

Purpose: This guidance is intended to assist Project Sponsors in accurately reporting information about water quality implementation accomplishments in eLINK, a web-based software tool used by local governments across Minnesota and state agencies to manage and report on watershed projects. The project information provided in eLINK is used to fulfill reporting requirements to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and track the progress of watershed implementation activities throughout Minnesota. All eLINK Guidance Documents referenced in this document can be found at <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/outreach/eLINK/index.html>.

Who should use this guidance to enter project information into eLINK?

- You are a recipient of a 319 or Clean Water Partnership (CWP) grant or CWP loan administered by MPCA, and
- Your implementation project has a pollutant reduction component

What information needs to be entered in eLINK?

- Practice types and count
- Mapped location of implemented practices
- Indicators associated with practices

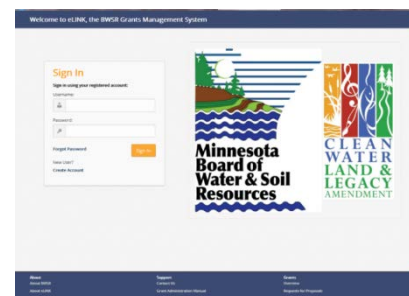
When should you enter project information into eLINK?

Currently, you are required to enter information into eLINK each year you implement on-the-ground activities and can estimate a pollution reduction for your project. The specific date required for eLINK reporting is included in the contract for your grant. Contact your MPCA Project Manager or Grants Manager if you have any questions.

How do I access eLINK for entering project information?

Project Sponsors and MPCA Project Managers are issued individual eLINK accounts upon registration.

1. Access the eLINK log in screen at <http://elink.bwsr.state.mn.us/elink/>. If you don't remember your password, click on "Forgot Password." Usernames are generally first initial and last name.
2. If you don't have a current account, click on "Create Account," or see the eLINK Guidance Document *Setting up an Account* for basic information on getting started.
3. If you need additional assistance, click on "Contact Us" at the bottom of the screen, and enter "Account Assistance" as the subject line of the email.




How do I make sure this project is tied to the correct funding?



Your 319 or CWP Project will be set up by MPCA or BWSR staff and listed as a *grant* on the Home page of the eLINK system using the Project Title from your workplan/contract. Selecting the correct grant title from the home page will ensure your project activities are tied to the correct funding. For information about navigating within eLINK, review the eLINK Guidance Document [eLINK Overview](#).

Where do I enter accomplishment information in eLINK?

Any grant or 319/CWP Project will have accomplishments that will be reported as activities. An **Activity** project or group of projects of the same category (e.g. Agricultural Practices), under which practices, mapped location, and indicators are reported. See the eLINK Guidance Document [Grouping & Splitting Activities](#) for more information.

Activity details are the elements or individual best management practices that make up the activity as a whole. Review the eLINK Guidance Document [Managing Activities](#) for more information about Activities and Activity Details.

To add new activities to an existing grant, click on the workplan activities icon  next to the desired grant in the grants window of the **Home** screen. This will bring users to the **Workplan Activities** screen, with the activities filtered by the grant selected. If you can't find your specific grant, send an email to eLINKSupport@state.mn.us with the subject line "MPCA 319 or CWP assistance needed." Be sure to copy your MPCA Project Manager.

From the **Workplan Activities** screen, click the "Add New Activity Budget" button. Note that while reporting activity budget amounts and expense information is not required for 319 and/or CWP grants, eLINK requires a value to be entered for each Activity Budget row. This value can be "0". Enter the information consistent with the *eLINK Guidance Document* [Managing Activities](#). Reporting 319 or CWP Project accomplishments will primarily use the Activity Actions for Edit Activities  and Activity Details  icons. Within the Activity Details, be sure to enter practices and indicators, and map the details.

How do I enter estimated pollution reductions?

From the Activity Details page (accessed by clicking the  icon for a given activity), click the indicators icon .

1. **Indicator Category:** select the primary category for the indicator; this will filter the next list. These categories are used to query data.
2. **Indicator Name & Units:** select the specific indicator name; units are specified by the indicator name.
3. **Value:** enter the resulting pollutant reduction value from your calculation based on your implementation activities. These values could be estimated based on the BMP design (i.e. stormwater pond), models, monitoring activities, or literature. **Note: This is the most important value you will report in eLINK.**
4. **Waterbody:** enter the waterbody the indicator is intending to address.
5. **Calc. Tool:** select the calculation tool used to determine the value.
6. **Comments:** enter additional information about the calculation, or if the calculation tool was not available, enter the name of the tool used.
7. Click on the green check at the right of the window box to save the indicator.
8. Repeat for additional indicators.

9. Hit the [X] in the upper right hand corner of the window to close the window and return to the activity details window.

Models that may assist you with estimating pollution reductions:

- Pollution reduction calculators available on the eLINK website:
www.bwsr.state.mn.us/outreach/eLINK/
- MinnFARM (Minnesota Feedlot Annualized Runoff Model),
www.manure.umn.edu/applied/open_lots.html – model calculates the annual pollutant loading from a Minnesota feedlot (this replaces FLEVAL). Note: The MinnFARM program should be run before and after feedlot improvements have been made as the pollution reduction is the difference between those end result values.
- EPA – models to estimate pollution reductions are (1) STEPL (Spreadsheet Tool for Estimating Pollutant Load) or (2) Region V Model, (both can be found at <http://it.tetrattech-ffx.com/stepl/>)

Do I need to submit a progress report?

There is no need to submit a progress report in the eLINK user interface. MPCA Project Managers will be checking your grant(s) in eLINK to verify that indicators have been entered, and that the indicators have been entered correctly.

Please continue to submit any required reports outside of eLINK, per MPCA’s guidelines.

What do I do after entering information in eLINK?

Notify your MPCA Project Manager when you have finished updating pollution reduction estimates. There is no need to submit a progress report through eLINK. If you have questions about what to report, contact your MPCA Project Manager. If you have questions about using eLINK, send an email to eLINKSupport@state.mn.us with the subject line “MPCA 319 or CWP assistance needed,” note the specific grant title and your organization within the body of the email, and be sure to copy your MPCA Project Manager.

**MPCA Project Managers only:* Once notified by your Project Sponsor that the above information has been entered into eLINK, please verify that information below appears on the All Details Report. If any information is inaccurate due to technical issues within eLINK, please contact Conor Donnelly, BWSR IT Specialist, at conor.donnelly@state.mn.us or (651) 282-3815.

As a MPCA Project Manager, how do I ensure that funding information has been properly entered into eLINK?

In the Quick Reports box on the Home screen of eLINK, enter the grant title. Select “All Details Reports” from the Grants Reports drop-down box, then select “Go” to generate the file. Open the downloaded file, and verify the following information in the following tables has been entered and is accurate:

■ **Activity Details Summary**

- “Total Action Count” should match any numbers reported elsewhere to MPCA
- “Total Activity Mapped” should match “Total Action Count” number for the row

■ **Indicators Summary**

- Verify that all relevant pollution reduction indicator types are listed
- Verify that total value and unit entered are valid

■ **Grant Activities**

- Verify that the correct Category has been selected
- Start and End Dates entered

■ **Activity Actions** (for completed BMPs)

- Verify practices are lumped/split under the appropriate Grant Activity (corresponds to Activity Budget row) according to [Grouping & Splitting Activities](#) guidance
- Verify that correct practice type(s) selected
- Proposed Size/Units entered
- Actual Size/Units entered

■ **Final Indicator** (if applicable)

- Indicator name, value, subcategory/units, calculation tool, and waterbody should be complete