

~2009~
**SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM – FARM BILL
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

- 1) Is there a match and/or in-kind contribution requirement?
No. Matching funds and in-kind contributions are not required, but are strongly encouraged.

- 2) Will matching funds and in-kind contributions need to be documented during Phase I, Concept Proposal?
There are two ways matching/ in-kind contributions will be documented:
 - 1) When submitting a Concept Proposal on the Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool (FAAST), applicants will be asked a general question pertaining to the availability of match/in-kind contributions, which includes project partnerships and multiple partnerships if applicable.
 - 2) The Budget Template (Attachment A) includes a column for match/in-kind contributions.

The source of match or in-kind contributions does not need to be included in the Concept Proposal application.

- 3) How do applicants submit Concept Proposals? Are there page limitations and/or format requirements?
Page 9 of the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) refers applicants to the web based FAAST system available at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has partnered with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to host Concept Proposal submission process for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). Applicants will submit Concept Proposals through FAAST. Once applicants successfully register for a FAAST account, they can begin the application submission process. The application on FAAST is in a question and answer format. Character limits are indicated for responses to each question, which automatically determines the length of the Concept Proposal.

- 4) Will CDFA advise potential applicants whether or not the Concept Proposal project meets the SCBGP requirements?
In order to maintain the integrity of a competitive grant process, CDFA is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific proposals. The NOFA provides the SCBGP requirements for eligible projects, describes Funding Areas and suggests Areas of Emphasis.

- 5) Can grant funds be used for projects that benefit a single company, individual or commercial entity?
In accordance with the federal regulations, SCBGP funds shall be used for projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops that benefit the specialty crop industry as a whole. Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual because these projects do not enhance specialty crop industry competitiveness.

- 6) How many Concept Proposals can one organization submit?
There is no limit. Eligible applicants can submit applications for numerous Concept Proposals.

- 7) Are private colleges eligible to apply?
Yes, private colleges are eligible to apply for SCBGP funds.

- 8) What is the Indirect Cost Rate allowed?
The Indirect Cost Rate allowed is 3%. Please refer to page 3 of the NOFA for the federal definition of "Indirect Costs."
- 9) What is the Review Criteria for the Concept Proposals?
There is a Concept Proposal Review Criteria Form on CDFA website at: www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants
- 10) Will CDFA provide individual feedback to Concept Proposal applicants not invited to participate in Phase II, Grant Proposal?
During the solicitation process CDFA **will not** provide feedback to individuals that have not been invited to participate in Phase II, Grant Proposal.
- 11) Is there are list of projects approved in the past?
Please visit CDFA's website: <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants>
- 12) What other resources are available on the 2009 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program?
USDA, AMS website: <http://www.ams.usda.gov>
- 13) Is the latitude and longitude of a Concept Proposal project location required to submit an application on FFAST?
This information is not required. Please refer to page 11 of the NOFA.
- 14) Are applicants required to submit information under the 'Agency Contacts' tab when submitting an application on FFAST?
This information is not required. Please refer to page 11 of the NOFA
- 15) How many Funding Areas can an applicant select on FFAST if a Concept Proposal addresses more than one Funding Area?
Applicants must choose one Funding Area that the Concept Proposal addresses. However, applicants are not limited to the number of different Concept Proposals that can be submitted under a single or various Funding Areas.
- 16) Will personal services costs be reimbursed for personnel, including subcontractors, which reside or have their business or educational affiliation outside California?
No, personal services costs, including costs for subcontractor personal services, will only be reimbursed with SCBGP funds for personnel that reside or have their business or educational affiliation in California. However, there are no residential or business/educational affiliation requirements governing in-kind or matching funds that pay for personal services.
- 17) Who may submit a Concept Proposal(s) on behalf of an organization?
Organizations are responsible for deciding who should submit a Concept Proposal on their behalf.
- 18) Are SCBGP funds considered federal funds because the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awards the funds to California or State funds because CDFA awards the funds to Grant Recipients?
The SCBGP funds are considered federal funds because they are authorized by federal legislation through the Food, Conservation and energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill).

- 19) Can SCBGP funds be used as match for another federally funded project?
The type of match that may be claimed for a federally funded project is determined by the requirements and regulations governing the particular federal program funds.
- 20) Can an organization that is not a non-profit, for-profit, university, local, state or federal government entity, submit a 2009 SCBGP Concept Proposal?
Only exempt 501(c)3 non-profits, licensed for-profits, universities, local, state and federal government entities may submit 2009 SCBGP Concept Proposals.
- 21) Will future SCBGP funds be available for organization or entities that are not eligible for 2009 SCBGP funds?
Yes, CDFA anticipates SCBGP funds will be available through 2012. Organizations and entities that do not meet eligibility requirements for 2009 SCBGP funds may submit Concept Proposals for future SCBGP funds *if* eligibility requirements are met when CDFA announces the availability of those funds.
- 22) What is the level of detail required in the Concept Proposal Budget Template, including subcontract costs?
The level of detail required in the line item section of Concept Proposal Budget Template is the total amount budgeted for each line item category. The level of detail required in the section titled "Budget Detail" should give a brief description of anticipated costs specific to the proposal. For example, anticipated number and type of subcontractors included in the budget under the line item category "Contractors/Consultants" or description of equipment included in the budget under "Operating Expenses."
- 23) When calculating in-kind match, is there a procedure or requirement as to method and amount at which to value time contributions?
Volunteer services furnished by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor may be counted as cost sharing or matching if the service is an integral and necessary part of an approved project or program. Rates for volunteer services shall be consistent with those paid for similar work in the recipient's organization. In those instances in which the required skills are not found in the recipient organization, rates shall be consistent with those paid for similar work in the labor market in which the recipient competes for the kind of services involved. In either case, paid fringe benefits that are reasonable, allowable, and allocable may be included in the valuation.
- 24) Are organizations that were awarded SCBG funds in Round I or Round II in 2008 eligible to apply for the 2009 SCBG Program?
Yes. Organizations awarded 2008 Round I and/or Round II SCBGP funds are eligible to apply for 2009 SCBGP funds.
- 25) Can CDFA advance funds or reimburse invoices for two separate entities under one SCBGP award?
No, CDFA cannot advance funds or reimburse invoices for two separate entities under one SCBGP award. CDFA can only enter into a Grant Agreement with a single entity and will advance funds to or reimburse invoices from the entity named on the Grant Agreement. The entity awarded a Grant Agreement is responsible for reimbursing subcontractors.

26) Should all matching funds that are anticipated, but not guaranteed be acknowledged in the Concept Proposal?

Yes, a description of all guaranteed and anticipated matching funds from all sources should be described in the Concept Proposal under FFAST Question No. 8.

27) Can the budget for the Concept Proposal be an estimate and the budget for the Grant Proposal be the actual cost of the project?

The Concept Proposal should be as accurate and concrete as possible. CDFA expects that the Concept Proposal budget may vary slightly from the Grant Proposal budget. However, applicants should keep in mind that major revisions between Phase I -Concept Proposal and Phase II -Grant Proposal may affect review criteria scoring results.