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**SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM – FARM BILL
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

Revised January 29, 2010

1. *Will CDFA provide answers to questions regarding whether specific Concept Proposal projects are eligible for SBCGP funding or best fit under a Funding Area?*
No, perspective applicants must determine whether a specific Concept Proposal meets the purpose and criteria established for SCBGP funding. Please refer to the 2010 SCBGP Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) posted on CDFA's website at www.cdca.ca.gov/grants to make this determination.
2. *If a Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool (FAAST) account was established for the 2009 SCBGP, does another need to be created for the 2010 SCBGP?*
No, the same account may be used for the 2010 SCBGP. FAAST has an option to retrieve your password on the log in page.
3. *What name should be listed under Applicant Organization?*
The name listed under Applicant Organization must be the same name the organization cites as listed on their federal tax ID number, Dun and Bradstreet number or when signing legal documents such as contracts.
4. *Is the \$75,000 minimum to \$500,000 maximum funding amounts per year or for the entire project period? How is match calculated?*
The minimum to maximum amount a project will be funded is for the entire project period. The equation to calculate the percentage of match is: $\text{total match} / \text{total project cost} = \text{percentage match}$.
5. *What does the question: 'RWQCB Responsible' in the FAAST application refer to and how should it be answered?*
RWQCB Responsible refers to the area of geographic responsibility covered by California's Regional Water Quality Control Boards. The RWQCBs are a subset of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has partnered with the SWRCB to host FAAST and consequently some questions only concern applicants that apply for SWRCB or RWQCB funds. Please simply answer the question "statewide."
6. *Can Concept Proposals only be submitted under one funding category if they appear to address issues under multiple categories? Can the same Concept Proposal be submitted under multiple categories? Will CDFA move a Concept Proposal to the more appropriate funding category?*
No, the applicant must select the single funding category which best fits issues that the Concept Proposal addresses. The applicant, not CDFA, must decide the appropriate funding category.
7. *Are government entities allowed to apply for SCBGP funding?*
CDFA is seeking Concept Proposals from eligible non-profit organizations, local, state and federal government entities, for-profit organizations, and universities (including private colleges and universities) for projects that solely benefit the production of and access to California specialty crops.

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Please see the 2010 SCBGP Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) posted on CDFA's website at www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants for eligibility requirements.

8. *Are non-profit organizations located outside of California eligible to apply for these funds?*
CDFA is seeking Concept Proposals from eligible non-profit organizations, local, state and federal government entities, for-profit organizations, and universities (including private colleges and universities) for projects that solely benefit the production of and access to California specialty crops.

Please see the 2010 SCBGP Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) posted on CDFA's website at www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants for eligibility requirements.

9. *Has CDFA participated in any multi-state grants or has it discussed this option with other states?*
No, CDFA has not participated in multi-state grants and has not discussed this option with other states.

10. *Is improving product quality eligible for funding? Could it be for both field cultural practices as well as processing practices?*

Yes, the purpose of CDFA's SCBGP is to enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops by creating and expanding partnerships, promoting and developing new and existing markets, reaching new consumers and ensuring the long term viability of California specialty crop agriculture.

The inclusion of processed specialty crops is also allowed. Since the purpose of the SCBGP 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. In addition, the specialty crop in the processed product must constitute greater than 50% of the product by weight, exclusive of added water. Funding is restricted to enhancing the competitiveness of California grown specialty crops and this would also apply to the processed product.

11. *How much of the up to \$17 million in 2010 SCBGP funds are obligated to previous, multi-year projects?*

None, all available 2010 SCBGP funds will support Grant Proposals selected through the current solicitation process described in the NOFA which can be found at www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants.

12. *Is there a required manner for submitting Concept Proposals and invited Grant Proposals? How does FFAST relate to CDFA's solicitation and review process?*

Yes, Concept Proposals and invited Grant Proposals must be submitted through FFAST. Applicants submit Concept and Grant Proposals through FFAST and the CDFA SCBG Technical Review Committee (Technical Review Committee) reviews the Concept and Grant Proposals on FFAST.

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The SWRCB web site at: <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>, contains a Frequently Asked Questions section and a User's Manual for the FAAST system. If after reading the information available on the web site, you have questions about the FAAST System, please contact FAAST customer service at (866) 434-1083, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or contact the SWRCB staff via e-mail at: faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov.

13. *What are matching funds? What are unallowable matches?*

Matching funds are the portion of project costs that are not borne by the funding source. Match dollars should be used to meet the objectives of the proposed project and may be either cash or in-kind contributions. In general, matching funds that do not meet these criteria are unallowable.

14. *Can an organization submit multiple proposals for different projects?*

Yes, eligible non-profit organizations, local, state and federal government entities, for-profit organizations, and universities (including private colleges and universities) may submit multiple Concept Proposals for different projects.

15. *Does the SWRCB host solicitations separate from CDFA's 2010 SCBGP?*

Yes, please visit the SWRCB's website at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/>.

16. *Will feedback be provided to applicants not selected for funding?*

Yes, CDFA will provide feedback to all applicants who were not selected for funding under the 2010 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program once the solicitation process is complete.

17. *Who are the Concept Proposal and Grant Proposal reviewers?*

The Technical Review Committee is made up of growers, industry, universities, public agencies and representatives from non-profits with an interest and expertise in specialty crop food and agricultural systems. Depending on the nature of the Concept Proposal, CDFA may seek additional technical peer review for more specialized proposals.

18. *Can recipients awarded SCBGP funds in prior years apply for 2010 SCBGP funds?*

Yes, recipients awarded SCBGP funds in prior years may apply for 2010 SCBGP funds.

19. *Can proposals be submitted that benefit specialty crops grown in another state?*

CDFA is seeking Concept Proposals for projects that solely benefit the production of and access to California specialty crops.

Please see the 2010 SCBGP Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) posted on CDFA's website at www.cdca.ca.gov/grants for eligibility requirements.

20. *Does the Concept Proposal Review Criteria include points for match?*

No, the Concept Proposal Review Criteria does not include points for match. Matching funds and in-kind donations are not required, but are strongly encouraged.

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The Concept Proposal Review Criteria may be viewed on CDFA's website at http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/pdfs/conceptproposalreviewcriteria.pdf.

21. *Does the Concept Proposal Review Criteria award or subtract points for continuing a previously funded SCBGP project?*

No, the Concept Proposal Review Criteria does not award or subtract points for continuing a previously funded SCBGP project. The Non-Scoring portion of the Concept Proposal Review Criteria requests a yes or no response to answer a question asking whether the project builds on a previous project funded under the SCBGP.

The Concept Proposal Review Criteria may be viewed on CDFA's website at http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/pdfs/conceptproposalreviewcriteria.pdf.

22. *Can you provide an example of a measurable outcome in the marketing area?*

Please visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Services' (AMS) website at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5080825> for project examples that include measurable outcomes.

23. *Is there a central location where identified needs and priorities for the specialty crop industry can be found?*

Please see CDFA's SCBGP NOFA at www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants. The NOFA includes a list of Funding Areas and Areas of Emphasis within each Funding Area which outline potential types of projects and approaches to consider.

24. *Is there a restriction on who can provide match?*

There is no restriction on who can provide match. Please see the response to Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) No. 13 above regarding match.

25. *Are salaries allowable match?*

Please see the response to Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) No. 13 above regarding match.

26. *If facilities or land can be considered as "in-kind" contributions/matching funds, is there a guideline to determine value?*

The method used for determining matching for equipment, buildings, or land (where the purpose of the award is to support activities that require the use of those resources), is normally only depreciation or use charges. For land, fair rental charges may be used, but other reasonable use calculations may also be approved.

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27. *What percentage of 2009 SCBGP Concept Proposals were invited to submit Grant Proposals?*

About 38 percent of the applicants who submitted Concept Proposals in response to the 2009 SCBGP NOFA were invited to submit Grant Proposals.

28. *How much in 2009 SCBGP funds were awarded?*

USDA, AMS awarded California \$16,325,315 to fund 56 projects. Please visit the USDA, AMS website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5080060> for a list of the projects funded.

29. *Is SCBGP grant funding taxable income?*

Applicants should check with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or their tax experts to determine whether SCBGP grant funding is taxable income. All successful SCBGP recipients will be required to complete a Payee Data Record which CDFA is required to submit to the IRS.

30. *How is the confidentiality of Concept Proposals assured? Are Concept Proposals sent to Technical Review Committee members with confidentiality agreements?*

As explained in FAQ No. 11 above, Technical Review Committee members review Concept Proposals directly on FFAST. In addition, Technical Review Committee members are required to sign confidentiality agreements.

31. *Will there be another workshop for Phase II – Grant Proposal of the solicitation process?*

No, specific directions and guidance for submitting Grant Proposals will be provided to successful Concept Proposal applicants.

32. *Can funds be used for equipment, facilities and land?*

Capital expenditures on general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable as direct and indirect charges. However, rental costs of buildings and equipment are allowable as direct costs in accordance with the federal Office of Management and Budget Cost Principles in Subpart T of 7 CFR Part 3015.

Special purpose equipment is allowable as direct costs, provided that item(s) with a unit cost of five thousand (\$5,000) or more and have the prior approval of CDFA. Special purpose equipment means equipment which is used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities.

33. *Can funds from a loan be used as match?*

Yes, if they qualify under the definition of Matching Funds found in the response to FAQ No. 13 above.

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34. *Can in-kind services or materials be provided by out-of-state or out-of-country organizations?*
Yes, if they qualify under the definition of in-kind contributions in the response to FAQ No. 12 above. Please see the 2010 SCBGP Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) posted on CDFA's website at www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants for applicant eligibility requirements.
35. *If intellectual property is developed using SCBGP grant funding, would the developer own the intellectual property? Can SCBGP funding be used to produce copyrighted or trademarked material?*
Yes, however all SCBGP recipients will be required to sign an agreement stating that CDFA and USDA have the right to use any copyrighted material or trademarks developed with SCBGP funding without royalty and may do so in cooperation with other public agencies. The agreement further states that the results of projects may be published by USDA, CDFA or by appropriate contractors or cooperators as mutually agreed.
36. *What are the payment methods to pay for costs incurred under the SCBGP?*
There are two types of payment methods to pay for allowable costs incurred - advance payments and reimbursement payments.
37. *Has CDFA allocated a specific funding amount available for each Funding Area and/or Area of Emphasis?*
No, CDFA has not allocated a specific funding amount available for each Funding Area and/or Area of Emphasis.
38. *Is there a need to provide documentation for indirect cost objectives?*
No, applicants will not be asked to provide documentation for indirect cost objectives.
39. *Will FAQs be posted for Phase I – Concept Proposal and Phase II – Grant Proposal?*
Yes, CDFA will be post FAQs during Phase I - Concept Proposal and Phase II – Grant Proposal.
40. *How are multiple Concept Proposals submitted by a single organization identified in FFAST?*
A unique pin number will be assigned to each Concept Proposal submitted in FFAST.
41. *What is the time limit in FFAST for an applicant to save their work?*
Applicants have ninety (90) minutes to save their work in FFAST.
42. *Can you spell check in FFAST?*
FFAST does not offer the capability to spell check. It is recommended that you draft your proposal in a word document, utilize spell check, and then copy into FFAST.
43. *Whose initials are used when submitting a Concept Proposal in FFAST if a consultant prepares it?*
Please use the initials of the person responsible for submitting the proposal.

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44. *Will FFAST accept Concept Proposals that do not include required information?*

Yes, FFAST accepts all Concept Proposals without exception. CDFA will conduct an Administrative Review to determine whether Concept Proposals meet all administrative requirements.

45. *Can you exceed the character limitations set in FFAST for Concept Proposals by providing more information in an attachment?*

No, you cannot exceed the character limitations set in FFAST for Concept Proposals by providing more information in an attachment. Attachments will not be accepted in Phase I – Concept Proposal.

46. *Since FFAST has a tab for attachments are attachments such as a Budget Template required for Concept Proposals?*

No, attachments are not required in Phase I – Concept Proposal. Please see the response to FAQ No. 44 above.

47. *Are Concept Proposal applicants required or allowed to list cooperating entities under the tab in FFAST labeled Cooperating Entities?*

Concept Proposal applicants are not required to list cooperating entities in FFAST, but can list them at their discretion.

48. *Is a Budget Template and/or Budget Narrative required attachments for the Concept Proposal? How will a Concept Proposal budget be scored under the review criteria?*

No, please see the response to FAQ No. 46 above.

Please also see CDFA's SCBGP Concept Proposal Technical Review Criteria at www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants for scoring criteria.

49. *Are descriptions of previously SCBGP funded projects located on CDFA's website?*

Yes, please visit www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants. There are links to descriptions of SCBGP projects funded between 2007 through 2009.

50. *Is a tax registration certificate or a business license an eligibility requirement for receiving SCBGP funds?*

CDFA is seeking Concept Proposals from eligible non-profit organizations, local, state and federal government entities, for-profit organizations, and universities (including private colleges and universities) for projects that solely benefit the production of and access to California specialty crops.

Those entities that are non-profit or for-profit will be required to provide either verification of their non-profit status or a copy of a valid California Business License if invited to submit a Grant Proposal.

Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

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Please also visit the 2010 SCBGP Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) posted on CDFA's website at www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants for eligibility requirements.

51. *Does the USDA, AMS website provide SCBGP eligibility requirements?*

Yes, SCBGP eligibility requirements are available on the USDA, AMS website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgbp>.

Eligibility requirements for California's 2010 SCBGP administered by CDFA are available at www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants.

52. *Are SCBGP grant funds available for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution or individual?*

No, please refer to FAQ response No. 50 above. SCBGP grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

Tuesday, January 26, 2010 Update

53. *Who do I list as Project Director when completing my application in FFAST?*

The project director is the authorized from the applicant organization to execute the funding agreement.

54. *According to the NOFA, SCBGP grant funds will not be awarded for projects that benefit or provide a profit to single organizations, institutions or individuals. Please explain.*

SCBGP projects must impact and produce measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution or individual. Projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution or individual are ineligible.

Please visit the 2010 SCBGP Guidance Document on the USDA, AMS website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5080702> for examples of acceptable and unacceptable projects.

55. *Can an organization that received 2009 SCBGP funding include the same or similar measurable outcomes in their 2010 SCBGP Concept Proposal?*

Applicants are required to demonstrate how a Concept Proposal submitted under the 2010 NOFA builds upon a previously funded SCBGP project. Measurable outcomes should be appropriate to the 2010 Concept Proposal.

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57. *Are applicants required to state Latitude/Longitude and Watershed, County or Legislative Information in FFAST?*

Requests for Latitude and Longitude: Please leave blank; this information is not required

Watershed: Please leave blank; this information is not required

County: Enter county/counties

Legislative Districts: Select District

58. *Is market research for potential new products made from specialty crops eligible to apply for the 2010 SCBGP?*

Although CDFA cannot comment on the eligibility of specific projects as stated in the response to FAQ No. 1, please see paragraph 1, in the response to FAQ No. 10 regarding products.

59. *How will my project budget be determined reasonable and appropriate if only the total amount is requested in the Concept Phase?*

The Technical Review Committee will conduct their review based on all questionnaire responses in the Concept Proposals and according to their best judgment about whether the project can be accomplished with the funds requested.

60. *Is there a requirement for liability insurance if an applicant is awarded SCBGP funding?*

Applicants that receive SCBGP funding will be required to sign a grant agreement that the applicant agrees to indemnify, defend and save harmless the State, its officers, agents and employees from any and all claims and losses accruing or resulting to any and all contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, laborers, and any other person, firm or corporation furnishing or supplying work services, materials, or supplies in connection with performance of the project, and from any and all claims and losses accruing or resulting to any person, firm or corporation who may be injured or damaged by Recipient in the performance of the project.

Friday, January 29, 2010

61. *Would facilitating seminars and technical educational efforts for specialty crop growers be eligible under the Funding Area of Marketing or Research?*

Although CDFA cannot comment on the eligibility of specific projects as stated in the response to FAQ No. 1, please refer to the NOFA for a description of Funding Areas.

62. *Is an organization allowed to match/cost-share unrecovered indirect costs?*

Please refer to the description of matching funds in FAQ No. 13 above.

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63. *The NOFA states that a proposal shall not benefit a single organization, institution, or individual. Does this refer to the findings or the funding?*

Please refer to FAQ No. 54 above.

64. *Is it possible for potential applicants that were unable to attend CDFA's SCBGP Workshops to receive any training materials?*

CDFA has posted the 2010 SCBGP Power Point slides presented at the Workshops on its website at:

http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2010SCBGPWorkshop.pdf

Please refer FAQ No. 12 for information on how to submit Concept Proposals through the FAAST web based application tool.

65. *Is the Concept Proposal for the Food Safety Funding Area due February 1, 2010?*

CDFA has partnered with the University of California, Davis' Center for Produce Safety (CPS) to utilize the technical expertise of their grant reviewers in the area of food safety. According to their website, CPS will announce a separate food safety proposal solicitation on March 1, 2010. Please refer to the CPS website at <http://cps.ucdavis.edu> for their solicitation timeline and proposal requirements.

66. *Should a consultant assisting with implementation of a Concept Proposal project be listed as a collaborator in FAAST?*

Consultants can be listed in FAAST in the Cooperating Entities section. Cooperating entities are organizations an applicant is/will be working with to plan and/or implement the proposed project.

67. *Should consultants be listed as project manager in fast if they are responsible for day-to-day project management?*

The project manager is the day-to-day contact on the project from the applicant organization.

68. *Do in-kind match contributions need to be estimated at a dollar value? Can the dollar value of in-kind match contributions be combined with cash match contributions?*

Yes, an estimation of the dollar value is needed for in-kind match contributions. Yes, the dollar value of in-kind and cash match contributions can be combined.

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69. *How is match calculated?*

Match is calculated based on the percentage of the total project cost, not the grant amount requested. To calculate, the total match cost is divided by the total project cost for the percentage of match (Total match cost/Total project cost = percentage match).

Example:

Project cost:	\$142,857
SCBGP funds requested:	\$100,000
Secured matching funds:	\$42,857
Percent of Match:	30%