

# 2009 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Phase II, Grant Proposal



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – Rev: 6/19/09

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### 1. What is the required page length of the Workplan attachment?

There was a discrepancy with the page limit for the “Workplan” attachment between FFAST and the Grant Proposal Guidance. As specified in the Grant Proposal Guidance, the Workplan should not exceed 2 pages. The discrepancy has been corrected in FFAST.

### 2. Can Grant Proposal projects start/ end date(s) vary from the Concept Proposal?

Grant Proposal projects may vary from the dates submitted in the Concept Proposal; however, Grant Proposal projects cannot begin earlier than October 1, 2009 and must be completed by June 30, 2012.

### 3. Can modifications be made from the Concept Proposal to either increase or decrease the amount requested in the Grant Proposal?

Modifications to either increase or decrease the amount of grant funds requested are acceptable, providing the modification does not change the original Scope of Work outline in the Concept Proposal. Any variances must be justified in the Budget Narrative.

### 4. Where do I attach the supporting documents (Workplan, Budget and Budget Narrative, Matching Fund and/or In-Kind Contributions etc.) to submit with my FFAST application?

In FFAST under the “Application Attachments” tab, a drop down menu with pre-populated attachment titles is listed that are specific to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) solicitation. Select the appropriate attachment from the drop down menu, upload an attachment and name the attachment accordingly, as indicated in the Grant Proposal Guidance.

### 5. How do I determine the percentage of match (cash and/or in-kind) contributions?

The percentage of matching funds and/or in-kind contributions should be calculated based on the percentage of **total project cost, not the grant amount requested**. For example, if requesting \$100,000 in SCBGP funds and \$42,857 in matching funds are secured, the percent of match is 30% of the total project cost. The following formula is used for calculating the above example:

- Total match cost / Total project cost = Percentage match
- \$42,857 / \$142,857 = 30%

### 6. Whose Resumes and/or Curriculum Vitae should be submitted as an attachment with the Grant Proposal?

Only Resumes/Curriculum Vitae of Project Directors, Co-Project Directors, and collaborators who will receive a portion of the SCBGP funds associated with the Grant Proposal should be attached. Project Directors and Co-Project Directors are individual(s) responsible for managing (or in some instances, performing) the activities describes in the workplan.

### 7. Is there a limit to the number of Resumes/ Curriculum Vitae that can be attached?

No. There is no limit to the number of Resumes/Curriculum Vitae to be attached; however, each Resume/Curriculum should not exceed 3 pages.



**8. Will Resumes and/or Curriculum Vitae for the work teams be accepted if attached in a different font size other than 12 point font?**

Yes, only Resumes/Curriculum Vitae will be accepted if attached in a different font size. All other required attachments must be submitted in the font size indicated in the Grant Proposal Guidance.

**Friday 6/12/09 Update**

**9. Can contractors be considered as partners?**

Yes, contractors can be considered as partners.

**10. What is the difference between letters of support and letters documenting in-kind contributions?**

Letters of support are from those organizations that do not have a specific role in the project, but are generally supportive of the project. Letters documenting in-kind contributions are from those organizations that have an active role in the project and are contributing staff and/or other resources (but not cash) to achieve the outcomes of the project.

**11. What is the significance of the request for supplying information on additional funding from federal or state agencies? Will this affect potential funding or is it for information only?**

CDFA, as well as USDA are requesting this for informational purposes and to avoid “double-dipping”. An applicant is not allowed to receive SCBGP funds to support the same project activities funded by grant funds from other state or federal agencies. Applicants are allowed to receive SCBGP funds to support different activities within a project funded through multiple grant sources. If a project will be funded through multiple grant sources, the Grant Proposal should clearly delineate exactly what activities the SCBGP funds will support. CDFA reserves the right to deny project funding if it is determined that funds are being used for the same purpose.

**12. With regards to Section G, Item 6.h: Limitations and Restrictions, Capital Expenditures: It is stated that capital expenditures of \$5,000 or more require prior approval of CDFA. When is approval required – prior to submission of the final proposal, prior to actual expenditure, or is approval implied by virtue of acceptance of the Concept Proposal?**

Once a project proponent receives an award notice from CDFA, capital expenditures of \$5,000 or more will be considered approved.

**14. The OMB Circulars state that memberships, subscriptions and professional activity costs are allowable expenses. Meeting expenses such as meals, facility rental, etc. are allowable costs when the primary purpose is the dissemination of technical information. Are these costs eligible for reimbursement? Can they be counted as a match?**

All allowable costs are eligible for reimbursement if they meet the criteria specified in the OMB Circulars. The OMB Circulars provide basic guidelines for determining whether specific costs are allowable under a grant award. The OMB Circulars also explain how to categorize costs between direct and indirect costs and provide a description of typical direct and indirect costs. The costs may be counted as match if they are incurred in support of the

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Grant Proposal project and paid through another source or in-kind services. Costs directly reimbursed with SCBGP funds cannot be counted as match funds.

**15. Are applicants required to state Latitude/Longitude and Watershed for the SCBGP or are these used primarily for RWQCB projects instead?**

*Requests for Latitude and Longitude*

Please leave blank; this information is not required.

*Watershed:*

Please leave blank; this information is not required.

*County:*

Enter county/counties.

*Responsible RWQCB*

Select "statewide".

**16. Will reviewers the Phase II – Grant Proposals only read material from Phase II or will they also refer back to the Phase I – Concept Proposals?**

The reviewers will review and score Phase II – Grant Proposals based on the information in the Grant Proposal. However, they will have access to and may refer back to the Phase I – Concept Proposal to assist in their review. The reviewers may check to ensure that the Grant Proposal is a more detailed version of the same project described in the Concept Proposal.

**17. Our project will be funded, in part, through a large amount of in-kind services. Should the resumes for the work team be from all team members or only from team members supported by the SCBGP funds.**

Please refer to Question No. 6 above.

**18. Will the recent Executive Order S-09-09 issued by the Governor on State Contracts impact awarding SCBGP grant funds to successful Grant Proposal applicants?**

CDFA does not expect that Executive Order S-09-09 (<http://gov.ca.gov/executive-order/12460/>) to impact awarding SCBGP grant funds to successful Grant Proposal applicants.

**Tuesday 6/16/09 Update**

**19. Please describe what constitutes a timeline in the Project Oversight Section and provide examples if possible.**

Below is an example of a Project Oversight Section response:

The Director of Marketing and Development, John Doe, will work directly with the individuals identified as representing each partnering entity. Mr. Doe will coordinate the execution of cooperative agreements with each participating entity and monitor progress throughout the year long grant period. He will contact the principles of each project by phone at least once during each quarter to determine if the projects are on-track.

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**20. Can Federal funds be used as a match? What about funding from USDA Farmer's Market Promotion Program? Since matching funds are not required under this grant, only encouraged, is it acceptable for other federal funds to be used as match?**

Yes, it is acceptable for federal funds to be used as match; however, please see the response to Question No. 11 above to ensure that using federal funds as match is appropriate and that SCBGP funded activities and federally funded match activities are documented separately.

**21. Can the name of the project under which the Phase I application was submitted be changed as long as the details of the project remain essentially the same?**

Yes, name changes to projects are allowed, provided that the scope of the work does not change.

**22. If a Concept Proposal was submitted under the Nutrition Funding Area but did NOT address Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) systems how should applicants respond to Question 1 - Eligibility - YES or NO?**

Please respond as "No."

**23. If results from a published study are referenced within our grant submission, where should we reference that study? Do references have to fit inside a textbox?**

No, references do not have to fit inside a textbox. You may attach a reference sheet to FFAST entitled "References" in a 2003 MS Word document, 12 point font with 1 inch margins and no longer than 1 page.

**24. How can matching funds from revenue earned through contracts that are currently or will be in the re-negotiation or signage process be documented?**

The Director, Chief Financial Officer or other executive manager in a similar position may document the source and amount of match in letter form.

**25. How should the performance monitoring/data collection plan activity be addressed in the Workplan if an expected measurable outcome will happen outside the Grant Proposal project period?**

Please refer to pages 8-9 of the CDFA SCBG Invitation to Submit Grant Proposal – Grant Proposal Guidance document.

**26. Question 2, Potential Impact, of the Grant Proposal Score Criteria asks "Does the number of project beneficiaries justify the investment?" Does the USDA or CDFA have any benchmarks or ratio as a standard (i.e. \$5,000 for every producer who benefits from the program)? Will the reviewers be provided specific guidance on rating this criterion?**

USDA and CDFA have not set benchmarks or ratios as a standard for Potential Impacts. Please refer to Appendix B of the CDFA SCBG Invitation to Submit Grant Proposal – Grant Proposal Guidance document for the Grant Proposal Score Criteria that will be used by the SCBGP Advisory Committee. Please also refer to pages 7 and 8 of the Grant Proposal Guidance Document for Examples of Potential Impact Statements.

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**27. Please clarify why projects may have an October 1<sup>st</sup> start date if Subrecipient Grant Agreements (Agreements) are not executed until October/November?**

CDFA expects USDA to award SCBGP funds by October 1, 2009. Although Agreements can be effective as soon as an award is made, they will most likely be prepared and executed in October or November. Although you should wait until an Agreement is *executed* to begin work supported by SCBGP funds, match or in-kind services beginning at the time of the Agreement's effective date will be applicable to the grant period.

**28. Will advance payment requests for the first 90 days of grant activities be allowed?**

Grant Recipients may request up-to a twenty-five percent (25%) advance of the total annual budgeted amount on a quarterly basis. The request must be submitted in writing and signed by an authorized official. Second and subsequent advance payment requests will be denied until CDFA receives invoices against all previous advance payments. An advance payment to cover project costs incurred during the final quarter of the project is not allowed.

**29. Can an organization receive multiple grant awards if it received more than one Invitation to Submit a Grant Proposal in different funding areas?**

Yes, organizations may receive multiple awards in the same funding area or in different funding areas.

**30. If a project includes a field-based trial, are 'in-kind' contributions classified as all operations that are conducted for producing the crop, including those that are specific to the proposed research? Should all 'in-kind' contributions be itemized, or is it sufficient for the grower to provide a value indicating the cost per acre to farm the crop?**

To document growers' in-kind contributions, please provide a reasonable estimate of the cost per acre to grow the crop. Production costs for most crops are available through the UC Cooperative Extension.

**31. If a Grant Proposal is not awarded 2009 SCBGP funds, will there be opportunities to apply for future funding?**

Yes, according to Section 10109 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Public Law 110-246, federal funding for the SCBGP will be available through 2012. California should receive slightly more than the 2009 amount annually through 2012. CDFA plans to announce the availability of 2010 SCBGP funds on its website in Fall 2009.

**32. Will CDFA accept electronic signatures on FFAST Grant Proposal submissions?**

Yes, electronic signatures are the acceptable signature method on FFAST Grant Proposal submissions. However, CDFA will require original signatures on Subrecipient Grant Agreements.

**Friday 6/19/09 Update**

**33. What are the Budget Years (BY) time frames?**

A Budget Year (BY) is based on the 12 months following the Agreement effective date. For example, if an Agreement effective date is October 1, 2009 then the first BY ends

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September 30, 2010. All 2009 Agreements end June 30, 2012 in order for CDFA to meet SCBGP closure requirements.

**34. Is there a page limit for the budget narrative?**

No, the Budget Narrative does not have a page limitation. While applicants must use the Budget Narrative Template provided, additional rows may be inserted under the budget categories if necessary, to demonstrate in paragraph form, that costs are reasonable and adequate for the proposed work.

**35. Is there a limit to the number of Letters of Support that can be attached?**

No, there is no limit to the number of Letters of Support that can be attached.

**36. Are all responses limited to 1000 characters?**

No, all responses are not limited to 1000 characters. The FFAST application specifies the character limits for each question.

**37. When completing the Application in FFAST, what information should be included under the “Agency Contacts” tab?**

Applicants are not required to provide contact information under the Agency Contacts tab.

**38. What is required in the Budget Narrative for each project participant?**

Indicate the title(s), percent of full time equivalent (FTE), and corresponding salary for project participant. For example, if a project participant’s salary is \$50,000 and they are participating 50% of their time on the project, the total budgeted salary cost would be \$25,000.

**39. Should salary and benefit information in the Budget Narrative be included for unfunded participants as well as funded participants?**

No, only salary and benefit information for funded participants should be included in the Budget Narrative.

**40. How should cooperators that will receive funding be included in the Budget?**

Personnel employed by the grantee should be listed under the Personnel line item and those employed elsewhere should be listed under the Contractual Budget line item in the Budget.