

**2017 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**  
**PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL**  
**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)**  
**November 9, 2016**

**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

1. Q. How much does CDFA expect to award in 2017?  
A. While USDA has not yet announced allocations for 2017, in 2016, CDFA was awarded \$22.3 million in SCBGP funds and approximately the same amount is anticipated for 2017.
2. Q. Where can applicants find the character limits for each question?  
A. The character limit for each question is provided in FFAST. This limit includes letters, numbers, punctuation, spaces, and special characters.
3. Q. Is CDFA able to provide inexperienced applicants with technical assistance on how to write a concept proposal?  
A. Because the SCBGP is a federally-funded competitive process, CDFA is required to provide the same level of assistance to all applicants. Unfortunately, it is not feasible for CDFA to provide one-on-one technical assistance to all prospective applicants. However, all prospective applicants are encouraged to attend one of our workshops and webinars to learn more about applying to the program.
4. Q. Are the materials from the SCBGP workshop and webinar presentations available online?  
A. PDF copies of each PowerPoint as well as a video of each presentation will be made available on the CDFA SCBGP website ([www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants)) during the first week of November.
5. Q. What is a cooperating entity and what types of organizations can be listed?  
A. Cooperating entities are organizations an applicant will work 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 contribute cost share. There is no restriction on what types of organizations may serve as cooperating entities, provided the organization will have a role in project activities and has agreed to participate as a cooperator.
6. Q. Can cooperators or contractors outside the state of California or outside the United States be involved in project activities?  
A. There is no prohibition on cooperating or contracting with an organization outside of California or the United States, provided the country is not listed on the Office of Foreign Assets Control Active Sanctions List and that the applicant sufficiently demonstrates that the primary benefit of the project will be to California specialty crops. Applicants are required to follow the same policies and procedures used for procurements from nonfederal 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.
7. Q. Are proposals from underrepresented areas of the state given preferential consideration?  
A. Geographic location is not a factor in the scoring process. All proposals are evaluated on their own individual merit.
8. Q. The 2017 SCBGP Request for Concept Proposals (RFCP) states, "Recipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that offer equivalent products or services." What does this mean?  
A. Recipients cannot use SCBGP funds to give their organization an advantage over other organizations providing equivalent services in the marketplace. Grant funds must be used on activities to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, rather than to enhance the

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competitiveness of an organization. For example, an organization should not request grant funds to expand its operations to better compete with other similar organizations.

9. Q. What should be done with specialty crops grown as a result of an SCBGP funded project?  
A. **Revised November 9, 2016:** Specialty crops grown as a result of an SCBGP funded project cannot be given away. However, crops grown as a result of project activities can be used for demonstration/educational purposes or sold and the resulting program income reinvested in the goals and objectives of the project. Reference [Budget Template Q&A #11](#) for more information on program income.
10. Q. If an organization is submitting multiple proposals, is there a limit to the total amount of funds that organization may request across proposals?  
A. There is no limit to the total amount of funds an organization submitting multiple proposals may request across proposals; however, each proposal must request funds within the allowable grant amount: \$50,000 minimum - \$450,000 maximum (\$50,000 minimum - \$150,000 maximum for fixed amount awards). Importantly, organizations should only submit the amount of proposals they are capable of managing if awarded funds for each proposal.
11. Q. Where may applicants find information about projects awarded SCBGP funding in past years?  
A. Applicants may find project descriptions of past year awards on the [SCBGP website](#). Additionally, Final Performance Reports are currently available for projects awarded in years 2010 – 2012. Note: Program requirements change year to year, so past projects may not necessarily conform to current program requirements.
12. Q. Does CDFA have to award all SCBGP funds that are allocated by USDA? What happens if there are not enough appropriate applications submitted?  
A. CDFA is not required to award all SCBGP funds allocated by USDA. Historically, CDFA has received more high quality proposals than it has the ability to fund and has used its entire allocation. However, in the unlikely event that enough quality proposals were not received, CDFA would apply for less than its full allocation or fund additional projects through a separate process to reach the full allocation.
13. Q. In 2016, CDFA awarded one project more than \$1,000,000. Why is the maximum award amount \$450,000?  
A. **Revised November 9, 2016:** A significant majority of SCBGP funds are awarded through the competitive process described in the RFCP. All applicants must request funding of no more than \$450,000 (or \$150,000 maximum for fixed amount award projects). However, CDFA may award funds submitted through a separate process for projects that address urgent or critical issues affecting California specialty crop agriculture. The urgent or critical issues vary dependent on priorities identified by CDFA. Note: It is at CDFA's discretion to reach out to organizations best suited to address the urgent or critical issues identified.

**New Questions: November 9, 2016**

14. Q. Can a concept proposal address more than one type of specialty crop?  
A. A concept proposal can address more than one type of specialty crop, but it is not required.

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15. Q. Can one individual be listed as Principal Investigator (PI) for multiple proposals?  
A. One individual can be listed as PI on multiple proposals as long as the total of their full time equivalent (FTE) for all proposals does not exceed 100 percent. For example, if a PI will work 60 percent FTE on proposal A, they cannot work more than 40 percent FTE on proposal B.
16. Q. Are costs associated with incentives allowable?  
A. No, incentives are not an allowable cost of this program.
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**ELIGIBILITY**

1. Q. Can SCBGP funds be used to purchase specialty crops as part of an educational program?  
A. SCBGP funds may be used to purchase specialty crops needed as part of an educational program. For example, purchasing specialty crops for a cooking demonstration or for samples to accompany an educational curriculum. However, it is not allowable to purchase specialty crops to provide to participants to take home.
2. Q. Are projects that involve donating produce eligible for SCBGP funding?  
A. Using SCBGP funds to donate specialty crops is unallowable. Both the cost to purchase or grow the produce and the personnel costs associated with facilitating the donation are unallowable costs. Projects that focus primarily on donating or distributing donated food may want to consider alternative funding opportunities described in the RFCP and on the CDFA grants website.
3. Q. Are applicants allowed to submit the same project for funding to more than one grant program?  
A. Applicants may submit the same project to multiple state or federal award programs; however, applicants are required to disclose the other grant programs if invited back to the grant proposal phase. If the proposal is selected for funding by another state or federal award program after the proposal is submitted to the SCBGP, the applicant must inform CDFA immediately. Applicants are allowed to receive SCBGP funds to support activities within a project funded through multiple grant sources. However, SCBGP funds may not be used to duplicate activities funded by another grant source.
4. Q. Are past SCBGP recipients more or less likely to receive funding? Is there a waiting period required between receiving SCBGP funding?  
A. Past recipients are not more or less likely to receive funding and all proposals are reviewed on their individual merit. However, failure to adequately explain how a proposal builds upon previously funded work may negatively impact scoring. Additionally, any significant issues with an organization's past performance may affect the probability of funding or necessitate additional requirements if funds are awarded. There is no waiting period required between receiving SCBGP grants; an organization could apply for and receive funding for projects in any year.
5. Q. Are sole proprietors eligible to apply?  
A. Sole proprietors are eligible to apply. However, CDFA encourages sole proprietors to partner with another organization such as a local Farm Bureau or extension office, a commodity board, or other growers. Although it is acceptable for sole proprietors to apply, applicants must demonstrate that their project will sufficiently benefit a wider segment of the specialty crop industry beyond their organization.

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6. Q. Can regional specialty crop organizations submit projects emphasizing local/regionally grown specialty crops or must all projects benefit California grown specialty crops statewide?  
A. Projects that emphasize local or regionally grown specialty crops are acceptable. A statewide California grown emphasis is not required and projects can be region-specific.
7. Q. Are proposals focused on processed agricultural products made from California-grown specialty crops eligible for SCBGP funding?  
A. Proposals focused on processed specialty crop products are eligible for SCBGP funding. However, since the purpose of the program is to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, the focus of the project proposal must be on the specialty crop in the processed product. Additionally, the specialty crop in the processed product must constitute greater than 50 percent of the product by weight, exclusive of added water.
8. Q. According to USDA's document, "[Definition of Specialty Crop](#)," it is possible that certain plants may be eligible or ineligible under the program based on use. Can you further explain this?  
A. Because some cultivated plants have multiple uses, their eligibility under the program depends on use. For example, amaranth may be grown as a leafy green, or it may be grown as a grain. Leafy greens are vegetables, therefore amaranth grown as a leafy green would be considered a specialty crop. However, grains are not specialty crops, therefore, amaranth grown for grain would not be considered a specialty crop. There are many other examples of crops with multiple uses. However, the following groups of crops are not considered specialty crops: grains (field corn, wheat, rice, etc.), oil seed crops (canola, soy bean, camelina, etc.), bio-energy crops (switchgrass, sugar cane, etc.), forages (hay, alfalfa, clover, etc.), field crops (peanut, sugar beet, cotton, etc.), and plants federally controlled as illegal drug plants (cannabis, coca).
9. Q. Are for-profit organizations subject to the same federal cost principles as all other eligible entities?  
A. No, for-profit organizations will be subject to [48 CFR Subpart 31.2](#). State, local or Indian tribal governments, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities will be subject to [2 CFR 200](#).
10. Q. If an organization is involved in non-specialty crop as well as specialty crop production, does their non-specialty crop production make them ineligible for funding?  
A. As long as the proposal makes clear that all SCBGP funds would exclusively support costs and activities solely benefiting California specialty crops, then said organization would be eligible for funding if it also meets the eligibility requirements detailed on page 1 of the [2017 SCBGP RFCP](#).

***New Questions: November 9, 2016***

11. Q. Are organizations that serve the community eligible to apply for the SCBGP or must all applicant organizations directly serve growers?  
A. Organizations that serve the community are eligible to apply for the SCBGP, provided the organization is one of the eligible organization types listed in the RFCP (reference page 1). Applicant organizations are not required to be grower-oriented.
12. Q. Are organizations outside of California or the United States eligible to apply for SCBGP funding?  
A. Organizations outside of California or the United States may be eligible to apply for SCBGP funding, provided the applicant sufficiently demonstrates that the primary benefit of the project will be to California specialty crops. Applicants outside of the United States cannot be listed on the Office of Foreign Assets Control Active Sanctions List and must ensure they are able to execute a grant agreement with CDFA.

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13. Q. Are a federal tax ID, a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, and registration on the System for Award Management (SAM) required prior to submitting a concept proposal?
- A. Applicants must have a legal business name and a federal tax ID in order to submit a concept proposal. You may begin an application in FFAST prior to receiving a federal tax ID number; however, you must enter a federal tax ID number prior to submitting your concept proposal. A DUNS number and registration on the SAM are not required prior to submitting a concept proposal; however, if advanced to the grant proposal phase and ultimately awarded SCBGP funds, recipients will need to obtain a DUNS number and register on the SAM before SCBGP funds are awarded. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the registration process early.
14. Q. Will grant funds be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual?
- A. Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. To receive funding, applicants must clearly demonstrate that the project primarily benefits the California specialty crop industry.
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**FIXED AMOUNT AWARDS**

1. Q. What is a fixed amount award?
- A. Fixed amount awards are a type of grant agreement with payments based on outcomes achieved rather than reimbursement for actual costs incurred. This type of award reduces some of the administrative burden and record-keeping requirements for both the recipient and CDFA. While payment is based on outcomes achieved, fixed amount awards must comply with the federal cost principles and the program requirements described in the RFCP.
2. Q. Why did the fixed amount award category change from 2016?
- A. Fixed amount awards address urgent priorities faced by California's specialty crop industry and may change year to year based on current issues. Technical assistance for workforce issues is a time sensitive need that was identified for 2017. Proposals submitted to this category should seek to address workforce concerns throughout the specialty crop supply chain, including conforming to labor regulations, securing skilled and unskilled workers, and training the existing workforce to effectively utilize new technologies.
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**FFAST APPLICATION**

1. Q. Is signing up for FFAST required to submit a concept proposal?
- A. All applicants must sign up for a FFAST account in order to access and submit a concept proposal application. No applications will be accepted outside of the FFAST system.
2. Q. What should an applicant do if they are experiencing difficulties with FFAST?
- A. Applicants experiencing difficulties using FFAST should contact the FFAST Help Desk at (866) 434-1083 or [FFAST\\_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:FFAST_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov). All communications should reference the 2017 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program along with the proposal identification number (PIN).
3. Q. Who will CDFA notify regarding whether a concept proposal moves forward?
- A. CDFA will email the Project Director, Project Manager, and Submitter listed on the application in FFAST. To ensure all communications are received, points of contact listed in the application should add [grants@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:grants@cdfa.ca.gov) to their email safe senders list, address book, or contact list.

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4. Q. Is there a mechanism in FFAST for applicants to indicate whether they have institutional approval to submit a concept proposal?  
A. There is no mechanism in FFAST to indicate institutional approval. It is each organization's responsibility to ensure their employees are aware of any institutional policies regarding the submission of grant applications.
5. Q. Can corrections be made to a concept proposal that has already been submitted in FFAST?  
A. Corrections can be made to a concept proposal that has already been submitted in FFAST. Applicants should contact the FFAST Help Desk at (866) 434-1083 or [FAAST\\_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:FAAST_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov) and reference the 2017 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program along with their PIN and FFAST will make the concept proposal available; however, applicants are still required to resubmit their revised proposal before the submission deadline. All requests must be received within a reasonable amount of time before the submission deadline and no changes can be made after the submission deadline.
6. Q. FFAST requires applicants to identify a Regional Water Board. What should an applicant located outside of California select?  
A. Applicants outside of California should identify the Regional Water Board where project activities will take place or that will ultimately be impacted by the results of their project. Projects that will impact more than one region may select "Statewide."
7. Q. What is the best way for multiple individuals to work on the same application?  
A. It is up to the applicant to determine the best way to facilitate collaboration among individuals working on a project. The applicant organization can decide to share a single FFAST account among multiple users working on an application or create multiple FFAST accounts. However, be sure to communicate to avoid saving over another user's work.
8. Q. Do individuals that have served as a reviewer in the past and already have a FFAST account need to sign up for a new account?  
A. Individuals who already have a FFAST account may use their existing account to access the 2017 SCBGP application.
9. Q. What is the difference between the applicant organization and the submitting organization?  
A. The applicant organization is the entity that would enter into the agreement with CDFA and receive grant funds. The submitting organization is the entity that submits the proposal in the FFAST system on behalf of the applicant. In most cases, these organizations are the same; however, if different, the proposal should disclose the submitting organization in order to prevent conflicts of interest during the review process.
10. Q. What attachments are required to be submitted with the concept proposal application? Should letters of support be included?  
A. The budget template is the only required attachment. It is not necessary to provide letters of support during the concept proposal phase. Successful applicants will have an opportunity to submit letters of support during the grant proposal phase. During the concept proposal phase, the Technical Review Committee is not required to review any additional attachments and additional attachments cannot be used to circumvent the character limits for each question. For these reasons, applicants are discouraged from relying on additional attachments to support or explain their concept proposal.

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11. Q. If multiple organizations will be collaborating on a project, how should they decide who the applicant organization will be? What if multiple organizations need to receive grant funds?  
A. It is up to the organizations collaborating on the project to determine which organization will serve as the applicant. The applicant organization will enter into the grant agreement with CDFA and will receive grant funds. Any other organizations collaborating on the project that will be paid with grant funds would be considered contractors. These organizations should be listed on the Cooperating Entities tab in FFAST as well as on the contractual line item in the budget template.
12. Q. Does the FFAST application have a section where applicants can include the expertise of people working on the project?  
A. During the concept proposal phase, applicants should provide the names and requested contact information of the Project Director, Project Manager, and cooperating entities, if applicable. During the grant proposal phase, applicants are required to submit more detailed information about those working on the project, including resumes or curriculum vitae.
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**FUNDING AREA AND FUNDING CATEGORY**

1. Q. Can an applicant select more than one funding category for a single proposal?  
A. Only one funding category can be selected for each proposal in FFAST. Although a project may address elements of more than one funding category, it is up to the applicant to determine the most appropriate funding category for their proposal.
2. Q. Can an applicant submit proposals to multiple funding areas and funding categories? Can an applicant submit multiple proposals within the same funding category?  
A. Applicants can submit multiple proposals to different funding categories (within the same funding area or a different funding area) as well as within the same funding category. However, each proposal submitted, regardless of funding area or category, must be for a unique project. In addition, applicants should only submit the number of proposals their organization would be able to administer if all were ultimately awarded funding.
3. Q. Can applicants submit multiple linked proposals to different funding categories?  
A. Although applicants are allowed to submit multiple proposals to different funding categories, it must be clear that the activities of each proposal are not duplicative. In addition, each project is evaluated on its individual merits and it is possible that one project could receive funding but not the other.
4. Q. Are certain funding categories likely to receive more funding than others?  
A. Each proposal is evaluated on its individual merit. Funding for each category is determined solely on the merits of the proposals submitted.
5. Q. Would types of projects should be submitted in Funding Area III: Research? Are there specific types of research methods required of projects submitted within this funding area?  
A. Projects in this funding area should focus on improving the competitiveness of California specialty crops through investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes, pest control and disease, and organic and sustainable production practices. While research may be the primary objective of projects in this funding area, all SCBGP projects are required to include an outreach component. There are no specific research methods required; however, applicants must make sure their projects address at least one of the program priorities listed beneath their chosen funding category.

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6. Q. What types of projects should be submitted within Market Enhancement Category B: Market Expansion and Access?  
A. Projects submitted in this funding area should focus on expanding the specialty crop consumer market or improving availability of specialty crops to California consumers. Projects should seek to increase the consumption of specialty crops by increasing consumer demand or the overall availability of specialty crops.
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**PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

1. Q. Why do program priorities change each year?  
A. The program priorities are reviewed annually and revised based on feedback from the specialty crop industry, the technical reviewers, the public, and based on the department's priorities and changes to the program at the federal level. A project addressing a prior-year program priority could still be eligible under the program as long as it was also able to address at least one of the 2017 program priorities.
2. Q. Can a proposal address more than one program priority? Does identifying more priorities make a proposal more competitive?  
A. A proposal may address multiple program priorities. However, there is no priority given to projects that address multiple program priorities.
3. Q. Can a proposal identify program priorities from multiple funding categories?  
A. A proposal may identify program priorities from other funding categories that the project will address. However, all proposals must address at least one program priority from the funding category identified.
4. Q. Do proposals that identify California Grown Promotion program priority one have to incorporate multiple specialty crops?  
A. California Grown Promotion program priority one is for projects that are specifically focused on multi-commodity promotion. Other program priorities may be more appropriate for proposals focused on marketing efforts for a single specialty crop.
5. Q. Do proposals that identify California Grown Promotion program priority two have to focus on local, regional, and international markets?  
A. Proposals that identify California Grown Promotion program priority two are only required to focus on local, regional, or international markets. A focus on all three is not required.
6. Q. Do projects that address certain program priorities receive higher priority for funding than others?  
A. No. There is no consideration given to any specific program priorities.
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**PROJECT PURPOSE**

No questions at this time.

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**PRIOR YEAR SCBGP PROJECTS**

1. Q. Can an organization submit a proposal that builds on a prior year SCBGP project awarded to a different organization? Is it required to collaborate with the PIs of the previous project?  
A. There is no prohibition against submitting a proposal that builds upon a prior year project by another organization and it is not required for applicants to collaborate with PIs of a previous project. However, the applicant must have sufficient access to the prior project to demonstrate how their proposal differs from and builds upon the prior project.
  2. Q. Why does CDFA include the Prior Year SCBGP Projects question? Is a preference given to proposals that build upon prior year SCBGP projects?  
A. USDA and CDFA will not fund duplicative efforts. If a project builds upon a previously funded SCBGP project, this question allows applicants to describe how their project differs from, complements, or builds upon the previous work. There is no preference given to proposals that build upon prior year SCBGP projects. All proposals are reviewed on their individual merits.
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**PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

1. Q. Should applicants discuss program income within Project Sustainability?  
A. Program income refers to net income generated during the grant period by a supported project activity or earned as a direct result of the award. So, "program income" should not be discussed within Project Sustainability, as this section is for sustainability beyond the grant duration. However, if income will be generated after the grant duration to sustain the project, said income may be appropriate to discuss within Project Sustainability.
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**PROJECT BENEFICIARIES**

1. Q. What is meant by project beneficiaries?  
A. Project beneficiaries are the people, groups, commodities, etc. that will benefit from a project. Stating that a project will benefit the entire specialty crop industry is not an appropriate response for this question; CDFA wants to see a realistic estimate of the actual number of people that may be impacted by a project. For example, the number listed here could be the number of people receiving training as the result of an education project, or the number of growers of a specific specialty crop that will be impacted by the results of a research project.
2. Q. How can an applicant estimate the number of beneficiaries that will be impacted by a project?  
A. CDFA is unable to advise applicants on how to determine the expected number of beneficiaries for their project. However, reviewing the annual and final reports available on CDFA's SCBGP website may be helpful in illustrating how past recipients have determined their project beneficiaries. Keep in mind that grant recipients will be required to track and report on the number of project beneficiaries estimated.
3. Q. Should the answer for Project Beneficiaries only include benefits to the California specialty crop industry?  
A. The purpose of the SCBGP is to fund projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Therefore, the Project Beneficiary section should only include benefits to the California specialty crop industry.

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**OUTCOME MEASURES**

1. Q. Are applicants required to select all of an indicator's associated sub-indicators?  
A. Applicants must identify at least one outcome measure, at least one associated indicator, and, if applicable, at least one associated sub-indicator. If an applicant selects an indicator with multiple associated sub-indicators, it is not required to select all sub-indicators.
  
2. Q. The RFCP states that applicants must enter verbatim the outcome measure(s) the project will achieve. Does this also apply to indicators and sub-indicators?  
A. All outcome measures, indicators, and sub-indicators must be copied verbatim from the Outcome Measures Supplement. The outcome measures, indicators, and sub-indicators have been developed by USDA for nationwide reporting purposes and cannot be altered in any way.
  
3. Q. Should applicants quantify the indicator(s) identified for their chosen outcome measure(s)?  
A. During the concept proposal phase, applicants are asked to identify the outcome measure(s) and indicator(s) of success, and to explain how the project will accomplish the outcome measure(s) and indicator(s) identified. If known, applicants are encouraged to provide a quantified estimate for each indicator identified; however, a number is not required at this point. If invited to submit a grant proposal, applicants will be asked to provide more detail.
  
4. 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.
  
5. Q. Are there specific requirements for outcome measures for marketing projects?  
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 outcome measure one. At this time, baseline and target sales figures are not required. However, applicants will be required to provide these numbers if advanced to the grant proposal phase.
  
6. Q. What is an appropriate way to measure change in sales?  
A. There are multiple ways of to measure a change in sales. Each applicant must determine the most appropriate method for their project and the data available. However, changes in sales must be based on actual sales data. For example measuring change by comparing quarterly sales reports would be appropriate; counting social media impressions or survey responses would not.
  
7. Q. Do projects submitted to Market Enhancement Category B: Market Expansion and Access need to select Outcome 1: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales?  
A. It depends on the nature of the project. All marketing and promotion projects, 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, must select Outcome 1. Projects submitted to Market Enhancement Category B that meet this definition would need to select Outcome 1. However, projects submitted to Market Enhancement Category B that focus on increasing consumer demand or the overall availability of specialty crops without marketing and promotion activities to increase sales would not necessarily need to select Outcome 1.

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8. Q. Is an increase in profit due to lower production costs the same as an increase in sales?  
A. An increase in profit due to lower production costs is not the same as an increase in sales. An increase in sales must be expressed as a dollar value and percentage increase in sales of one or more specialty crops in one or more States or foreign markets as the result of marketing and/or promotion activities. Although cost savings may be appropriate to some outcome measures, it is important to carefully review the Outcome Measures supplement to find the outcome measure(s) that best align with your project.
9. Q. Where should applicants expand on how the project will accomplish the outcome measure(s) and indicator(s) identified?  
A. Applicants should explain how the project will accomplish the outcome measure(s) and indicator(s) identified under question eight, third text box in the FFAST application.
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**PROJECT DURATION**

No questions at this time.

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**WORK PLAN AND OUTREACH**

1. Q. Should a project timeline be included in the application as an attachment?  
A. Applicants should use the work plan question in the FFAST application to describe their project's activities and the estimated timeframe when the activities will occur. The only required attachment during the concept proposal phase is the budget template. The Technical Review Committee is not required to review any additional attachments and additional attachments cannot be used to circumvent the character limits for each question. For these reasons, applicants are discouraged from relying on additional attachments to support or explain their concept proposal.
2. Q. What should be included within the work plan? Should applicants include personnel titles?  
A. Applicants should describe the project activities that are necessary to accomplish project objectives and support outcome measures. During the concept proposal phase, applicants are not required to include the titles of personnel carrying out each activity within the work plan. It is up to each applicant to determine if said information is necessary. However, in the Brief Description column for Salary and Wages in the budget template, applicants are asked to list the title of each employee who will receive grant funds.
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**BUDGET TEMPLATE**

1. Q. Where can applicants download the budget template?  
A. There is a link to download the budget template on page 14 the 2017 RFCP as well as under question 11 in the FFAST application.
2. Q. Is there a limit on the amount of salary that can be requested for an individual?  
A. There is no limit on the amount of salary that can be requested for an employee of the applicant organization and the amount requested should be based on their organization's established policy. The amounts listed under salary and wages in the budget template should only reflect the portion of time an employee will spend working on the grant. For example, if a full time employee with an

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annual salary of \$100,000 spends five percent of their time working on grant activities, only \$5,000 should be charged to the grant to cover their time spent on grant activities. However, please note that salary and wages for contractors may not exceed the GS-15, Step 10 rate for their area. Contractor costs exceeding the GS-15, Step 10 rate must be paid from a source other than SCBGP funds unless a justification is provided and approved by CDFA and USDA. Please use the 2016 General Schedule (GS) Locality Pay Tables available here in developing a contractual cost estimate: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2016/general-schedule/>.

3. Q. Can an organization hire new staff to work on project activities? Can the cost of the new hire's salary be included in the budget request?  
A. An applicant organization is allowed to hire new staff needed to work on project activities and the cost of the new hire's salary would be included in the salary and wages section of the budget template.
4. Q. What are fringe benefits?  
A. Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits should follow an organization's established policy and may include, but are not limited to, the costs of leave (vacation, family-related, sick, or military) employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. Please refer to [2 CFR 200.431](#) for more information.
5. Q. Is travel required for each project?  
A. Travel is not required for projects submitted to the SCBGP. It is up to the applicant to determine whether travel costs are needed to support project activities. However, food safety research proposals submitted to the Center for Produce Safety (CPS) require project managers to travel to the annual CPS Research Symposium. Please review CPS's Request for Proposals, available at [www.centerforproducesafety.org](http://www.centerforproducesafety.org), for more information.
6. Q. What are indirect costs and is there a maximum rate? Does charging an indirect rate less than the maximum make a proposal more competitive?  
A. Indirect costs (also known as "facilities and administrative costs") are costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. Typically, these involve costs to run an organization as a whole, including administrative staff salaries, information technology services, rent, utilities, internet and telephone service, general use office supplies, insurance, and maintenance. The maximum amount of indirect costs an organization can request is eight percent of total personnel costs (budget category A. Salary and Wages plus category B. Fringe Benefits). There is no additional consideration given to proposals requesting less than the maximum indirect rate; however, proposals with indirect costs exceeding eight percent may be disqualified.
7. Q. Can SCBGP funds be used to construct an educational school garden?  
A. Costs to build an educational garden may be allowable if necessary to the success of the project and the educational garden will solely benefit specialty crops. Applicants should review the appropriate cost principles for their organization to verify the allowability of individual costs.
8. Q. Can SCBGP funds be used to improve land?  
A. SCBGP funds cannot be used for capital improvements, which are expenditures to acquire capital assets or make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations to capital assets that materially increase their value or

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useful life. Land grading and any permanent construction would be an unallowable cost because it improves the value of the land. However, an applicant could use cost share to pay for capital improvement costs and use SCBGP funds to pay for allowable costs, such as purchasing plants or seeds, soil amendments, etc.

9. Q. Should the brief description for Category F. Contractual include a breakdown of all the individual budget categories such as personnel, fringe, and travel for each contractor?  
A. The amount requested for category F should include all associated costs for each contractor; however, a detailed breakdown of all the individual costs for each contractor is not needed at this time. In the brief description column, list the services to be provided and the contractors that will work on the project, if known. Applicants will be asked to provide a detailed breakdown of the costs for each contractor if the project moves forward to the grant proposal phase.
10. 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 is allowed to claim indirect costs up to eight percent of their respective 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; this will make the indirect rate appear to exceed the eight percent maximum and could result in disqualification.
11. Q. What is program income?  
A. Program income refers to net income generated during the grant period by a supported project activity or earned as a direct result of the award. If a project will generate program income, applicants must provide a description of how it will be generated and how it will be used to solely enhance specialty crops. Program income cannot be used as a net profit and it must be spent before the end of the grant period in accordance with restrictions on allowable and unallowable costs and activities.
12. Q. If a project has the potential to generate income after the end of the grant duration, how should this be addressed in the proposal?  
A. Applicants are only required to report program income that is generated during the grant period. However, the proposal should make clear that the results of the project, including any income generated as a result of project activities, will benefit the specialty crop industry rather than the applicant organization.
13. Q. Is the budget net or gross?  
A. The budget should be gross costs that are allowable, appropriate, and necessary to complete the project objectives. If program income will be generated as a result of the project activities, it should be disclosed in the budget template and used to further the objectives of the project.
14. Q. **Revised November 9, 2016:** May applicants use SCBGP funds to subaward grants to subrecipients as part of a proposed project? If so, do subrecipient resumes or curriculum vitae (CVs) need to be submitted?  
A. Yes, applicants may subaward grant funds as long as the funded activities are necessary to carry out the project activities, solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, and benefit the specialty crop industry. When awarding funds as a pass-through entity, organizations must ensure those funds are spent in accordance with CDFA's SCBGP guidelines, USDA's program guidelines, and the cost principles for federal grants. Resumes or CVs are not required in the concept proposal

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phase, however if invited to submit a grant proposal more detailed information about those working on the project, including resumes or curriculum vitae may be required.

15. Q. Is there a limit on the amount of funds that may be requested within each budget category in the budget template?  
A. Aside from category H. Indirect Costs, there is no limit to the amount of costs that may be requested within each budget category, as long as the total SCBGP funds requested stays within the allowable grant amount: \$50,000 minimum - \$450,000 maximum (\$50,000 minimum - \$150,000 maximum for fixed amount awards). The amount requested for category H. Indirect Costs must not exceed 8.00% of total personnel costs (A. Salary and Wages + B. Fringe Benefits).
16. Q. Are applicants allowed to follow their own organization's established travel policy guidelines?  
A. It is a program requirement that applicants follow the *lesser* of the rates in effect at the time of travel as established by the United States (U.S.) General Services Administration (GSA) or the applicant's established travel policy.
17. Q. Are participant support costs allowable?  
A. Participant support costs, defined as costs for items such as stipends, subsistence allowances, travel allowances, or registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with approved conferences, training projects, and focus groups, are allowable.
18. Q. If a project increases sales of California specialty crops through marketing and/or promotion, would said sales be considered program income?  
A. Program income refers to income earned by the *grant recipient* directly generated by a supported project activity or earned as a direct result of the award. Only if income is earned by the recipient during the grant duration as a result of grant-funded activities should it be reported as program income.
19. Q. What should be included within the description column of the budget template?  
A. Refer to the SCBGP RFCP, pages 14-16, for detail regarding what to include in the description column. Although there are no character limits within the description column, applicants should provide a brief description of the costs or activities associated with each budget category. Applicants will be asked to provide greater detail if invited to submit a grant proposal.
20. Q. Are costs for equipment and equipment installation allowable?  
A. Costs for scientific research equipment and supplies used solely for the project to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops are allowable. Scientific research equipment is nonexpendable, tangible personal property with a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000 to be used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities. Supplies are items with an acquisition cost less than \$5,000 per unit that are used exclusively for the objectives of the project. Acquisition cost means the cost of the asset including the cost to ready the asset for its intended use, including installation if necessary. Therefore, costs for necessary installation of allowable scientific research equipment and/or supplies may be allowable under the Scientific Research Equipment and/or Supplies budget categories. Note: Costs for general purpose equipment, equipment that is not limited to research, scientific, or other technical activities with an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000, are not allowable.

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21. Q. Can applicants alter the title of the budget template attachment in FAAST?  
A. It is possible to alter the budget template attachment's title in FAAST. However, FAAST auto generates the attachment's title upon uploading, so modifications are not necessary. Importantly, the budget template must be attached as a Microsoft Word Document (.doc).

***New Questions: November 9, 2016***

22. Q. If specialty crops are grown as a result of grant funded activities, are there restrictions on whom the applicant organization can sell them to?  
A. There are no restrictions on whom the applicant organization can sell specialty crops to (i.e., local restaurant partners, community, etc.); however, specialty crops grown as a result of an SCBGP funded project cannot be given away as this is unallowable under the SCBGP. In addition, any revenue generated during the grant period by a supported project activity must be listed under budget category J. "Program Income" and include a description of how it will be generated and how it will be used to solely enhance specialty crops.
23. Q. Can SCBGP funds be used to develop a specialty crop cookbook and can it be sold to the public?  
A. SCBGP funds may be used to develop a specialty crop recipe cookbook as long as the main focus is on the specialty crop. In addition, the specialty crop recipe cookbook cannot be given away as this is unallowable but may be sold to the public. Reference Budget Template Q&A #11 for information on program income.
24. Q. Are rental fees for a commercial kitchen which is primarily used for nutrition education programs an allowable cost and if so, what is the appropriate budget category?  
A. Rental fees for commercial kitchens primarily used for nutrition education programs may be an allowable cost to the extent that the rates are reasonable, necessary to achieve the project objectives, and solely benefit the competitiveness of specialty crops. Rental costs for commercial kitchens should be categorized under the budget category G. "Other."
25. Q. Are printing/marketing costs for educational materials like recipe handouts, newsletters, and signage an allowable cost and if so, what is the appropriate budget category?  
A. Printing/marketing costs for educational materials like recipe handouts, newsletters, and signage may be an allowable cost if they solely promote the specialty crop rather than promote or benefit a program or single organization. Printing/marketing costs should be categorized under the budget category G. "Other."

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**GRANT PROPOSAL PHASE**

1. Q. What percentage of proposals make it through each phase? Does USDA ever decline SCBGP proposals?  
A. About 50-60 percent of concept proposals are invited to submit grant proposals and about 40-50 percent of grant proposals are submitted to USDA for consideration. These percentages vary each year and depend on the individual grant requests and CDFA's SCBGP allocation. Historically, USDA has not declined SCBGP proposals submitted by CDFA. However, USDA does have final decision making authority, so it is possible for a proposal submitted by CDFA to be declined.

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2. Q. Can substantial changes to a project's budget or activities be made between the concept proposal and grant proposal phase?
- 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 to a project's budget or activities are discouraged. There are no requirements regarding the maximum amount that the budget may change; however, drastic changes (+/- 20 percent) may be questioned. CDFA cannot anticipate how substantial changes to a project's scope or budget will be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.
3. Q. Can project participants and cooperating entities change between the concept proposal and grant proposal phase?
- A. Project participants (including project manager, project director, staff, and contractors), as well as cooperating entities can change between the concept proposal and grant proposal phase. However, CDFA cannot anticipate how changes would be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.

***New Questions: November 9, 2016***

4. Q. Can modifications be made from the concept proposal to either increase or decrease the amount requested in the grant proposal?
- A. Modifications 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.

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**COST SHARE**

1. Q. Can unallowable costs necessary to accomplish the project objectives be paid for with cost share?
- A. Applicants should use cost share to cover any unallowable costs and activities that are needed to accomplish their project objectives. In the concept proposal, only describe costs and activities that will be paid for with SCBGP funds; do not include any unallowable costs or activities that will be paid for with cost share. If the proposal advances to the grant proposal phase, the applicant will be asked to provide additional detail about funding sources and activities that will be paid for with cost share.
2. Q. If an organization has an indirect cost rate agreement that exceeds the SCBGP program requirement can the difference be considered cost share?
- A. The difference between the applicant's indirect cost rate and the program limit of eight 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.
3. Q. Is cost share required?
- A. Cost share is not required and each year projects are funded that have no cost share. However, the Technical Review Committee may view cost share as an indicator of industry support.

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4. Q. If an organization is staffed by volunteers, would volunteer time dedicated to the project be considered an in-kind contribution?
- A. Yes, in-kind contribution refers to the determined value of assets (i.e., equipment, use of land, volunteered staff time, etc.) donated to the project.
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## **REVIEW PROCESS**

1. Q. Do the Technical Review Committee members change between the concept proposal phase and the grant proposal phase?
- A. The Technical Review Committee does not typically change members between the concept proposal phase and the grant proposal phase. Generally, the same members review the concept proposals and grant proposals.
2. Q. What is required to serve on the Technical Review Committee (TRC)? May TRC members submit concept proposals?
- A. All individuals interested in serving on the TRC submit an application form and a copy of their résumé to [grants@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:grants@cdfa.ca.gov), which are reviewed for experience and expertise. TRC members are asked to complete and sign conflict of interest disclosures. In addition, applications and resumes are reviewed to identify possible conflicts of interest. All TRC members are recused from reviewing/discussing any proposals where conflicts of interest are identified or would likely occur. TRC members and their organizations may submit concept proposals, but said TRC members are prohibited from reviewing/discussing them.
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## **GRANT MANAGEMENT**

1. Q. If selected, when do recipients receive their funding?
- A. Conventional award recipients must submit invoices to CDFA for reimbursement of actual expenditures. Invoices must be submitted at least quarterly, but not more frequently than monthly, in arrears. In certain cases, recipients may be eligible to receive an advance payment (not exceeding 10 percent of the total award) to cover project expenditures. Funding for fixed amount awards will be distributed in one of two ways: In several partial payments, the amount of each agreed upon in advance, and the “milestone” or event triggering the payment also agreed upon in advance; or in one payment upon completion of the project. Applicants invited to the grant proposal phase will develop a budget based on milestones achieved during the activities of the project, or upon successful completion of the project.
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## **CALIFORNIA GROWN**

1. Q. Do applicants have to be a member of the Buy California Marketing Agreement (BCMA) in order to submit a proposal to the California Grown Promotion funding category?
- A. Applicants do not have to be a member of BCMA in order to submit a proposal to the California Grown Promotion funding category.
2. Q. What is the definition of California Grown Identity?
- A. The phrase California Grown Identity refers to specialty crops grown within the state of California and can be used by applicants to the California Grown Promotion funding category whether or not they are a member of BCMA. Leveraging California Grown Identity messaging and promoting

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multiple commodities has proven to be an effective way to maximize return on projects. Projects submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category should focus on highlighting specialty crops grown in California.

3. Q. Do projects submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category have to incorporate the CA GROWN logo?  
A. Applicants are not required to use the CA GROWN name or blue and yellow license plate logo in their projects. However, applicants that choose to use the CA GROWN name and logo must be members of BCMA.
  
4. Q. Are proposals submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category required to involve multiple specialty crop organizations? Could an applicant partner with a tourism or visitor's bureau?  
A. Proposals submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category are not required to involve multiple specialty crop organizations. It may be acceptable for a project to involve a tourism or visitor's bureau, depending on the nature of the project.