

2021 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
OCTOBER 16, 2020

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Q. Can an individual participate in multiple proposals?
A. Yes, individuals can participate in multiple proposals. While there is no limit on the number of proposal in which an individual can participate, they should ensure that they have adequate capacity to effectively participate in multiple Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) projects and that the combined time will not exceed 100 percent full time equivalent (FTE) if all proposals are awarded funds.
2. Q. What is a cooperating entity?
A. Cooperating entities are individuals and/or organizations an applicant will work with to plan and/or implement the proposed project, and who may receive a portion of the SCBGP funds and/or contribute cost share. Cooperating entities that will receive grant funds if a proposal is awarded funding should also be listed as contractors in the budget template.
3. Q. Is there a limit to the number of active SCBGP grants that one organization can have at a given time? Can current SCBGP grant recipients apply for funding in multiple grant years?
A. There is no limit on the number of active SCBGP grants that can be held by a single organization. However, before submitting multiple proposals, applicants should ensure their organization will have adequate capacity to effectively execute multiple SCBGP grants, if additional proposals are awarded funds.
4. Q. Can applicants submit additional attachments to the Concept Proposal phase like a letter of support?
A. No, only the required attachments as specified in the [Request for Concept Proposals \(RFCP\)](#) should be included in the concept proposal application. Projects that advance to the Grant Proposal phase may provide letters of support with their concept proposal application.
5. Q. Will recordings of the solicitation webinars be available to applicants?
A. Yes, links to the recordings of the webinar will be uploaded to [CDFA's SCBGP website](#) by Friday, October 9, 2020. PDF versions of the PowerPoint slides are also available upon request by sending an email to grants@cdfa.ca.gov.

New Questions: October 16, 2020

6. Q. Can new project personnel be added to the project in the grant proposal phase?
A. Yes, project personnel including the Project Director, Project Manager, Principal Investigators, cooperators, contractors, and other staff may be added in the grant proposal phase.
7. Q. Is there a minimum or maximum acreage requirement in order to qualify for the SCBGP?
A. No, SCBGP proposals do not have a minimum or maximum acreage requirement.

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8. Q. Is there a page limit for the Concept Proposal Budget and Outcome Measures Templates?
A. No, the Concept Proposal Budget and Outcome Measures Templates do not have page limits. However, applicants should be concise and the content provided should be appropriate, necessary, and responsive to the template.
9. Q. Where can applicants access the Outcome Measures and Budget Templates?
A. The required templates can be downloaded on the [CDFA SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) or from the application questionnaire in FFAST.
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ELIGIBILITY

1. Q. How can applicants determine whether a project is appropriate for the SCBGP?
A. To be appropriate for the SCBGP, projects must enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops, address at least one funding category priority identified in the [RFCP](#), and accomplish one outcome measure and indicator within the grant duration.

New Questions: October 16, 2020

2. Q. What is the System for Award Management? How do applicants check for an active exclusion?
A. The System for Award Management (SAM) is a federal system in which organizations register to do business with the U.S. government. To receive federal grant funds, applicant organizations must be registered in SAM at <https://sam.gov/>. Organizations with an active exclusion in SAM may have their projects disqualified. To check an organization's status, applicants will need to search the SAM database using the organization's name or Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.
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ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED ORGANIZATIONS

1. Q. Is a school district eligible to apply to the Additional Assistance for Historically Underrepresented Organizations (Additional Assistance) program?
A. No, public school districts and individual public schools are typically considered local government agencies and are therefore not eligible to apply directly to the Additional Assistance program. However, an individual school could participate as a collaborator, partner, or contractor on an application from an eligible organization. A public middle school or school district would also be eligible to submit a conventional grant proposal.

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New Questions: October 16, 2020

2. Q. Can organizations represented by a fiscal agent or fiscal sponsorship apply for the Additional Assistance funding categories? What if the fiscal agent or sponsor has already received SCBGP funding?
- A. Yes, organizations represented by a fiscal agent or fiscal sponsor can apply to the Additional Assistance funding categories if the sponsored organization has not previously received funding and meets all other requirements for the Additional Assistance Program, even if the fiscal agent or sponsor has already received SCBGP funding.
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FAAST APPLICATION

1. Q. Are applicants required to enter the project latitude/longitude in FAAST?
- A. No, applicants are not required to enter the project latitude/longitude in FAAST. However, applicants must provide the county where the majority of project work will be done.
2. Q. Can applicants add additional users to a proposal in FAAST?
- A. Yes, applicants can add users to a proposal by entering their username(s) in the box provided on the “Add User” tab. Individuals added via the “Add User” tab will only have access to that specific proposal.
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FUNDING AREA AND FUNDING CATEGORY

New Questions: October 16, 2020

1. Q. Can an applicant submit proposals to multiple funding areas and funding categories?
- A. Yes, applicants can submit multiple proposals to different funding areas or categories as well as within the same funding area or category so long as each proposal is unique.
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PROGRAM PRIORITIES

No questions at this time.

PROJECT PURPOSE

No questions at this time.

PRIOR-YEAR SCBGP PROJECTS

1. Q. Do applicants need to indicate that their proposal builds upon a prior-year SCBGP project, even if that project was completed several years ago?

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- A. Yes, if a proposal builds upon any previously funded SCBGP project, the applicant must reference the project number and include a description of how this project builds upon the previous project without duplicating costs or activities.
2. Q. Where can applicants find information on previously awarded projects?
A. Applicants can view previously awarded projects on the SCBGP website at:
http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/PastGrantAwards.html.
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PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

1. Q. How can applicants demonstrate project sustainability?
A. Proposals should adequately demonstrate that project activities can continue beyond the grant duration, or that the project will continue to benefit the specialty crop industry after the grant has ended. If a project will create a new program for example, explain how the program will continue to exist after the end of the grant period. Likewise, if a project will not continue beyond the grant duration, the proposal should explain how the results of the project will benefit the industry after the project is complete. For example, a research project may post findings on a website that will continue to be accessible after the grant duration.
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PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

1. Q. How should applicants estimate the number of beneficiaries that will be impacted by a project?
A. The number of beneficiaries indicated in the Project Beneficiaries response should be a realistic, reasonable, trackable, and reportable estimate of the direct or primary beneficiaries of the project results that will be impacted within the grant duration. For example, stating that a project will benefit the entire specialty crop industry is likely not an appropriate response for this question.

New Questions: October 16, 2020

2. Q. How are project beneficiaries defined? How should the number of beneficiaries be determined?
A. Project beneficiaries are the people, groups, commodities, etc. that will directly benefit from a project. The number of project beneficiaries should include only the number of individuals, groups, commodities, etc. that will receive a benefit from the project that is direct, measurable, trackable, and reportable within the project duration. Generally, growers, producers, groups, commodities, etc. that will directly benefit from a project should be counted individually. Employees of these organizations who may receive an ancillary benefit from the project results are not typically considered project beneficiaries. However, if employees of an organization will receive a direct benefit from the project activities, such as training, then they could be counted as direct project beneficiaries.

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OUTCOME MEASURES

1. Q. Have there been updates to the Outcome Measures template this year?
A. Yes, for the 2021 SCBGP grant cycle, there is only one description box required for each outcome measure instead of two. CDFA has removed the "Description of Activities to Monitor and Report on Outcomes" textbox. Any activity to monitor and report on outcomes can be included in the "Description of Data Collection Methods" section.

2. Q. Do applicants need to address all indicators and sub-indicators for a selected outcome measure?
A. No, applicants must select at least one indicator and/or sub-indicator for each outcome selected but are not required to address all indicators and/or sub-indicators for each outcome.

New Questions: October 16, 2020

3. Q. When do projects need to select Outcome Measure 1: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales?
A. Outcome Measure 1 must be selected for any project with a marketing and promotion component, defined as involving efforts to sell, advertise, promote, market, and generate publicity, attract new customers, or raise customer awareness for specialty crops or a specialty crop venue. This includes projects that focus on educating consumers about the nutritional benefit of a specialty crop for the purpose of increasing awareness or sales.

WORK PLAN AND OUTREACH

No questions at this time.

BUDGET TEMPLATE

1. Q. Can equipment that is typically considered general purpose be purchased with grant funds if it will be used for research purposes?
A. Generally, only equipment that is research, scientific, or technical in nature, with a cost per unit that equals or exceeds \$5,000 is considered scientific research equipment and considered an allowable cost. However, it may be possible to purchase general purpose equipment using grant funds if that equipment is used solely for research purposes. Eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, more than one single commercial organization, commercial product, or individual must benefit from the use of the equipment. Applicants are also able to rent general purpose equipment when costs are reasonable and necessary to the project. For more information regarding general purpose and scientific research equipment, please reference pages 3-5 of the [2021 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](#).

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2. Q. Is computer software considered scientific research equipment?
A. No, computer software with a cost of \$5,000 or more per unit is considered general purpose equipment and is unallowable. Computer software with a cost of less than \$5,000 per unit is typically considered a supply and is allowable if costs are reasonable and the software is necessary for the completion of a project. Please reference pages 6-7 of the [2021 Allowable and Unallowable Cost and Activities Table](#) for more information.
3. Q. What is considered program income?
A. Program income is any income generated during the grant period by a supported project activity or as a direct result of the award. Program income cannot be used as income or net profit and program income generated during the grant period must be used toward allowable activities in accordance with the [2021 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](#). As an example, program income can be used to supplement approved grant activities such as conducting additional workshops or training programs that were not budgeted in the grant.

New Questions: October 16, 2020

4. Q. Are contractors allowed to charge indirect costs? If so, is there a maximum amount? Where should these costs be listed in the budget template?
A. Each contractor may claim indirect costs up to 8 percent of their respective total personnel costs. Each contractor's requested indirect costs should be included within the amount requested for category F Contractual. Do not combine contractual indirect with applicant indirect in category H.
5. Q. Can applicants follow their own organization's established travel policy guidelines?
A. In developing a travel budget, applicants should apply the lesser of the rates established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) or the applicant's established travel policy.
6. Q. How can applicants determine if specific costs are allowable under the SCBGP?
A. Costs must be necessary and reasonable for the performance and administration of the grant and be in conformance with the applicable federal cost principles and award terms and conditions. To determine the allowability of a cost, applicants should reference the federal cost principles appropriate to their organization type. Information about and links to the federal cost principles can be found in the [RFCP](#). In addition, applicants can reference the [2021 Allowable and Unallowable Cost and Activities Table](#) which provides overall guidance for the handling of common costs and includes requirements specific to the SCBGP.

COST SHARE

No questions at this time.

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REVIEW PROCESS

1. Q. When will applicants find out if their proposal has been selected to move forward to the Grant Proposal phase?
A. Applicants will be notified whether or not their proposal will advance to the Grant Proposal Phase in January 2021.

 2. Q. Is there a potential for the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to release a new Request for Applications (RFA) with different requirements than that current program criteria?
A. CDFA does not anticipate any major changes to the program with the release of the 2021 RFA by USDA, however, if necessary, CDFA will attempt to prepare, and make available a supplement to the RFCP to advise applicants of any changes to the program upon publication of the new RFA. CDFA and all applicants will be subject to the terms and conditions of the new RFA, and substantial changes could potentially affect the feasibility of proposals.
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GRANT MANAGEMENT

No questions at this time.
