

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE II, GRANT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
MARCH 17, 2016

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Q. When are the grant proposals due?
A. Grant proposals must be submitted through the State Water Resources Control Board's Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool (FAAST) by 11:59 pm PDT on Sunday, March 20, 2016. Late submissions will not be accepted.

2. Q. Can project activities occur outside of the grant period of October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2019, and if so, can the costs of those activities be charged to the grant?
A. Activities that occur outside of the grant duration and their related expenses cannot be charged to the grant. Applicants may use cost sharing to fund activities prior to the start of the grant duration; however, activities occurring before grant awards are announced would be subject to the risk that grant funding is not subsequently received.

3. Q. Will CDFA provide answers to specific questions regarding the eligibility of grant proposals or assist applicants in selecting a program priority and/or an outcome measure and indicator?
A. To maintain the integrity of the competitive grant process, CDFA is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with feedback on specific proposals during the solicitation process. CDFA cannot provide guidance on the most appropriate program priority and/or outcome measure(s) and indicator(s) for a grant proposal.

4. Q. Can substantial changes be made to the project described in the concept proposal?
A. Applicants may revise and refine their project during the grant proposal phase, as some degree of change is anticipated in response to grant proposal requirements and feedback provided. However, substantial changes are discouraged and CDFA cannot anticipate how changes to the scope of a project will be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.

5. Q. Can project titles change from the concept proposal to the grant proposal?
A. Project titles can be updated from the concept proposal to the grant proposal. Access the General Information tab in FAAST to update the project title.

6. Q. How does one access the Technical Review Committee and CDFA Administrative Review Feedback for their concept proposal in FAAST and can CDFA provide clarification on the feedback?
A. To view the concept proposal feedback, log onto FAAST at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/> using your username and password and click on Submitted Applications. Select the project's title and click on the Feedback tab. To maintain the integrity and competitiveness of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP), CDFA is unable to provide applicants with clarification on feedback provided in FAAST.

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7. Q. Where are the Cost Principles for Federal Grants (2 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 200 and Federal Acquisition Regulation [FAR] Subpart 31.2) located?
- A. [Links to 2 CFR 200 and FAR 31.2 can be found on page 3 of the 2016 SCBGP Grant Proposal Instructions.](#) [2 CFR 200](#) applies to state, local or Indian tribal governments, non-profit organizations, and colleges and universities. [FAR 31.2](#) applies to profitmaking organizations.
8. Q. When are 2016 SCBGP awards announced and can CDFA inform applicants of the status of their application prior to the announcement?
- A. [It is anticipated that the United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) will announce 2016 SCBGP awards in October 2016. USDA has final approval of all proposals awarded funding; therefore, CDFA cannot advise applicants of their project status before awards are announced.](#)
9. Q. Can applicants be awarded funding for more than one SCBGP project?
- A. [Applicants may be awarded funding for more than one SCBGP project, however, duplication of costs or activities is not permitted. Also, applicants should ensure they have adequate capacity to effectively manage multiple SCBGP awards.](#)
10. Q. Can applicants use any prior year grant proposal templates?
- A. [Applicants should only use the 2016 grant proposal templates provided in the 2016 SCBGP Grant Proposal Instructions and in FFAST.](#)
11. Q. There is no place to enter a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number in FFAST. Is this still a requirement, along with registration on the System for Award Management (SAM)?
- A. [A DUNS number and registration on the SAM is not required prior to submitting a grant proposal; thus, it has been removed from the grant proposal application. However, successful 2016 applicants will be required to provide the applicant organization's DUNS number before SCBGP funds are awarded. Applicants are highly encouraged to begin the free registration process now.](#)
12. Q. How does an applicant organization obtain a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number?
- A. [To obtain a DUNS number, applicants should visit the D&B website and select "Click here to request your D-U-N-S Number via the Web." Successful 2016 applicants will be required to provide the applicant organization's DUNS number before SCBGP funds are awarded. Applicants are highly encouraged to begin the free registration process now.](#)
13. Q. Is there a recording or PowerPoint available of the 2016 SCBGP Grant Proposal webinar? When will it be posted?
- A. [A recording of the 2016 Grant Proposal webinar and copies of the PowerPoint presentations have been posted to the SCBGP website, \[www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants\]\(http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants\). The answers to questions received during the webinar will be incorporated into the weekly Questions & Answers \(Q&A\) posted to CDFA's website.](#)

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14. Q. How can an applicant address administrative and/or technical feedback for a section in the concept proposal phase that was not included in the grant proposal application?
- A. Generally, the administrative and technical feedback provide guidance for areas that could have been improved and/or expanded upon in the concept proposal. Some questions in the concept proposal phase do not carry over to the grant proposal questionnaire due to changes in USDA's project template; however, it may be possible to incorporate feedback received within the other sections of the grant proposal depending on the nature of the project.
15. Q. Where can an applicant download the required templates for the 2016 SCBGP Grant application?
- A. Applicants can download the required templates by logging onto FFAST at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/> and accessing their application. The templates are also linked to the [2016 SCBGP Grant Proposal Instructions](#).
16. Q. If a proposal builds upon work funded by another state or federal grant program, should this be disclosed in the SCBGP proposal?
- A. It may be necessary to provide this information to demonstrate that SCBGP funds will not be used to duplicate efforts of another federal or state program. This information may also be useful to assist the technical review committee during their review.
17. Q. Can an applicant submit two proposals that address the same issue?
- A. Applicants may submit more than one proposal, but each proposal should be for a unique project. Submitting the same grant proposal over multiple funding categories is prohibited. If an applicant submits more than one proposal to address the same issue within the specialty crop industry, the applicant should clarify how each project supplements rather than duplicates efforts of the other and detail the tracking mechanisms and processes in place to ensure the SCBGP does not fund duplicate costs and activities across proposals. CDFA cannot advise how this would be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.
18. Q. Will answers to the concept proposal questionnaire be considered during the grant proposal review?
- A. During grant proposal review, the Technical Review Committee is only required to review the answers and attachments of the grant proposal. Applicants should not rely on any answers provided during the concept proposal phase to supplement their grant proposal answers or attachments. The grant proposal questionnaire was devised to allow applicants ample opportunity to provide comprehensive detail about their projects and should be treated as a standalone document.
19. Q. Are bus rental fees allowable?
- A. Bus rental fees may be allowable if they are required to accomplish the goals and objectives of the project. Costs for the rental fees should be included in the Budget Narrative, in section G. Other.

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20. Q. Can specialty crops be purchased for nutrition education projects which involve food preparation demonstration and tastings?
A. Specialty crops can be purchased for food preparation demonstrations and tastings if the primary purpose of the project is nutrition education. However, costs for giving away food are unallowable.
21. Q. Within Project Objectives, what is meant by “intended results?”
A. Intended results refers to the goals of the project. Within the Project Objectives, applicants should clearly describe the project goals and objectives. Project activities detailed within the Project Objectives template should directly link to the intended results of the project.
22. Q. Can applicants make changes to any of the required templates?
A. Applicants are asked to complete each template per the instructions provided. Within the Budget Narrative, Project Objectives, and Cost Sharing templates, applicants may add rows at their own discretion based on project needs. Portions of the Outcome Measures template are locked, and applicants may only enter content into the text fields specified. It is not necessary to delete unused sections of the Budget Narrative or Outcome Measures templates.

New Questions: March 17, 2016

23. Q. Can an applicant withdraw their grant proposal from consideration and, if so, how?
A. All applicants are free to withdraw their grant proposals from consideration at any time, for any reason. If you have not yet submitted your grant proposal in FFAST, simply leave the application unsubmitted in the system. If you have already submitted your grant proposal in FFAST, the Project Director or Project Manager listed in the application must email grants@cdfa.ca.gov to formally request that the proposal be withdrawn from consideration. Any proposals withdrawn will not be reviewed by CDFA or the Technical Review Committee.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Q. Where can applicants access information regarding the eligibility of a particular crop or commodity?
A. Applicants can access a list of eligible specialty crops on the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service website:
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbqp/specialty-crop>
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FIXED AMOUNT AWARDS

1. Q. Do fixed amount award applicants complete the same questionnaire in FFAST as other applicants to the program?
A. Fixed amount award applicants must complete the same questionnaire in FFAST for CDFA to conduct an administrative review of the proposal and for the Technical Review Committee to complete a merit based review.

 2. Q. Is it necessary for fixed amount award applicants to complete the grant proposal Budget Narrative?
A. Fixed amount awards are based on outcomes achieved rather than actual costs incurred; however, costs associated with these awards must comply with the federal cost principles, USDA program requirements and CDFA program requirements. A complete Budget Narrative, along with completion of the Fixed Amount Awards Objectives Schedule Table at the bottom of the Budget Narrative, are necessary to determine the allowability and reasonableness of costs fixed amount award projects will incur to complete the project objectives.

 3. Q. If a grant is awarded to a fixed amount award proposal, how will the recipient receive funds for work completed?
A. The Budget Narrative includes a section for fixed amount award applicants to describe the outcomes of their proposal, and set a payment schedule based on expected costs to achieve these outcomes. The proposed payment schedule should align with the objectives described in the response to question three of the grant proposal application, Project Objectives, and include a deliverable that will evidence completion of each objective. As part of its agreement with SCBGP recipients, CDFA withholds 10 percent of funds until the final invoice and final performance report are received and/or any performance issues or audit findings are resolved. When developing the payment schedule, applicants should ensure that the final payment equals at least 10 percent of the total funds requested to ensure compliance with the Withhold Pending Closeout provision.

 4. Q. What is the benefit to applicants of applying for a fixed amount award?
A. The application requirements are the same for fixed amount awards and conventional grant proposals. However, if awarded funds, fixed amount award recipients have reduced administrative requirements and greater flexibility to achieve project outcomes.

 5. Q. Do fixed amount awards have the same start date as the conventional grant proposals?
A. The earliest start date for all 2016 SCBGP projects, including fixed amount awards, is October 1, 2016. Projects are allowed to start later than October 1, 2016 but must be completed by March 31, 2019. Please note that fixed amount awards can only be two years in duration.
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FAAST APPLICATION

1. Q. How does one access the grant proposal application in FAAST?
A. To view the grant proposal application, log onto FAAST at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/> using your username and password and click on Active Applications. Select the project's title and click on the Questionnaire tab.

2. Q. What are the computer system requirements necessary to use FAAST? May an applicant submit using a Mac computer platform?
A. The FAAST System Administrator recommends using a PC with Internet Explorer (6.0 or higher) and disabling pop-up blocking software while using FAAST. CDFA strongly encourages applicants to submit their grant proposals in advance of the deadline to ensure there is adequate time to resolve any technical issues that may arise. While many users have successfully submitted a complete application in the past using a Mac or browser other than Internet Explorer, CDFA is not responsible for any submission issues that may arise from applicants using non-recommended operating systems, such as a Mac, or browsers and will not grant deadline extensions.

3. Q. The Project Objectives, Outcome Measures, Budget Narrative, and Cost Sharing Summary templates are locked for editing when opened from the link in FAAST, how can this be resolved?
A. To properly complete the FAAST application templates, click on the file links and select "Save as." Save the files to your computer first, then open the file. You may then make edits and complete the document. The Outcome Measures template may open in read-only view. In this case, click on "View" then "Edit Document." Make sure you save your document after edits are made before uploading the completed attachment within the Attachment tab in FAAST.

4. Q. What templates are required to be submitted with the grant proposal application?
A. All projects are required to complete and attach three templates to the application in FAAST: Project Objectives, Outcome Measures, and Budget Narrative. For projects with matching funds or in-kind contributions, a fourth template is required: Cost Sharing. Failure to submit one or more of the required templates will result in disqualification.

5. Q. Can additional documents beyond the attachments required be submitted with an application?
A. There is no prohibition against attaching additional documents to the FAAST application. However, additional attachments should not be included if the intention is to circumvent FAAST character limits. The Technical Review Committee is not required to review any additional attachments beyond what is required. Applicants should not rely on additional attachments for project clarity or to supplement answers within the questionnaire.

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6. Q. **Revised March 17, 2016:** Are there character limits for each section of the grant proposal application in FFAST as well as page limits on the attachments?
- A. FFAST imposes text box character limits, clearly marked in red text at the bottom of each text box. The character limits range from 100 to 1,000 characters including letters, numbers, spaces, punctuation, and hidden formatting code. Figures and tables are not allowed. Please view the grant proposal questionnaire within FFAST for more detail. The Project Objectives template should not exceed two pages. There are no page limits set on the Outcome Measures, Budget Narrative, and Cost Sharing templates.
7. Q. **Revised March 17, 2016:** Have the Work Plan and Outreach Plan been removed from the grant proposal application?
- A. The Work Plan and Outreach Plan have been removed from the grant proposal application. However, multiple sections of the 2016 grant proposal application allow applicants to describe the activities of their project in thorough detail, including, but not limited to, sections within the Project Objectives, Budget Narrative, Outcome Measures, and Cost Sharing templates, as applicable.
8. Q. Can an applicant edit or make changes to the concept proposal application in FFAST?
- A. It is only necessary to review the proposal budget and project description in FFAST and make changes as needed. Other changes to the concept proposal application are discouraged and some sections of the concept proposal may be locked for editing.
9. Q. If a collaborator will contribute funds to a project, where should that be included in the application?
- A. Any outside funds for a project should be included in the Cost Sharing template and also listed under local cost match in FFAST. The applicant should describe the funding and the activities that will be funded.
10. Q. If an attachment is corrupt or unreadable will the proposal be disqualified?
- A. Proposals with missing, blank, unreadable, corrupt, or otherwise unusable attachments that are required will result in disqualification. A non-required attachment that is unreadable (e.g., a Letter of Support) will not result in disqualification; however, CDFA cannot anticipate how this would be viewed by the technical review committee.

New Questions: March 17, 2016

11. Q. Can responses provided in the concept proposal be duplicated in the grant proposal?
- A. There is no prohibition against using responses provided in the concept proposal in the grant proposal. However, please note that in many cases, the information requested in the grant proposal application differs from the concept proposal. CDFA cannot anticipate how duplicated responses will be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.
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FUNDING AREA AND FUNDING CATEGORY

1. Q. Can grant proposals be submitted under a different funding category than the concept proposal?
A. Grant proposals cannot be submitted under a different funding category than the concept proposal.
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PROGRAM PRIORITIES

1. Q. Applicants are asked to identify at least one of the 2016 SCBGP program priorities for their chosen funding category. What is meant by "identify"?
A. Applicants must make clear the specific program priority (or priorities) their project will address. For this section of the application, applicants should cite at least one program priority as described in the [2016 SCBGP Request for Concept Proposals](#) and explain how the project addresses this priority. Applicants should select the priority (or priorities) that are listed beneath the chosen funding category for their project.
 2. Q. Question 2, Program Priorities, asks applicants to identify at least one of the 2016 SCBGP program priorities for their chosen funding category as described in the Request for Concept Proposals (RFCP). What program priorities may applicants for fixed amount awards choose?
A. The two fixed amount awards funding categories, detailed on page 10 of the [2016 SCBGP RFCP](#), include only one program priority each. Applicants submitting a grant proposal within the Food Safety Modernization Act funding category should address how their project will assist California specialty crop farmers in meeting the standards developed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Applicants submitting a grant proposal within the Adaptation to Drought funding category should address how their project will assist specialty crop farmers in adapting to California's historic drought with methods that reduce water use or improve efficiency.
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PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Q. What's the difference between Project Objectives and Outcome Measures?
A. Project Objectives refer to specific goals the project hopes to achieve. The objectives of the project should be relevant to the chosen funding category and the identified program priority or priorities. Outcome Measures refer to specific performance data applicants will collect to assess the success of a project. A list of Outcome Measures and their relevant indicators has been provided within the Outcome Measures template. Applicants must select at least one of the eight outcomes listed, and at least one of the indicators listed underneath the selected outcome(s).

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2. Q. Where should research activities be explained in the grant proposal template?
A. Research activities to support the project objectives should be documented on the Project Objectives template. Research activities to monitor data and report project outcomes should be described in the Outcome Measures template.
 3. Q. Is there a limit to the amount of activities or information that can be included in the project objectives template?
A. The Project Objectives MS Word Document must be completed using 11 point font with 1 inch margins, and must not exceed two pages. It is up to the applicant to decide the amount of activities necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of their project.
 4. Q. If the same activities contribute to multiple objectives, should they be repeated under each project objective?
A. Applicants should include all activities necessary to accomplish the stated project objective(s).
 5. Q. Are applicants required to provide the timeframe for when activities will occur within the project objectives template?
A. Because the project objectives are not based on yearly activities, timeframes are not required in Project Objectives template but should be provided in justification section of the Budget Narrative.
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PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

1. Q. What is meant by "project beneficiaries," and how can an applicant estimate the number of beneficiaries that will be impacted by a project?
A. Project beneficiaries are the people, groups, commodities, etc. that benefit from the project. CDFA is unable to advise applicants regarding the relevance and/or expected number of their project's beneficiaries.

New Questions: March 17, 2016

2. Q. Can more than one type of project beneficiary be included in FFAST?
A. If a project will have more than one type of beneficiary, provide the total estimated number of project beneficiaries in the first text box in the Project Beneficiaries section in FFAST. In the following text box, provide a description of the different types of beneficiaries and the estimated number of each type.
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SPECIALTY CROP ENHANCEMENT

1. Q. Are projects with the potential to benefit non-specialty crops eligible to receive funding?
- A. SCBGP funds can only be used to benefit eligible specialty crops. If a project has the potential to benefit ineligible commodities, the response to the Specialty Crop Enhancement question must demonstrate the tracking mechanisms and processes that are in place or will be implemented to verify all SCBGP funds are expended on activities and costs that solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible California specialty crops.
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PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

1. Q. The Allowable and Unallowable Costs Table states that fundraising is unallowable under the SCBGP. If raising funds is integral to an organization's sustainability, may fundraising to sustain the project beyond the grant duration be discussed within Project Sustainability?
- A. Organized fundraising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions, regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used, is unallowable under the SCBGP. The SCBGP cannot pay for costs associated with fundraising during the grant duration, which includes salaries of personnel involved in activities to raise capital. However, fundraising conducted after the grant duration without the use of SCBGP funds would be allowable to sustain the project and its results.
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FUNDING SOURCES

1. Q. Should an applicant inform CDFA if they applied to another agency to fund a project submitted to the 2016 SCBGP? What if both agencies agree to fund the project?
- A. An applicant must inform CDFA if they apply and/or receive funding for a project that has been submitted to the 2016 SCBGP. SCBGP funds cannot duplicate activities supported by other state or federal programs. If awarded funding from another source, applicants must either demonstrate that funds from each program will go towards different activities or be prepared to decline funding from one program or another.
2. Q. If a SCBGP proposal and another federally-funded proposal have some overlap in content and both are funded, is it possible to receive partial funding from SCBGP for the activities that do not overlap?
- A. If a proposal has been or will be submitted to or funded by another federally-funded program, applicants must identify the federal grant program, state the amount of grants funds requested or awarded by the program, and describe how the proposed SCBGP project supplements rather than duplicates efforts funded by the other federally funded program. If an applicant is awarded funds from another federally funded program, the applicant must notify CDFA immediately. Funding decisions in this scenario would be made on a case-by-case basis.
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EXTERNAL PROJECT SUPPORT

1. Q. Are Letters of Support required, and who should submit them?
A. Letters of support are not a requirement of the SCBGP, but are strongly encouraged in demonstrating industry support for your project. Letters of support may come from specialty crop stakeholders, individuals, and organizations outside the applicant organization that are not involved with the project but support the project objectives. Letters of support from project beneficiaries are appropriate, so long as the benefit received is not in the form of grant funding. For example, letters of support from specialty crop farmers who will receive training through the grant are appropriate, letters of support that come from the employees of the applicant or a contractor are not. Letters of support should be on official letterhead, be addressed to CDFA Office of Grants Administration, and explain why the organization is in support of the project.

 2. Q. Who should be listed as cooperating entities and do they have to provide a letter of support?
A. Cooperating entities are organizations an applicant will be working with to plan and/or implement the proposed project. Cooperating entities can include individuals who may receive a portion of the SCBGP funds and/or provide matching funds or in-kind contributions. It is not a requirement for cooperating entities to submit a letter of support.

 3. Q. What types of organizations are considered specialty crop stakeholders?
A. Individuals or organizations involved in the specialty crop industry such as growers, companies, certified crop advisors (CCAs) and pest control advisors (PCAs), commodity boards or commissions, trade associations, etc. are considered stakeholders. The general public or organizations not affiliated with the specialty crop industry are not.
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OUTCOME MEASURES

1. Q. Do applicants choose outcome measures and indicators based on funding category?
A. All proposals submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category must select the outcome measure to increase sales. Proposals in other funding categories that involve marketing or promotion of specialty crops as defined in the Outcome Measures Supplement must also select the outcome to increase sales. However, proposals in other funding categories that do not involve marketing or promotion may choose any of the outcome measures and their indicators as applicable to their project. CDFA is unable to advise applicants regarding which outcome measures and indicators to choose.

2. Q. What is an appropriate way to measure change in knowledge or the number of growers?
A. One example of an appropriate way to measure change in knowledge may be by conducting pre- and post-surveys.

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3. Q. **Revised March 17, 2016:** Can applicants modify the outcome measures, indicators, or sub-indicators?
- A. The outcome measures, indicators, and sub-indicators are defined by USDA and the Office of Management and Budget and cannot be altered, amended or replaced. Projects must accomplish at least one outcome measure and indicator/sub-indicator as listed in the Outcome Measures template. Any additional project outcomes that do not align with those provided on the Outcome Measures template may be discussed in the Project Objectives template and other portions of the grant proposal, as appropriate.
4. Q. What are applicants required to provide within the Outcome Measures template?
- A. Applicants are required to complete the Outcome Measures template by selecting at least one of the eight outcome measures, at least one indicator for each selected outcome and describe the project activities to monitor outcomes and collect data. It is only necessary to address outcome measures that are relevant to the proposal. All other outcome measure sections of the template can be left blank and it is not necessary to delete them.
5. Q. Are marketing and promotion proposals allowed to select an outcome measure other than increasing sales if a baseline of sales in dollars does not already exist?
- A. All proposals submitted to California Grown Promotion funding category and any other proposals that meet the definition of marketing and promotion as described in the Outcome Measures Supplement must select the outcome to increase sales. If no baseline data exists, establishing a baseline of sales dollars must be included in the project activities and in the description section of the outcome measures template.
6. Q. How can applicants provide a number for the selected indicator and/or sub-indicator if the impact is not yet known?
- A. Both CDFA and USDA understand that outcome measures described at this phase are projections. Applicants should provide an estimate that is reasonable and achievable for the selected indicators and/or sub-indicators.
7. Q. Do projects that address more than one outcome measure receive higher priority for funding?
- A. There is no priority given to projects that address more than one outcome measure.
8. Q. Is it appropriate for a project to support increased consumption of specialty crops in the form of a drink?
- A. If the project supports increasing consumption of an eligible commodity this may be appropriate. Note that outcomes related to increased consumption are generally associated with improved access, nutritional health or eating habits. Increasing consumption of a processed product like wine is more appropriate to an increase in sales, rather than consumption. Also, per the Allowable and Unallowable Costs Table, in order for a processed product to be eligible under the SCBGP, said product shall consist of greater than 50% of the specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water.

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9. Q. Are applicants required to select outcome measure that can be achieved during the grant duration?
- A. Although long-term outcomes may be appropriate, the proposal must include at least one outcome measure that can be achieved during the grant duration.

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10. Q. What should applicants do if they are unable to check boxes or enter descriptions in the Outcome Measures template?
- A. If you are unable to edit the Outcome Measures template, the document may be opening in read-only view. To edit the document: save it to your computer, open the saved document, click on "VIEW" in the upper left side of the window, and then click "Edit Document." You should now be able to check the appropriate outcome and indicator boxes. If you are using a Mac, please make sure you have the most recent version of Microsoft Office installed and that your computer has all necessary updates. If you are still unable to check any boxes, CDFA recommends completing the Outcome Measures template using a Windows PC, if possible.
11. Q. Do the fields in the Outcome Measures template have character limits and can longer responses be separated into paragraphs?
- A. There are no character limits for the fields in the Outcome Measures template. However, the fields will not allow character returns (i.e. you cannot press "Enter" on the keyboard to start a new paragraph). Each response should be entered as one continuous paragraph.
12. Q. What is an appropriate way to measure change in sales?
- A. One example of an appropriate way to measure change in sales could be comparing quarterly sales reports.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

1. Q. Can modifications be made from the concept proposal, including staff changes, to either increase or decrease the budget amount requested in the grant proposal?
- A. Modifications, including staff changes, can be made from the concept proposal to either increase or decrease the budget amount requested in the grant proposal or make changes from one line item to another. If the budget amount requested changes, the budget amount should be updated in FFAST. While there are no requirements regarding the maximum amount that the budget may change, drastic changes (+/- 20%) may be questioned. Most importantly, the new budget amount must range between \$50,000 and \$450,000. In the case of fixed amount awards, grant amounts must range from \$50,000 and \$150,000.
2. Q. Does the Budget template submitted with the concept proposal need to be updated to reflect changes made to the budget during the grant proposal phase?
- A. Applicants are only required to complete the grant proposal Budget Narrative. It is not necessary to update the concept proposal Budget template or to complete a new concept proposal Budget template.

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3. Q. Projects with contractual costs must complete additional Budget Narrative attachments detailing the costs for each contractor/subcontractor listed. Is there a separate attachment available for download to complete and attach for each contractor/subcontractor?
- A. If contractual costs are requested, download, complete, and attach additional Budget Narrative templates for each contractor/subcontractor. Applicants with contractual costs would complete a Budget Narrative template and additional Budget Narrative templates per contractor/subcontractor. Each contractor/subcontractor Budget Narrative template must be completed and attached as an MS Word document in paragraph form using 11 point font with 1 inch margins. Name each file: Budget_Contractor1, Budget_Contractor2, Budget_Contractor3, etc. In addition, all contractual costs should be totaled in the original Budget Narrative.
4. Q. For applicants with contractual costs, how much detail should be provided in the separate contractual Budget Narrative template(s)?
- A. Applicants attaching additional Budget Narrative templates per contractor should follow the directions provided within the Budget Narrative template, providing the same level of detail and answering each section as appropriate for the contractual costs requested. For example: Costs for travel undertaken by a contractor should be detailed in the Travel section of a separate contractual Budget Narrative template per the guidelines provided.
5. Q. What is the limit for compensation for individual contractors/consultants?
- A. Compensation for individual contractual fees should be reasonable and consistent with fees in the marketplace for similar services. Hourly rates/flat fees for contractors/consultants cannot exceed the GS-15 step 10 for your locality/area without justification. A justification for an individual contractor/consultant may include but is not limited to: a cost/price analysis; an explanation of unique qualifications, special expertise due to the complexity of the project/task or limited pool of available or qualified contractors/consultants; or historical data supporting the rate charged by contractors/consultants.
6. Q. Are fiscal sponsorships allowable under the SCBGP?
- A. Projects that involve a fiscal sponsorship are subject to the following requirements: 1) The fiscal sponsorship arrangement and the identities of the involved parties must be clearly disclosed within the grant application; 2) If awarded funds, the fiscal sponsor, rather than the sponsored organization, is the grant recipient. The fiscal sponsor is responsible for executing the grant agreement and must ensure all project activities and costs, including activities of the sponsored organization, contractors or consultants comply with applicable Federal regulations and requirements, and grant terms and conditions; 3) Changes to the recipient (such as a change from the non-profit fiscal sponsor to the sponsored organization) or key personnel require USDA and CDFR approval; and 4) Fiscal sponsorship fees cannot be charged as a direct cost. Fiscal sponsorship fees may be allowable as an indirect cost, if charged consistent with the sponsored organization's established policies.

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7. Q. Do applicants need to provide a justification for changes made to the budget amount requested in the grant proposal and will this result in the disqualification of the proposal?
A. Applicants are not required to provide a justification for changes made to the budget, and budget changes will not result in the disqualification of a proposal unless the budget is less than the minimum award amount, more than the maximum award amount, or the project involves unallowable costs necessary to project activities. However, substantial changes are not appropriate.
8. Q. In what section of the grant application should applicants identify project staff that will carry out the project's activities?
A. Applicants should identify project staff who will carry out the project's activities in the budget narrative (sections A and/or F).
9. Q. Should the budget describe all activities of the organization/project, or only those costs and activities funded by the SCBGP?
A. The budget narrative should only include SCBGP funded activities. Activities and costs funded with cost share should be described on the Cost Sharing template.
10. Q. If project personnel, including applicant organization staff or contractual employees, have not yet been identified, what should applicants provide in the Budget Narrative?
A. Applicants should include the information that is known such as the position/title, estimated salary or contractual rate and a description of activities the project personnel will accomplish to meet the objectives and outcomes of the project, including timelines for each activity.
11. Q. Are costs to construct a structure allowable under the SCBGP?
A. Costs to acquire capital assets, including land, buildings (facilities), equipment, and intellectual property, whether acquired by purchase, construction, manufacture, lease-purchase, exchange, or through capital leases, are unallowable under the SCBGP.
12. Q. Would costs which include installation of irrigation and staking systems for a demonstration orchard be considered allowable?
A. Costs to include a drip irrigation and staking systems for a demonstration orchard may be allowable if they are necessary to the project, and do not permanently improve or increase the value of the property.
13. Q. Is a written justification for all costs required, regardless of the dollar amount listed in the Budget Narrative sections A-G required?
A. A written justification for costs listed in Budget Narrative sections A, and C through G is required regardless of the dollar amount listed.
14. Q. How should applicants determine when an expense will be incurred if the dates have not yet been determined.
A. Applicants should provide an estimated date of when expenses will be incurred.

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15. Q. What budget section should graduate student research tuition and fees be listed under?
A. Graduate student research tuition and fees should be categorized as fringe benefits.
16. Q. How should applicants determine travel costs for meetings (e.g., mileage and airfare) if the locations have not yet been determined?
A. Applicants should provide an estimate of travel costs for meetings based on a best guess of where the meeting will be held or by using past meeting locations.
17. Q. Are costs to travel to and attend scientific conferences allowable?
A. Travel costs for a scientific conference are allowable when the primary purpose is the dissemination of technical information and attendance is necessary and reasonable for successful performance under the Federal award.
18. Q. How should mileage costs be broken down in the travel section of the budget narrative?
A. For each trip listed, mileage should be broken down by number of miles per trip (to and from) at \$0.54/mile if using a personal vehicle. If using a vehicle rental include cost per day, number of days and an estimate of fuel costs. If locations are not known, provide an estimate.
19. Q. Where should items costing less than \$5,000 per unit but purchased in quantities that exceed \$5,000 be listed?
A. Items with a per-unit cost of less than \$5,000 are considered a supply, even if purchased in quantities that will exceed \$5,000 in total.
20. Q. In the Supplies section, can applicants group similar supplies together using broad terms (e.g. laboratory supplies) under "Item Description" in the table?
A. Applicants can group similar supplies together using broad terms under "Item Description" in the table. However, under the "Supplies Justification" section applicants must provide a breakdown of each individual supply included in the grouping, the cost per item and a description of how the supplies are necessary for the completion of the project's objectives and outcomes.
21. Q. **Revised March 17, 2016:** Can SCBGP funds be used to purchase computing devices?
A. Information technology systems having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more, including computing devices, ancillary equipment, software, firmware, and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources are considered Information Technology Systems and are unallowable. Computing devices with a per-unit cost of less than \$5,000 (e.g. laptops) are allowable as direct costs. These costs should be listed under section E Supplies in the Budget Narrative and must include a justification describing how it will be used to support project objectives.
22. Q. Where should costs for a spokesperson be included within the budget narrative?
A. Costs for a spokesperson are considered contractual costs and should be included within a separate contractual Budget Narrative, broken down by section according to the specific costs incurred.

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23. Q. What should be included under Contractual within the Budget Narrative?
A. All costs associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship should be included under Contractual. (Note: There is no dollar amount set to determine whether or not an individual or organization should be included under Contractual.)
24. Q. Can contractual costs be provided using a format other than the Budget Narrative template?
A. Contractual costs must be provided using the required Budget Narrative template. However, please note that information is only needed for cost categories (sections A through H) in which the contractor will incur grant funded expenses.
25. Q. **Revised March 17, 2016:** In what circumstances is it not required to attach a separate contractor Budget Narrative?
A. There is no need to attach a separate contractor Budget Narrative if the contractor's only expense will be an hourly fee or a flat contractual rate. In this case, the applicant must list the contractor's name and the total amount requested in the table under section F Contractual in the applicant's Budget Narrative. Within the Contractual justification section, provide the hourly rate and number of hours to be worked or the basis for the flat contractual rate. Be sure to include a description of the project activities the contractor will accomplish including timelines for each activity, as well as a justification for exceeding GS-15 step 10, if necessary.
26. Q. **Revised March 17, 2016:** In what circumstances is it required to attach a separate contractor Budget Narrative?
A. If a contractor will charge an hourly fee in addition to other project-related costs (e.g. travel, supplies, etc.), it is required to provide a breakdown of these costs in a separate contractor Budget Narrative attachment. The applicant must provide the contractor's name, the total amount requested, and a description of project activities under section F Contractual in the applicant's Budget Narrative. The applicant must also attach a separate contractor Budget Narrative with a breakdown of the hourly fee and all other expenses as appropriate. Please note that the contractor's hourly rate or fee for professional services must be listed under section A Salary and Wages in the contractor's Budget Narrative; applicants may use the Salary and Wages justification section to explain that the cost listed is a professional services fee rather than salary.
27. Q. Should contractors be listed as cooperating entities?
A. Contractors or any individuals who may receive a portion of SCBGP funds and/or provide matching funds or in-kind contributions should be listed under cooperating entities in FFAST.

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28. Q. Are there requirements for selecting contractors/consultants?
A. All contractors/consultants must be selected using a competitive process. Applicants are required to follow the same policies and procedures used for procurements from non-federal sources, which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations and conform to the federal laws and standards identified in 2 CFR Part 200.317 through 326, as applicable.
29. Q. If a project will have contractual costs, can both the applicant Budget Narrative and the contractual Budget Narrative include indirect costs?
A. Both the applicant Budget Narrative and the contractual Budget Narrative may include indirect costs of up to 6 percent of total personnel costs for each Budget Narrative.
30. Q. Can SCBGP funds be used to pay for a workshop that is part of a larger conference?
A. SCBGP funds may be used to pay for a workshop that is part of a larger conference depending on the nature of the conference and if it solely enhances the competitiveness of California specialty crops.
31. Q. What section of the budget narrative should conference registration fees be listed in?
A. Conference registration fees should be listed in section G. Other.
32. Q. What budget section should speaker stipends be listed under?
A. Speaker stipends should be listed in section G. Other.
33. Q. Are costs to maintain scientific equipment an allowable expense?
A. If maintenance is necessary to keep scientific equipment in efficient operating condition for project use and does not add to the value of the equipment, this may be an allowable cost and should be listed in section G. Other.
34. Q. Can costs like rent and utilities be charged directly if indirect costs will go to other purposes like administrative costs or fiscal sponsorship fees?
A. Items defined as indirect costs in the request for concept proposals, such as rent and utilities, cannot be charged directly.

New Questions: March 17, 2016

35. Q. Can institutions charge an indirect cost rate greater than six percent of total personnel costs under the provisions of Assembly Bill 20 or 2 CFR 200.331(a)(4)?
A. The indirect cost rate for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is established in federal statute and therefore supersedes the provisions of Assembly Bill 20 and 2 CFR 200.331(a)(4). Please reference 2 CFR 200.414 (c)(1) as well as section 10010(4) of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79. CDFA has established a maximum indirect cost rate of six percent of total personnel costs (salary and wages plus fringe benefits) for California Specialty Crop Block Grant Program projects. This cap is necessary for CDFA to be able to administer the program and adhere to all statutory requirements. Accordingly, CDFA will not accept requests for indirect costs greater than six percent of total personnel costs.

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36. Q. USDA's Request for Applications states that indirect costs are limited to 8 percent of the total federal funds provided under the award. Why does CDFA cap applicants' indirect rate at six percent of total personnel costs?
- A. [Section 10010\(4\) of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79](#) prohibits states from using more than eight percent of SCBGP funds received for administrative expenses. This eight percent maximum includes all indirect costs associated with the SCBGP, both indirect costs incurred by awardees as well as CDFA's costs incurred during administration of the program (both pre- and post-award). Per USDA program requirements described in their [Request for Applications](#), it is at the discretion of participating state departments of agriculture to determine the maximum indirect rate for their states' SCBGP projects. Participating states can decide to allow applicants no indirect costs at all, the full eight percent, or somewhere in between. In order to allow CDFA to adequately administer the program and adhere to all statutory requirements, the maximum indirect rate for California SCBGP applicants has been capped at six percent of total personnel costs. If CDFA allowed applicants to charge the full eight percent, it would not be possible for CDFA to administer the program.
37. Q. Where should costs to develop and implement a workshop be listed?
- A. Costs to develop and implement a workshop should be listed under section G Other. Please ensure that costs are adequately broken down and comply with all program requirements ([GSA per diem rates](#), [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities](#), etc.).
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COST SHARING

1. Q. What is the difference between matching funds and/or in-kind contributions?
- A. Matching funds refer to real dollar contributions to a project from sources other than the SCBGP. In-kind contributions refer to the determined values of assets donated to the project (i.e., equipment, use of land, volunteered staff time, etc.). If matching funds and/or in-kind contributions, also sometimes referred to as cost sharing, have been secured, applicants must complete and attach the Cost Sharing template.
2. Q. Should applicants attach letters documenting cost share from individuals or organizations contributing matching funds or in-kind contributions?
- A. For 2016, applicants only need to attach the Cost Sharing template to document any matching funds and/or in-kind contributions. Letters from individuals or organizations supplying cost share should not be included. The Cost Sharing template will provide sufficient evidence of financial commitment. On the other hand, Letters of Support should come from individuals or organizations that approve of and endorse the project rather than provide financial support. If applicable, Letters of Support should be attached as detailed in question nine, External Project Support.

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3. Q. Where should individuals donating time to work on project activities be included?
A. This is considered an in-kind contribution and should be included in the Cost Sharing template.
 4. Q. Can cost sharing be used to cover costs that are unallowable under the program?
A. Cost sharing can be used to cover costs that are not allowable under the program. For example, if a project has the potential to benefit non-specialty crops, the use of cost sharing is one method to demonstrate that SCBGP funds will not benefit non-specialty crops.
 5. Q. If an organization has an indirect cost rate agreement that exceeds the SCBGP program requirement can the difference be considered cost sharing?
A. The difference between the applicant's indirect cost rate and the program limit of six percent of personnel costs can be considered cost sharing. This extends to items of cost treated as direct costs by the applicant organization, but defined as indirect by the RFCP.
 6. Q. Can funds from other state or federal grants be used as matching funds?
A. Funds from other state or federal grant programs are not considered matching funds. An applicant should inform CDFA if they are receiving state or federal funds for a project being submitted to SCBGP.
 7. Q. Is there a certain percentage of time individuals must donate to a project before it is considered a cost share?
A. Any individual who donates any amount of time to a project should be included within the Cost Sharing template as an in-kind contribution.
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PROJECT OVERSIGHT

1. Q. Is there a limit to the amount of Project Directors, Project Managers, and/or Principal Investigators?
A. There is no limit on the number of Project Directors, Project Managers, or Principal Investigators a project may have. It is up to the applicant to determine the appropriate amount.
2. Q. May information about Project Directors, Project Managers, or Principal Investigators be changed during the grant proposal phase?
A. This information may and should change if necessary to reflect the most updated information.

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3. Q. The Project Management tab in FFAST does not allow for more than one Project Director (PD), Project Manager (PM), or Principal Investigator (PI) to be listed. If the project will have more than one, where should this information be included?
- A. Resumes or curriculum vitae should be attached for any PDs, PMs, or PIs who will receive a portion of the project funds as detailed in Question 13 of the Application Questionnaire, Project Oversight. Additional PDs, PMs, or PIs should be listed in the Cooperating Entities section in FFAST. It is up to the applicant to determine other areas of the proposal where appropriate. For instance, if the additional PD, PM, or PI will receive a portion of project funds, they should be included in the Budget Narrative template. If the additional PD, PM, or PI will be donating their time to the project, they should be included in the Cost Sharing template.
4. Q. Who should provide resumes or curriculum vitae?
- A. Curriculum vitae or resumes (whichever is most applicable) should be provided for the Project Directors, Project Managers, Principal Investigators, or collaborators who will receive a portion of the project funds. The preferred format for resumes or curriculum vitae is PDF.
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GRANT MANAGEMENT AND AUDITS

1. Q. Are award recipients required to report matching funds and/or in-kind contributions on quarterly invoices?
- A. It is not necessary to report matching funds and/or in-kind contributions on quarterly invoices, as they are not a requirement of the SCBGP. However, applicants will be asked to provide detail regarding the matching funds and/or in-kind contributions in their progress reports and final performance report.
2. Q. Are grant recipients required to attend meetings?
- A. All grant award recipients are subject to a minimum of one performance site visit, as well as a financial compliance audit and/or desk review. More information is available in the [2015 SCBGP Grant Management Procedure Manual](#). The 2016 SCBGP Grant Procedure Manual has not yet been released.

New Questions: March 17, 2016

3. Q. Can the Project Director and Project Manager be changed after a project receives funding?
- A. The Project Director and Project Manager can be changed after a project receives funding; however, this change requires approval from CDFA and USDA.