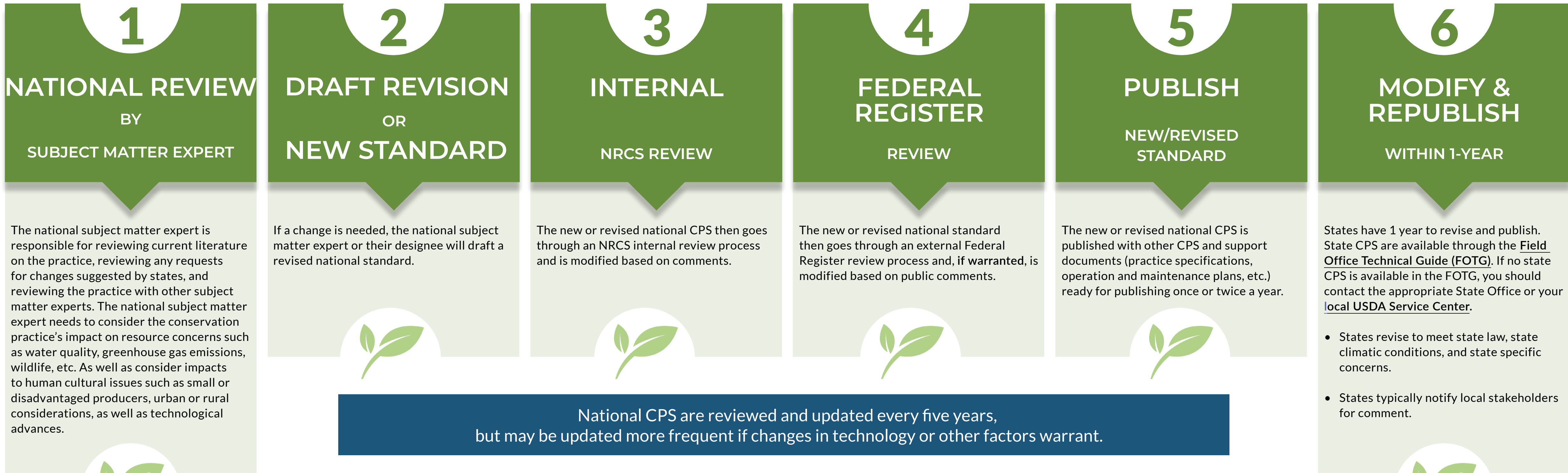


NATIONAL CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD REVIEW PROCESS

Conservation Practice Standards (CPS) are developed for the protection of the natural resources and land stewards. CPS provide the minimum criteria for the design and installation of practices. The flowchart below illustrates the CPS development process.



NRCS uses Interim Conservation Practice Standards (ICPS) as a method to field test new technology or innovations. ICPS are based on requests from a University, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), an industry representative, members of the State Technical Committees (state-level technical leads that assist in the development and maintenance of the FOTG), employees at the field office, or other such sources. The technology or innovation must have a scientific basis and have been previously evaluated. If the practice or innovation is from a vendor of the technology, the practice or innovation must have had the benefits of the practice verified by a third party.

Requests for an ICPS are reviewed and approved for development by the State Technical Guide Committee for the state which is submitting the ICPS and then forwarded for national level review by the national subject matter expert for the discipline responsible for the practice. For example, the National Forester would review a forestry ICPS, the National Water Management Engineer would review a new irrigation ICPS, etc.

Upon approval, the NRCS state is granted permission to use the ICPS over a 3-year evaluation period. At the end of a 3-year evaluation period, a final evaluation report is completed with specific disposition recommendations (either a new national conservation practice standard; incorporation into existing standard; or discontinuation). States can, and often do, request an extension for the evaluation if there has not been sufficient time to evaluate the practice or if there have been limited installations of the practice to evaluate.