

Example of a Project Plan Evaluation Ranking Procedure (Exhibit 608-4)

Rank each factor from 1 to 3, with 1 being low and 3 being high. Determine the overall priority ranking from the Key at the end.

A. Scientific Merit. How important is the Project for soil science and the soil resource inventory? Examples: updating or investigating taxonomic classifications; revising series concepts; updating or correcting pedon descriptions; sampling to fill data voids for series.

Score	Criteria
1	Little or no scientific merit.
2	Some merit; minor changes to benchmark soils; changes to soils of small extent, etc.
3	High merit; major advances in scientific knowledge about benchmark soils.

B. Agency Merit. How important is the Project for NRCS or Partners programs? Included here are all the Farm Bill programs, conservation planning, state cost-share, etc. Examples: K factors (affects HEL and CRP), hydric soils (wetlands), prime farmland issues, suitability groups.

Score	Criteria
1	Little or no scientific merit.
2	Minor or incidental effects on some properties or areas of concern; affects one or programs in a minor way.
3	Significant revision to properties of benchmark soils used in programs or areas of significant concern to conservation efforts; affects several programs, or has a major impact on one or more programs.

C. External Merit. How important is the Project for external customers, either government or private?

Score	Criteria
1	Little or no interest from external customers.
2	Some effect on soil survey users or agencies; one user group impacted.

3	Major impact on land use planning, interpretations, or agency programs or lands; more than one user group impacted.
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D. Financial/Partnership Inputs. Are there inputs from other sources or partners, such as funding, staffing, equipment, or technical support?

Score	Criteria
1	Little or no partnership involvement.
2	Some commitment of staff time, equipment, and/or technical support; one partner involved.
3	Major commitment of staff time and equipment, and/or financial support; more than one partner involved; strong support or guidance of NRCS or partner administration.

E. Synergy. Does the Project serve or support another project or proposal?

Score	Criteria
1	None.
2	Some advantage to another project.
3	Closely related to another Project; significantly improves the efficiency of both Projects.

F. County Soil Survey Deficiencies. Does the Project address deficiencies identified in the county soil survey evaluations and/or digital flags?

Score	Criteria
1	No deficiencies previously noted; affects newer surveys with 5-digit numbers.
2	Minor deficiencies are addressed; affects published surveys with mnemonic symbols (e.g., 27B, MeB).
3	Significant deficiencies in the existing soil surveys are addressed; affects "out-of-date" surveys.

G. Efficiency. How much "bang for the buck" is in this project? Evaluate, in part, on the ratio of acreage affected to time required to complete.

Score	Criteria
1	Low. Lots of work for a few acres; e.g., < 300 acres / person-day. Or, few and minor NASIS changes per person-day.
2	Moderate. Reasonable return for the labor; 300 to 1000 acres / person-day, numerous NASIS changes per person-day, etc.
3	High. Big changes with little effort; >1000 acres / person-day, major NASIS revisions per person-day, etc.

Key:

1. **If (G=3) and (D=3) and (2 or more of A or B or C or F = 3) OR Score = 3 on 3 of A, B, C, or F Then Priority = High**
2. **If (D=1) and (G=1) and (none=3) and (composite score <11) Then Priority = Low**
3. **All other; Priority = Medium**