

Regional Climate Collaboratives Program Round 2

Overview

This document provides guidance on how applicants should approach determining their Project Area for their Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) application. This guidance offers information about the RCC Project Area requirements, providing definitions and additional considerations for applicants to take into consideration when developing the project area map. It also provides guidance on responding to the application Narrative questions related to Project Area.

The identified project area and applicant's justification for why the project area was selected should demonstrate the clear capacity building needs in the project area, outlining the climate, environmental, socio-economic, and community-wide factors contributing to that need. In selecting their project area, applicants should be sure to focus on a Region size and number of Communities of Focus that allows for them to engage in meaningful planning, policy, and place-based work. Reviewers will score applicants based on their project area justification and not on the breadth of their geographic focus.

Region

Definition

Applicants must identify and define their Region based on shared natural, political, and built environment systems; climate risks; and/or other shared challenges or dynamics. The purpose of a selected Region is to identify the area where the Collaborative will enhance regional coordination.

The selected Region must include:

- A Region boundary, based on the definition above.
- Applicants may choose to work within a 'Region' that is pre-defined for another initiative to the extent that it meets the threshold eligibility criteria above and is helpful to accomplishing their workplan. However, doing so will not receive any preference in scoring or award selection.
- The Region must be contiguous. However, unlike in RCC Round 1, the Region does not have to adhere to the 1-8 county regional boundary.

Considerations for Identifying a Region

SGC recommends that Collaboratives choose a feasible Region size that will allow for them to conduct meaningful regional work and coordination. SGC recommends that Regions are selected based on the regional planning and policy efforts the Collaborative aims to work on.

- Example #1: A Collaborative that aims to work on planning and policy initiatives regarding air quality and pollution, such as engaging in the development of their District's Air Quality Plan, may consider selecting the Air Quality District region as their Region boundary.
- Example #2: A Collaborative that plans to engage in the development of Climate Action Plan(s) led by two contiguous Counties where their Communities of Focus are located may consider selecting those two counties as their Region boundary.

The RCC Mapping Tool provides a handful of optional Region boundaries as layers that Applicants can choose from. Applicants are also welcome to upload or draw their own Region boundary based on other considerations; however, they must adhere to the Region definition above. Please see page 15-16 of the RCC Round 2 Program Guidelines for more information on RCC program requirements related to the Region boundary. For information on how to use the mapping tool to determine your Region, please access the RCC Mapping Tool Instructions on the RCC application resources page.

Communities of Focus

Definition

The Communities of Focus are the census tracts or tribal areas representing the communities and neighborhoods where the Collaborative will conduct its place-based work. A Community of Focus could be a single census tract or tribal area or a cluster of census tracts or tribal areas. The Collaborative should determine their under-resourced Communities of Focus based on the number of census tracts and not the total land area.

Collaboratives must identify a minimum of two Communities of Focus and must meet either of the following two eligibility criteria:

1. At least fifty Seventy-five percent (75%) of the census tracts or tribal areas identified within the Communities of Focus must meet the definition of under-resourced:

- Disadvantaged Communities according to CalEnviroScreen: census tracts or tribal areas identified as disadvantaged by the California Environmental Protection Agency (Health & Safety Code § 39711); or

- AB 1550 Low Income Communities: census tracts or tribal areas with median household incomes at or below 80% of the statewide median income or with median household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development's list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093 of the California Health and Safety Code (Health & Safety Code § 39713, subd.(d)); or
- Department of Water Resources Disadvantaged Communities: census tracts or tribal areas with a median household income less than 80% of the statewide average (Public Resource Code § 75005 subd.(g)).

2. At least 75% of the census tracts or tribal areas identified within the Communities of Focus must meet SB 1072's definition of under-resourced or be Tribal Lands (according to the definition below) **as long as at least 50% of the Communities of Focus must meet SB 1072's definition of under-resourced.**

- Located in Indian Country as defined by 18 U.S. Code (USC) 1151;
- Within the limits of a Rancheria under the jurisdiction of the United States Government; OR
- Held in trust by the United States for an Indian tribe or individual; OR
- Held by an Indian tribe or individual subject to a restriction by the United States against alienation; OR
- Owned by a Tribal Entity in fee; OR
- Held in trust for the benefit of a Tribal Entity within the state of California.

Considerations for Identifying Communities of Focus

It is recommended that Collaboratives select a feasible number of Communities of Focus that will allow for them to conduct meaningful place-based work. Applicants may select specific under-resourced communities within the Region where Collaborative activities will be focused, and do not need to include every community that meets the definition of under-resourced in their geographic areas of focus for their selected Region.

Please consider the following guidance when selecting Communities of Focus:

- Communities with whom the Collaborative partners have built trusted relationships or communities with whom the partners have identified a clear and equitable pathway to building relationships.
- Communities that have demonstrated need and interest in participating in capacity building activities.

- Communities that have identified priority climate issues that the Collaborative has subject matter expertise to help address.

The RCC Mapping Tool helps applicants select Communities of Focus that meet the RCC program requirements. The tool allows applicants to select their Communities of Focus and easily see the number and proportion of under-resourced communities they have selected. Please see page 16 of the RCC Round 2 Program Guidelines for more information on RCC program requirements related to the Communities of Focus. For information on how to use the mapping tool to determine your region, please access the RCC Mapping Tool Instructions.

Scoring Criteria

In addition to assessing if an applicant meets the threshold eligibility, reviewers for the program will consider the following scoring criteria related to applicants' Region and Communities of Focus. Applicants should be sure to demonstrate how they meet each of these scoring criteria in their application. See pages 20-21 of the RCC Round 2 Program Guidelines for more information about scoring related to the Project Area requirements.

- Applicant makes a clear case for their definition of the Region and Communities of Focus as proposed, with an explanation of the factors that identify them as a region, and why the under-resourced communities were selected. Applicant provides a clear map of the geographic Region and Communities of Focus identified to justify Project Area focus.
- Proposed workplan demonstrates focus on the communities with the most need. Applicant considers both the proportion of under-resourced communities served above threshold requirements and the proportion of under-resourced communities within the overall region.
- Applicant provides a clear description of priority climate issues and catastrophic natural disasters and/or extreme weather events experienced by communities within the Region as well as any gaps in data or knowledge about climate issues or potential impacts facing the Project Area.
- Applicant provides a clear description of the Region and Communities of Focus' previous success and/or challenges in receiving climate-related funding to address priority climate-related issues, as well as the extent to which any funded projects address under-resourced communities' climate-related needs.
- Applicant demonstrates awareness of existing capacity building efforts within the Project Area and alignment with existing activities. Applicant additionally explains how the Collaborative will add value to and direct existing efforts to the needs of under-resourced communities served by this grant.