (listed below) through the online submission portal. No paper applications will be accepted. Applications must include all required attachments to be considered complete.

A complete application must include the following:

- **Application Form** (*Required*)
- **Application Budget and Partnership Schedule** (*Required*) – Use the template provided or create one excel spreadsheet that describes the Partnership budget and Partnership schedule. The FY22 budget request will be used for ranking purposes and should be budgeted in accordance with guidelines provided in section I(f) of this RFR. See attachment 2 for information about filling out these templates.
- **Stakeholder letter(s) of support** (*Minimum 1 required*) - Letters of commitment or other signed documents from anticipated Stakeholders that are named in the application. Letters should describe and affirm the existing and/or proposed relationship between the applicant and identified Stakeholder, and the anticipated roles and contributions of the Stakeholder. If specific Stakeholder technical or financial contributions are anticipated during the Partnership term, this information should be included in the letter, but is not a requirement.
- **Partnership Region Map** (*Required*) - A map detailing the Partnership Region boundaries, municipalities contained within the Partnership Region, and approximate area of the Partnership Region measured in square miles. The minimum area for a Partnership Region is 75 square miles. A Partnership Region must be located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. DER cannot fund overlapping Partnership Regions. Applicants must explain in the Application Form how the proposed Partnership model and Restoration Coordinator can effectively advance the goals of the Partnerships Program and the Partnership within the proposed Partnership Region.

The application, including the Application Budget/Partnership Schedule and Partnership Region map, but EXCLUDING the Stakeholder letter(s) of support, must not exceed 25 pages

total. There is no page limit for Stakeholder letters of support. The application and required attachments can be uploaded as Microsoft Word/Excel files and/or Adobe PDF files.

Supporting Documentation (Optional)

Applicants may submit additional supporting documentation through the online submission portal. The applicant should only include materials that are directly relevant to demonstrating the qualifications of the applicant to serve effectively as the Lead Organization and the merits of the proposed Partnership for meeting the goals and requirements of this RFR. Such supporting documentation may be referenced via URL links to existing online materials and/or uploaded through the online submission portal. Documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- Applicant organization Strategic Plan.
- Descriptions of relevant existing partnerships and ecological restoration plans.
- Evidence of the applicant’s strong working relationships with other groups in the proposed Partnership Region.
- Information about how the applicant currently prioritizes restoration projects and/or in-house planning methods, materials, or tools currently used to identify and prioritize restoration needs and projects.
- Information about specific restoration projects and activities underway in the proposed Partnership Region.
- Information about planned or potential restoration projects and activities that the applicant and/or prospective Stakeholders are participating in.

There is no page limit for supporting documentation, however, the application form, the required application attachments, and the supporting documentation combined cannot exceed 20MB in total when uploaded via the online submission portal. Supporting documentation should be uploaded with the application through the online submission portal when feasible. Supporting documentation can be uploaded in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF.

If supporting documentation exceeds the file size limit or if you have trouble with your online submission, please contact:

Ione Hughes, Program Coordinator

ione.S.Hughes@mass.gov

617-626-1545

You will receive an email confirming receipt of your application and supporting documentation within two business days following submission via the online submission portal. If you do not receive a confirmation email, please contact **Ione Hughes** (see above).

All applications, including all supporting documentation, must be received by DER by 4:00PM on July 23, 2021.

Applications will be accepted, and are encouraged to be submitted, in advance of the submission deadline. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected. DER reserves the

right to reject any and all proposals or to request additional information and documentation if needed.

By submitting an application, the applicant acknowledges the terms and specifications contained within this RFR.

b. Additional Required Documentation:

Additional Forms: If selected, applicants will be required to complete and submit the following forms to execute a grant contract. These additional forms ARE NOT required to be submitted as part of the RFR application. Forms with an asterisk (*) will not need to be submitted if they are already on file with the Commonwealth. All forms can be downloaded from the [Office of the Comptroller website](#):

- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form
- Commonwealth W-9 tax form with DUNS number and Federal Tax ID*
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signature Verification Form
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) form*

c. Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the standards listed below. DER may contact applicants for clarification or to request additional information.

Lead Organizations will be selected based on the following criteria:

Minimum Eligibility Requirements:

- ✓ Applicant is a Massachusetts-registered tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization or a Massachusetts Regional Planning Agency.
- ✓ Proposed Partnership Region and DER-funded restoration activities are located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- ✓ Applicant commits to a minimum of 25% match for the portion of the funding requested for the Restoration Coordinator staff position (salary + fringe).
- ✓ Proposed Partnership and its anticipated restoration priorities align with the goals and requirements of the Partnerships Program.
- ✓ Applicant agrees to participate in structured feedback tasks to support development and improvement of the Partnerships Program throughout the 3-year Partnership term.

Key application evaluation criteria:

1. Partnership Elements (55%): The application addresses all of the elements listed in section I(b) of this RFR and the proposed Partnership model supports all of the functions listed in section I(b) of this RFR; the proposed Partnership seeks to collaborate with and/or build upon existing restoration and/or climate change resiliency efforts in the Partnership Region (as applicable).

2. Applicant Leadership and Stakeholder Engagement (20%): The applicant demonstrates strong qualifications and past leadership success on other projects and programs; the applicant demonstrates strong relationships with Stakeholders in the Partnership Region; Stakeholders demonstrate commitment to supporting the Partnership.
3. Proposed Budget (15%): The proposed Restoration Coordinator costs (direct and indirect) are allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with guidelines provided; the proposed Restoration Coordinator salary match amounts and anticipated match sources meet Program requirements; the applicant proposes a vision to leverage DER funds with existing or anticipated resources (plans, opportunities, strategic alliances) to advance Partnership goals and priorities.
4. Overall Quality of Proposal (10% max.): To be allotted at the discretion of the review team.

IV. Deadlines and Procurement Calendar

- a. Release of RFR: 11:00 am EST on June 28, 2021
- b. Question and Answer Period: Between 11:00 am EST on June 28, 2021 and 4:00 pm EST on July 9, 2021. Only clarifying or technical questions regarding the application process may be answered following the release of the RFR. No questions will be accepted after the close of the Question and Answer Period.

All questions should be submitted in writing to Lone Hughes, lone.S.Hughes@mass.gov, by 4 pm EST July 9, 2021. Questions will not be answered over the phone. Answers to all questions will be posted on DER's website and in COMMBUYS by July 15, 2021.

DER hosted a Partnerships Program virtual meeting/grant information session on June 15, 2021 from 10:00-11:00 am EST. A recording of this session is available on [DER's website](#).

APPLICANT COMMUNICATION WITH DER AND THE COMMONWEALTH: Applicants are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of DER regarding this RFR during the open RFR period except as specified in this Grant Announcement. No other Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this Grant Announcement. Applicants may email the contact person for this Grant Announcement in the event this Grant Announcement is incomplete, or the applicant is having trouble obtaining or submitting any required attachments. Note that there is an open period to submit written questions up to the deadline specified in this Grant Announcement.

- c. Application due date: 4:00 pm EST July 23, 2021
- d. Estimated Award date: Awards are estimated to be announced by October 2021 with Cooperative Agreement and grant contract development to begin in November 2021.
- e. Estimated grant contract start date: DER anticipates execution of grant contracts in November 2021.

V. Miscellaneous

- a. Type of procurement: Grant
- b. Use of the Procurement by Single or Multiple Departments: This RFR is a single department procurement. All contracts awarded under this RFR will be utilized solely by the issuing entity.
- c. Request for single or multiple contractors: Multiple contracts may be awarded under this RFR.
- d. RFR Distribution method: This RFR has been distributed electronically using the COMMBUYS system. It is the responsibility of every applicant to check COMMBUYS for any addenda or modifications to an RFR to which they intend to respond.
- e. Public records: All applications and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted applications that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.
- f. Reasonable accommodation: Applicants with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFR information in an alternative format, are encouraged to reach out to DER and must communicate such requests in writing to the appropriate contact listed in Section IV (a & c). The submitted written statement should describe the applicant's disability and the requested accommodations. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. DER reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.
- g. List of attachments:
 - 1. Partnerships Program Overview
 - 2. Budget worksheet and Partnership schedule instructions
 - 3. Anticipated components of the Cooperative Agreement

Attachment 1: Partnerships Program Overview

Program Goals and Objectives

Communities and landowners across Massachusetts are eager to do restoration work and recognize the link between restoration and climate adaptation. Most, however, do not have the capacity to coordinate restoration projects on their own, and need significant and sustained technical and financial assistance. Regional and watershed organizations are well-positioned to help communities meet these needs, and many are seeking to build their capacity to do so.

The goal of the Partnerships Program is to increase the pace and scale of ecological restoration in Massachusetts by building the capacity of local and regional organizations to collaboratively advance restoration work. Non-profit organizations and Regional Planning Agencies have unique skill sets, local knowledge, and well-established relationships within their geographic regions. The Partnerships Program seeks to help these organizations increase their capacity to lead and support ecological restoration within their regions through direct financial and technical assistance. Pairing partner strengths with DER's investments will empower networks of partners to restore rivers and wetlands and help people and nature adapt to climate change.

Program objectives include:

1. Provide financial and technical assistance to help non-profit organizations and Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) establish Regional Restoration Partnerships (Partnerships) with municipalities, landowners, and others within their geographic regions.
2. Help non-profit organizations and Regional Planning Agencies build the staff and technical capacity needed to assess, plan, and coordinate restoration projects in collaboration with Partnership members.
3. Promote a strategic and coordinated regional- and/or watershed-scale approach to identify, assess, prioritize, and advance aquatic habitat restoration opportunities that successfully address ecological stressors.
4. Leverage DER's expenditures through the Partnerships Program to attract greater investment in ecological restoration by federal and state agencies, foundations, municipalities, and private donors.
5. Create a program structure that offers smaller organizations with limited budgets greater opportunities to build restoration capacity alongside their more established organizational counterparts.
6. Facilitate information sharing by supporting peer-to-peer learning among Partnerships.
7. Identify and document opportunities for inter-Partnership collaboration that leads to efficient methods of project completion, cost savings through bulk materials and services purchasing, and other savings opportunities.
8. Document lessons learned and iteratively adapt and improve the Partnerships Program.

Lead Organizations

A Lead Organization is the RFR applicant, grantee, Partnership leader, and employer of the Restoration Coordinator. The Lead organization is also the visionary for the Partnership. It engages with Stakeholders to establish priorities and advance ecological restoration work that effectively addresses aquatic ecosystem stressors within the Partnership Region. Lead Organizations forge and maintain strong relationships to foster sustained engagement with local communities and other organizations that support restoration in their Partnership Region.

The Partnerships Program helps Lead Organizations build the capacity to lead and support ecological restoration within their Partnership Regions. Capacity building needs may include organizational systems to support ecological restoration, restoration staff and funding, and skills or knowledge related to ecological restoration.

Restoration Coordinators

Through this program, DER will provide financial and technical support so that each Lead Organization can hire a Restoration Coordinator (RC) to support its Partnership. The RC provides the Partnership with leadership and coordination support. The ideal RC also possesses fundraising skills, group facilitation skills, project management skills, knowledge of natural resource management and aquatic ecosystems, and the ability to communicate and coordinate outreach activities effectively. The RC will be employed by the Lead Organization. The Lead Organization may hire a new employee or designate an existing qualified staff person to fill the role of RC.

RCs will have experience and qualifications that make them well suited for the position but would benefit from specialized training in areas such as grant management and ecological restoration project management to successfully lead Regional Restoration Partnerships. Materials and training will be provided by the DER Partnerships Specialist and may include: DER-grantee expectations, reporting requirements and template use, Partnership basics and support for Partnership functions, foundational literature on restoration ecology, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, and other content relevant to ecological restoration and project management skills. Example project management training topics include: how to identify, assess, and prioritize restoration opportunities; how to oversee a feasibility analysis; how to oversee engineering and design contracts; the restoration project permitting process; and information about relevant funding sources for restoration projects. This component of the Partnerships Program will likely evolve as the Partnerships develop and as Lead Organizations provide feedback on training needs.

RCs will work with their supervisor to develop annual workplans that are submitted to DER's Partnerships Specialist for review and approval. These workplans are part of the required grant deliverables.

Partnership Regions and Models

The Partnerships Program leaves many of the decisions about regional and local-level Partnership structure up to the applicant to define and propose. The intent of this flexible approach is to make the Partnerships Program accessible to both existing and newly formed partnerships that meet program goals and requirements.

The Partnerships Program has not established pre-defined regional boundaries. Applicants may structure their own Partnership Region that works best for their proposed Partnership and encourages collaboration across political, social, and geographic boundaries. Applicants should propose a Partnership Region that contains a manageable geographic area for the Partnership to effectively address restoration needs, given regional conditions and ecological stressors. Partnership Regions must include a minimum area of 75 square miles and be located entirely within the boundaries of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

DER cannot fund overlapping Partnership Regions. Therefore, organizations that may be interested in supporting restoration work within overlapping geographic regions should coordinate with each other prior to applying to the Partnerships Program.

Example Partnership models:

1. *Simple Partnership model:* A Lead Organization employs a Restoration Coordinator to engage regional Stakeholders who help define the Partnership's vision, goals, and priorities. They collaboratively identify and advance restoration projects. An example engagement structure might be a regional steering committee with Stakeholders that may include municipalities and regional and local organizations.
2. *Umbrella Partnership model:* A Restoration Coordinator is employed at a Lead Organization working across a larger Partnership Region that encompasses subregions served by Stakeholders. An example structure might be a committee composed of other 501(c)(3) organizations working within the Partnership Region. Under this model, the RC supports the Stakeholders as the Stakeholders advance on-the-ground activities in their respective communities. Stakeholders benefit from this structure because they build their own capacity to implement restoration projects through training, funding, and support received from the RC and Lead Organization. The Lead Organization benefits by advancing restoration priorities in areas where they may not have established relationships. The Lead Organization may propose to sub-award a portion of DER Implementation funding to support the work of non-profit Stakeholders under this model. The terms and conditions for proposed sub-awards will be negotiated with selected Lead Organizations during contracting. Eligible recipients of sub-awarded Implementation funding include Regional Planning Agencies and 501(c)(3) organizations. For-profit organizations are not eligible to receive sub-awards under this RFR. Restoration Coordinator funding cannot be sub-awarded. No match will be required for Implementation funding that is sub-awarded.

Other Partnership models may be proposed by applicants for consideration by DER.

Stakeholder Functions

The Partnerships Program emphasizes the importance of collaborative Stakeholder participation to identify and advance Partnership priorities and activities. Lead Organizations and their RCs are expected to engage regional and local Stakeholders to increase buy-in and project success. The approach for identifying and convening Stakeholders in the Partnership is flexible for the Lead Organization to define.

Partnership Stakeholders are expected to meet regularly with the RC to help develop a Partnership Plan, strategize, prioritize opportunities, and identify and advance implementation activities. This group may also help the Lead Organization and its RC address project-specific challenges or identify creative funding strategies. The term “Stakeholder” is not meant to describe a broad public education campaign or outreach effort. Stakeholders should, however, reflect the diverse economic, cultural, and societal makeup of the applicant’s Partnership Region, and the restoration work of the Partnership should reflect the contributions and interests of these groups. DER expects Stakeholder engagement to be structured with the following functions and outcomes in mind:

- Help articulate the long-term vision, goals, and priorities for the Partnership that are documented in the Partnership Plan.
- Provide input during Partnership planning to identify specific projects and activities that advance the Partnership’s stated restoration priorities.
- Help the Lead Organization and its RC identify potential funding sources, willing landowners, and other opportunities that directly advance the Partnership’s restoration priorities.
- Help the Lead Organization and its RC anticipate problems with implementation and identify solutions to support RC activities and maintain progress toward Partnership deliverables.
- Contribute and receive both technical and financial resources in support of Partnership goals so that Stakeholders receive a net benefit from participation in the Partnership as well as contribute to its success.
- Coordinate with and help build trust among other external partners and community members to further the goals of the Partnership and advance Partnership priority actions.
- Provide visibility to Partnership activities within the local community to garner local support for advancement of the Partnership’s priorities.
- Participate in structured Partnerships Program feedback opportunities to provide input about the Program elements, templates, and tools.

Partnership Planning

DER recognizes that Lead Organizations will enter the Partnerships Program at varying stages of development and with varying capacities to plan, coordinate, and support restoration partners

and activities. Restoration planning is important to help Partnerships focus efforts and strategically invest Implementation funds. Partnership planning will be supported with structured templates and technical assistance provided to each Lead Organization and its RC through DER's Partnerships Specialist. Partnership planning activities are expected to consist of the following elements:

1. *Baseline Assessment*: Completed upon execution of a Cooperative Agreement between the Lead Organization and DER. The assessment is an organizational self-evaluation of capacity building needs that the Lead Organization completes to identify priority areas of investment that can be supported with DER funds and technical assistance.
2. *Partnership Plan*: A written plan that outlines the vision, goals, and priorities of the Partnership, developed with Stakeholder input. The scope of the Partnership Plan covers the full duration of the Partnership term.
3. *Implementation Plan*: A more detailed planning step that helps the Partnership refine its list of restoration priorities and identify specific projects and actions to focus on and pursue. This step helps the Partnership articulate how and why they will tackle specific restoration work.

The Baseline Assessment is an organizational self-evaluation that the Lead Organization completes using a DER-provided template. The Lead Organization will use the findings from this assessment to identify priority capacity building needs to operate the Partnership and support its Stakeholders. DER will use the findings to tailor technical assistance and other training offerings to address the identified needs and provide support for Lead Organizations and their Partnerships.

Development of the Partnership Plan and Implementation Plan may draw from existing regional and local planning efforts and input from Stakeholders. This approach allows Partnership members to use existing plans and previous investments, when available, to identify and pursue priority implementation activities quickly.

Once a Partnership Plan and Implementation Plan have been reviewed and approved by DER's Partnerships Specialist, the Lead Organization will integrate tasks from these plans into the RC's annual workplan. Restoration priorities, projects, and activities identified in the Partnership planning documents are subject to DER review and approval to ensure eligibility for funding and alignment with the goals of the Partnerships Program.

Innovative Restoration Techniques

Lead Organizations that want to use Implementation funding to support innovative techniques should request a review of the proposed technique in advance of the next fiscal year contract. The process for review and approval may include submission of published research materials, grey literature, or other similar materials to justify a request.

Partnership Development Phases

Lead Organizations will progress through three Partnership development phases (startup, establishment, and implementation). The activities detailed in each phase are not necessarily linear steps. Some activities may be completed simultaneously, depending on the Lead Organization's existing capacity, previous restoration work, and status of a dedicated Restoration Coordinator position. The timeframe for a Lead Organization's progression through the phases is flexible and intended to meet the needs of each individual organization. DER reserves the right to modify this process or the activities described herein at any time during the Partnership term.

Startup Phase:

- ✓ Hire a Restoration Coordinator or assign existing staff to the position.
- ✓ Complete a Baseline Assessment to identify Lead Organization development and capacity-building needs.
- ✓ Develop fiscal year Workplan for the Restoration Coordinator and submit for DER review and approval.
- ✓ Initiate Partnership and identify/engage Stakeholders.

Establishment Phase:

- ✓ Convene Stakeholders to develop a Partnership Plan using a DER-provided template.
- ✓ Submit a completed Partnership Plan for DER review and approval.
- ✓ Work with Stakeholders to develop an Implementation Plan.
- ✓ Submit a completed Implementation Plan for DER review and approval.
- ✓ Request Implementation funds and/or DER technical assistance to advance specific priority restoration activities and projects.

Implementation Phase:

- ✓ Implement projects and other actions that advance restoration priorities. This may include additional assessment and planning activities, detailed project planning and design, construction, etc., depending on individual Partnership needs and priorities.
- ✓ Continue to convene and collaborate with Partnership Stakeholders.
- ✓ Prior to the start of each fiscal year, review and update the Implementation Plan, develop projected funding needs for priority projects and actions, and prepare new fiscal year Workplan for the Restoration Coordinator.

Lead Organization Feedback

Lead Organizations are expected to provide feedback on Program templates, processes, and workflows to help DER iteratively learn and adapt the Program throughout the three-year Partnership term. The information collected will be used for three primary purposes:

1. To iteratively refine Program elements, materials, processes, and workflows;
2. to improve technical support offerings; and

3. to identify opportunities to scale up the Program model by identifying successes. Alternatively, identification of implementation barriers will suggest refinement is needed.

Attachment 2: Budget Worksheet and Partnership Schedule Instructions

The Budget Worksheet Template is provided to help applicants estimate the fiscal year 2022 request, and to anticipate fiscal year 2023 and 2024 budget requests for the Partnership. The Partnership Schedule (located in the second tab of the Budget Worksheet, labeled “Schedule template”) is provided to help applicants depict their vision for the progression of Partnership activities over the three-year Partnership term. An example schedule is provided for applicants in a third tab labeled “Example schedule.” The worksheet and the schedule are a required attachment to the RFR application.

The FY22 budget request will be used for ranking purposes and must be budgeted in accordance with guidelines provided in section I(f) of this RFR. **The FY23 and FY24 budget estimates and projections will be used for information purposes only and not for ranking purposes.** Final amounts, costs, and scopes of work will be negotiated with selected Lead Organizations during contracting.

Application Budget Instructions

1. Enter the expected Restoration Coordinator base annual salary, excluding fringe benefits. If the RC is an hourly employee, calculate the annual cost as follows:

(number of hours worked per week) x (hourly wage) x (52 weeks annually) = Base Annual RC Salary

2. Enter the full-time equivalent (FTE) of the position. A 1.0 FTE typically works 40 hours per week. A 0.5 FTE typically works 20 hours per week, or half of the employer’s weekly full-time scheduled hours.

To calculate FTE, divide the employee’s weekly scheduled hours by the employer’s full-time scheduled workweek. For example, if the employee works 28 hours per week and the organization has a regular workweek of 40 hours per week, then the calculation would be as follows:

$$28/40 = .70 \text{ FTE}$$

3. Enter the total fringe benefit rate, up to 30%. Fringe benefit costs may include, for example: FICA (typically 7.65%), worker’s compensation expenses, employee health insurance expenses, and other employer-sponsored benefits.
4. The worksheet automatically calculates the total Restoration Coordinator costs and enters the allowable cost charged to the DER award (75% of the total RC salary + fringe cost). The total RC cost amount is based on the entries in the base salary, FTE, and fringe boxes. The 25% match requirement applies to the requested funds for the Restoration Coordinator salary plus fringe. The required match amount is automatically calculated for the applicant for information purposes at the bottom of the worksheet.

5. The maximum indirect rate that can be requested is 15% of the total Restoration Coordinator funding request. The maximum indirect amount is automatically calculated in the worksheet.
6. Other Direct Costs: Itemize each direct cost on a new line. Add additional rows as needed. The spreadsheet will automatically total the entries. For mileage costs, estimate at the current IRS rate of \$0.56/mile. Actual miles driven will be reimbursed at the amount stated in the annual grant contract. See RFR section I(d) for information on allowable direct costs and example direct costs.
7. Implementation Costs: If any implementation activities are currently planned for the Partnership and the estimated or projected costs are known, itemize each cost in this section. Add additional rows as needed. The spreadsheet will automatically total the entries. See RFR section I(d) for information on allowable costs and activities. It is acceptable to leave this section empty if implementation activities are unknown. *The FY23 and FY24 projections will not affect ranking.*

Partnership Schedule template instructions:

1. Note that the schedule spans the three-year Partnership term and is divided into quarters that progress consecutively from FY22 Q2 (execution of the Cooperative Agreement) to FY24 Q4. The final column denotes the time after the Cooperative Agreement term ends, when the final activity report is due.
2. The Cooperative Agreement execution dates and quarterly report dates are pre-populated based on minimum grant reporting requirements. These sections should remain as-is. Applicants must base the schedule on an expected Cooperative Agreement and FY22 grant contract start date of November 2021.
3. For each milestone activity planned for the Partnership, estimate the approximate timeframe during the three-year Partnership term that the activity is anticipated to take place. Example activities are detailed in the example schedule located in the tab labeled "Example schedule."
4. Illustrate the planned activity timeline by shading or coloring cells that correspond with an estimated date range (in months) for each activity. Applicants should fill in the number of cells necessary to create a solid bar that depicts the length of time each task will take to complete, in months.
5. Additional rows can be added as needed. Applicants should provide an overview that conveys their vision for Partnership activities during the 3-year Partnership term. If the partnership is new, applicants may choose to detail activities related to hiring/onboarding a Restoration Coordinator and beginning partnership development. For established partnerships, applicants may choose to provide details about future restoration activities that are planned with DER Implementation funds. *Details about future implementation activities planned for FY23 and FY24 will be used for information only, not for ranking purposes.*

6. Applicants can color-code Restoration Coordinator funding activities, Implementation funding activities, and grant reporting activities. Indicate which colors apply to each type of activity using the key at the bottom of the schedule.
7. An Example schedule is provided in a separate tab at the bottom of the sheet to demonstrate how to use the Partnership Schedule template.

Attachment 3: Anticipated Components of Cooperative Agreements

Cooperative Agreements will be developed collaboratively by DER and the selected Lead Organization. At a minimum, selected Lead Organizations will need to:

- ✓ Commit to supporting and advancing the Partnership over the three-year Partnership term.
- ✓ Provide administrative and supervisory support within the Lead Organization for the Partnership and for the RC position.
- ✓ Designate a staff person or officer within the Lead Organization with signatory authority for the duration of the Partnership term.
- ✓ Provide detailed feedback on all Partnerships Program elements, templates, processes, and workflows (e.g., through web surveys and Restoration Coordinator check-in calls).
- ✓ Include the DER Partnerships Specialist on Stakeholder communications and meetings/gatherings.
- ✓ Commit to timely completion of workplans, reports, tasks, and other agreed-upon grant tasks and deliverables.
- ✓ Follow Partnerships Program communications guidelines, including crediting DER as a funder and supporter whenever the funded work is mentioned in formal written external communications, meetings, and presentations.