

## SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM SCIENTIFIC STUDY PROPOSAL QUESTIONNAIRE

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

Title: **Community-Centered Optimization of Nature-Based BMPs Starting with the Gaffey Nature Center Facility**

Proposing Organization: **SEITec (Shahriar Eftekharzadeh)**

Your summary of the Project Goals and Objectives:

**The proposal reviewers agree that the goal of this project is to use an existing L.A. County biofiltration BMP as an experimental site to evaluate optimal configurations for this type of BMP – including different plant varieties – with the results used to inform design criteria for other L.A. County nature-based BMPs.**

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

**The proposal reviewers disagree on whether the objectives are clearly stated. One reviewer said the objectives are clear, but a little too broadly stated in some sections. The other two reviewers said that the objectives lack specificity about how the study will be conducted, including which specific aspects of BMP performance will be optimized through the study.**

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?

**The reviewers disagree on how effectively the project supports the SCWP's goals of increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution. Two reviewers expressed confidence that the study aspirations are well-intentioned to answer these questions, while the third reviewer said the proposal lacks clarity on this nexus – specifically, expressing concerns about how the study will contribute to optimizing filtration practices in the region.**

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)?

**All three reviewers agree that the technical approach will consist of: (1) engaging with stakeholders to develop a study design that encompasses different possible configurations and maintenance regimes for a biofiltration site, (2) collecting and analyzing field data, and (3) preparing a report that offers best-practices guidance on how to build similar systems elsewhere.**

5. Has the proposal provided sufficient information to describe the technical approach for each element? If not, what information is missing?

**All three reviewers agree that the proposal does not adequately describe the technical approach. One reviewer said the proposal “significantly lacks” information on where, how and how much data will be collected. A second reviewer said the technical approach is “weak” and lacking “in many areas,” noting that the proposal takes a “laundry list approach” to describing the study objectives instead of offering clear focus. The third reviewer expressed particular concern about**

**the lack of specificity regarding how different configurations described in the proposal will be assessed.**

6. Is the technical approach sound? If not, what do you recommend should be done to improve the technical approach of the proposed project?

**All three reviewers expressed concerns about the soundness of the technical approach, with two concluding that it is unsound and the third saying there isn't enough information to make such a determination. The first reviewer said the approach "does not seem to be well-suited" to answer the questions set forth in the proposal, and rhetorically asked if there is a social science component to the study that the proposal writer inadvertently overlooked. The second reviewer recommended "a complete rewrite" with a more narrowly defined set of study objectives. The third reviewer pointed to specific apparent flaws in the technical approach, including a technically problematic choice to use the metal zinc as a proxy for tracking other metals, and an approach to comparing multiple different configurations that – if implemented as described – would not be scientifically sound.**

7. How achievable are the study's stated technical objectives, especially within the proposed timeframe and budget?

**All three reviewers expressed concerns about the achievability of the technical objectives. One reviewer said that the lack of a detailed approach makes it difficult to evaluate if the budget is reasonable, although this reviewer also noted that the five-year study timeframe seems "reasonable." A second reviewer deemed the budget "excessive." And the third reviewer said the achievability of the proposal hinges on the study design, which lacks clarity.**

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

**All three reviewers cited significant technical risks associated with the proposal. One reviewer expressed concerns about the lack of technical detail. A second reviewer suggested the proposal writer may not have the experience and knowledge necessary to conduct a technically rigorous study. And the third reviewer identified a significant technical flaw in the study design: The proposing organization is planning to operate the hydrological cells to be monitored in series, when they actually would need to be operating in parallel.**

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 three reviewers expressed doubts that the study will produce results useful to stormwater managers. One reviewer complimented the proposal writer's well-intended aspirations for the study, but said that these aspirations ultimately are not likely to be achievable. A second reviewer said it "appears unlikely" the project will deliver a good return on investment. And the third reviewer said too little detail is offered to engender confidence that the project will inform management decision-making.**

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

**Two of the reviewers provided additional comments that were critical of the proposal. One reviewer advised against funding this proposal, noting that the budget is “exorbitant.” The other reviewer said the study should be rethought to clarify project tasks and suggested that the study could be improved by assessing multiple sites instead of just one.**

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?

**Two of the reviewers rated the proposal’s objectives as being “adequate” for addressing SCWP goals, and reiterated their concerns about the proposal’s lack of specificity. The third reviewer gave an “inadequate” rating.**

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

**All three reviewers rated the chances of the project achieving its goals “inadequate.”**

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

**Two of the reviewers rated the study team’s qualifications “not applicable because of insufficient information,” and the third reviewer rated the qualifications “inadequate.”**