

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM SCIENTIFIC STUDY PROPOSAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Proposal identification information and summary of the project goals.

Title: **Hardscape and Brownfield Transformation Opportunity Study**

Proposing Organization: **San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments**

Your summary of the Project Goals and Objectives:

All three reviews agreed that the primary goal of the study is to explore the feasibility and benefits of transforming impermeable hardscapes and brownfields into permeable, multi-benefit surfaces. This transformation is intended to improve water quality, increase stormwater capture, reduce pollutant loads, and enhance community engagement in stormwater management. Additional objectives include estimating costs and benefits, evaluating potential impacts on Measure W parcel tax revenue, and exploring incentives available through the Tax Credit Program.

Two reviewers highlighted the study's aim to assess the potential for integrating permeable surfaces into various land uses, while another reviewer noted its broader focus on increasing community investment benefits and nature-based solutions.

2. Are the objectives clearly stated? What portion of the objectives need more clarification?

Two reviewers found the objectives clearly stated and sufficiently detailed, requiring no further clarification. However, one reviewer noted that the study does not explicitly address testing infiltration rates or include details about the datasets to be utilized for identifying brownfield locations. Additional specifics on database sources and data validation could strengthen the proposal.

3. How do the project goals directly support a nexus to increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution?

All reviewers agreed that the study directly supports SCWP goals by targeting urban runoff pollution at its source. By converting hardscapes and brownfields into permeable surfaces, the study seeks to enhance stormwater infiltration, reduce runoff volumes, and mitigate pollutant loads. One reviewer emphasized that redeveloping brownfields represents a unique opportunity to expand stormwater capture in areas with limited green infrastructure.

4. What is (are) the overarching technical approach element(s) of the proposed project as you understand them (not necessarily the same as the elements described in the proposal)?

The reviewers identified the following technical approach elements:

1. **Spatial Opportunity Analysis: Quantifying and mapping impermeable surfaces and brownfields within targeted watersheds to identify transformation opportunities.**
2. **Metrics and Alternatives: Developing metrics to assess the costs, benefits, and SCWP relevance of proposed transformations.**

3. **Stakeholder Engagement: Collaborating with organizations like ARLA and Los Angeles Waterkeeper and conducting interviews with Los Angeles County Public Works.**
 4. **Programmatic Analysis: Evaluating various scenarios for site transformation and estimating associated environmental and economic impacts.**
 5. **Web-Based Tools and Outreach: Creating tools, story maps, and public-facing materials to communicate findings and facilitate community engagement.**
5. Has the proposal provided sufficient information to describe the technical approach for each element? If not, what information is missing?

Two reviewers considered the proposal's technical approach sufficient, while one reviewer identified gaps, including:

- **Details on the specific datasets for characterizing brownfields and impermeable surfaces.**
 - **Clarity on how stakeholder input will shape the study's methodologies and outcomes.**
 - **Inclusion of long-term maintenance costs for permeable surfaces and associated BMPs.**
6. Is the technical approach sound? If not, what do you recommend should be done to improve the technical approach of the proposed project?

The technical approach is generally sound, but reviewers recommended enhancements:

- **Hydrological Integration: Incorporate overlays of watershed hydrology and land use to identify sites with the highest potential for runoff capture and pollution reduction.**
 - **BMP Planning: Evaluate the deployment of temporary BMPs during construction to minimize pollutant discharge.**
 - **Data Quality Assurance: Validate existing datasets to ensure their reliability for planning purposes.**
 - **Public Engagement: Strengthen outreach strategies to include DACs and align transformation projects with community priorities.**
7. How achievable are the study's stated technical objectives, especially within the proposed timeframe and budget?

Two reviewers deemed the objectives achievable within the \$410,000 budget and proposed timeline, citing clear task definitions and leveraging of existing studies. However, the third reviewer raised concerns about potential delays from data gaps, scheduling conflicts, and coordination challenges with stakeholders.

8. What are the greatest technical risks that you foresee the proposing agency facing when implementing the project?

The reviewers identified the following risks:

- 1. Data Gaps: Limited or outdated data on brownfield locations and impermeable surfaces.**
 - 2. Stakeholder Engagement: Delays in securing interviews and input from key stakeholders, including County staff and community representatives.**
 - 3. Implementation Constraints: Variability in site-specific conditions, such as soil characteristics and land use, could affect project feasibility.**
9. Please describe the linkages between the project’s technical objectives and the types of decisions that stormwater managers will make based on the project’s outcome(s)? Will the technical achievements provide stormwater managers useful linkages that extend beyond this study?

All reviewers agreed that the study’s findings will inform critical decision-making for stormwater managers, including:

- Prioritizing sites for hardscape and brownfield transformations.**
- Allocating resources based on cost-benefit analyses.**
- Enhancing the effectiveness of the SCWP Tax Credit Program.**

One reviewer noted that the study’s public-facing tools, such as mapping applications, will provide valuable support for long-term planning and community engagement.

10. Please provide any additional technical perspectives you would like to share.

Reviewers offered the following perspectives:

- The study should include adaptive management strategies to accommodate changes in climate and urban development.**
- Collaboration with technical experts and community organizations can enhance the project’s credibility and relevance.**
- Exploring synergies with ongoing SCWP projects, such as DepaveLA, can maximize the study’s impact.**

11. Please answer each of the following questions by selecting one of the following five answer choices: *Excellent, Very good, Adequate, Inadequate or Not applicable because of insufficient information*. Please add an explanation to accompany your answer choice (or refer to the question number above for appropriate context and rationale):

- a. How well do the proposal objectives address the County's goals of increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution?

All reviewers rated the objectives as "very good," citing their direct alignment with SCWP goals. The focus on converting impermeable surfaces into nature-based solutions addresses key priorities for reducing runoff and enhancing infiltration.

- b. How well do you think the technical approaches will achieve the study objectives and stated outcomes?

Two reviewers rated the technical approaches as "very good," highlighting the study's methodology and stakeholder engagement. The third reviewer rated the approaches as "adequate," noting the need for clearer details on data validation and programmatic analysis.

- c. Technical experience and qualifications of the study team?

Two reviewers rated the study team as "very good," emphasizing their expertise in spatial analysis, environmental planning, and stakeholder engagement. However, the third reviewer marked this as "not applicable," citing insufficient information about specific team qualifications.