

2014 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (SCBGP)
PHASE II, GRANT PROPOSAL
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)
MARCH 19, 2014

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Was the Grant Proposal due date extended?
Yes, Grant Proposals are due Sunday, March 23, 2014 by 11:59 pm. Original due date was Friday, March 21, 2014. Refer to revised 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions issued on February 25, 2014.
2. How do applicants access proposals in FFAST to begin working on Phase II-Grant Proposal?
Log into FFAST; Click on Active Applications/Surveys; Click on the title of the proposal.
3. How do applicants access feedback provided by the Technical Review Committee in Phase I-Concept Proposal?
Log into FFAST; Click on Submitted Applications/Surveys; Click on the title of the proposal; Click on the Feedback Tab.
4. Are applicants required to address the Technical Review Committee comments in the Grant Proposal?
No, applicants are not required to address Technical Review Committee comments in the Grant Proposal; however, applicants are strongly encouraged to use the comments provided to assist in developing a detailed Grant Proposal.
5. Can applicants change their organization name in FFAST?
Yes, refer to the [FFAST Manual](#) from the FFAST website for instructions.
6. Where does an applicant download the required templates (Work Plan and Budget Narrative)?
Log into FFAST; Click on Active Applications/Surveys; Click on the title of the proposal; Click on the Questionnaire tab. Links to the templates are in the question associated with each template. Question 10 contains the link to the Work Plan template. Question 12 contains the link to the Budget Narrative template.
7. Can Grant Proposals be submitted under a different funding category than the Concept Proposal?
No, Grant Proposals cannot be submitted under a different funding category than the Concept Proposal.
8. Within FFAST do the character limitations include spaces?
Yes, FFAST application character limits for each question include spaces and hidden formatting.
9. Can applicants attach supplementary material to Grant Proposals?
Yes, applicants can attach supplementary material to Grant Proposals; however, the Technical Review Committee may only review the required attachments.
10. Can Project Titles change from the Concept Proposal to the Grant Proposal?
Yes, Project Titles can be updated from the Concept Proposal to the Grant Proposal. Access the General Information tab in FFAST to update the Project Title.

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11. Can Project Descriptions change from the Concept Proposal to the Grant Proposal?
Yes, Project Descriptions can be updated from the Concept Proposal to the Grant Proposal. Access the General Information tab in FFAST to update the Project Description. Project Description suitable for dissemination to the public should summarize the need for the project, include description of the goals and objectives, and plan for evaluating and measuring the success of the project.
12. Should responses provided in the Concept Proposal be revised to align with responses provided in the Grant Proposal?
No, responses provided during the Concept Proposal cannot be revised.
13. Will the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) provide answers to specific questions regarding the eligibility of Grant Proposals?
No, in order to maintain the integrity of the competitive grant process, CDFA is unable to advise and/or provide applicants with information specific to their Grant Proposal. Applicants must determine whether specific Grant Proposals meet the purpose and criteria established for SCBGP. Refer to the 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, page 6.
14. Will additional comments be provided other than the comments currently available under the Feedback tab?
No, additional comments will not be provided. The only comments provided are available under the Feedback tab in the FFAST system. Refer to General Questions FAQ number 3.
15. Can applicants add Project Partners or Cooperative Entities?
Yes, Project Partners and Cooperative Entities can be added to the Cooperative Entities Section.
16. Can changes be made to Grant Proposals after the submittal deadline?
No, changes cannot be made to Grant Proposals after the submittal deadline.
17. Will CDFA provide applicants farming community contact information to assist with outreach efforts?
No, CDFA does not provide applicants farming community contact information. It is up to the applicant to determine outreach efforts.
18. Will there be a provision for the uploading of supplementary material as appendices to the Grant Proposal?
No, in FFAST under the 'Application Attachments' tab, a drop down menu with pre-populated attachment titles is listed that are specific to SCBGP Grant Proposal solicitation.
19. What is meant by the "Public Relations" as referenced in the 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix B, page ii?
Public Relations refers to promotional activities and materials that support enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops.

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20. Can SCBGP funds directly benefit or provide profit to a single organization, institution, or individual?
No, SCBGP funds can not directly benefit or provide profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, page 4.

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21. When will SCBGP awards be announced?
CDFA anticipates announcing SCBGP awards by October 2014. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, page 5.
 22. Where can applicants include references and citations?
It is up to each applicant to determine the most appropriate placing of references and citations.
 23. Will the Technical Review Committee have access to the Concept Proposal comments provided to applicants?
Yes, the Technical Review Committee will have access to the Concept Proposal comments provided to applicants.
 24. Are there examples of Grant Proposals and required attachments?
No, CDFA does not provide examples of Grant Proposals and required attachments.
 25. Where can applicants access information regarding eligibility of a particular crop or commodity?
Applicants can access a list of eligible specialty crops on United States Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Marketing Service website, <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgrp> under Resources.
 26. Are certain specialty crops viewed as a higher priority than others?
No, all specialty crops are viewed as equal priorities.
 27. Will the Technical Review Committee have access to the Concept Proposals, allowing applicants to further elaborate in the Grant Proposal without repeating information/details?
No, the Technical Review Committee will not have access to the Concept Proposal responses. The applicants must submit a complete and detailed Grant Proposal.
 28. How are job titles and descriptions determined?
Job titles and descriptions should be consistent with the applicant organization's policies. It is up to each applicant to determine the appropriate title and list the applicable duties.
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PROJECT DURATION

1. Where should applicants identify the grant duration in the Grant Proposal?
The grant duration (project beginning and end date) should be reflected in the Work Plan under the timeline column.
2. Can the Project Duration change from the Concept Proposal to the Grant Proposal?
Yes, the Project Duration can change from the Concept Proposal to the Grant Proposal as long as activities occur within the grant period, October 1, 2014, to June 30, 2017.
3. If awarded and delays occur with implementation of project activities, is there a possibility of extending the project?
Yes, extensions may be requested/granted as long as the project activities occur on or before June 30, 2017.

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FAAST APPLICATION

PROJECT PURPOSE

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1. Is it necessary to provide background justifying financial need for SCBGP funds?
No, it is not necessary to provide background justifying financial need for SCBGP funds. However, applicants must address the specific issue, problem, or need; why the project is important and timely; and the overall objective of the project within the Project Purpose to justify investment.

SCBGP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

No SCBGP Goals and Objectives questions posted at this time.

PRIOR YEAR SCBGP PROJECTS

1. Are applicants required to provide information on previously funded SCBGP Projects that build on the Grant Proposal project?
Yes, if the Grant Proposal project is a continuation of a project that the SCBGP funded previously, describe how the project differs from and builds on the previous project's effort.

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2. Does the Prior Year SCBGP question only apply to applicants and the collaborators within the proposed project, or any SCBGP project related to the proposed project?
Prior Year SCBGP Project applies to any previously funded SCBGP project.
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PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

No Project Sustainability questions at this time.

SPECIALTY CROP ENHANCEMENT

1. Can a project that promotes California specialty crop products include ineligible products or commodities?
Yes, projects may also benefit ineligible products or commodities; however, applicants must describe in detail what tracking mechanisms and processes 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. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix B, "Solely Enhancing the Competitiveness of Specialty Crops."

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2. Can SCBGP funds be used to purchase non-specialty crop items (i.e., rice, milk, cheese, or meat) if the items are necessary for the promotion of the specialty crop (i.e., cooking demonstration and/or recipes)?
No, SCBGP funds cannot be used to purchase non-specialty crop items. For instance, recipes that include more than 50 percent of specialty crops by weight are allowable, but non-SCBGP funding sources (i.e., Matching Funds) would need to be used to purchase the non-specialty crop ingredients. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix B, "Solely Enhancing the Competitiveness of Specialty Crops."
 3. Are proposals focused on processed foods made from California-grown specialty crops eligible for SCBGP funding? If so, can the proposal relate to the processing of specialty crops and the marketing of the processed products by specialty crop growers?
Yes, proposals focused on processed specialty crops products are eligible for SCBGP funding. However, since the purpose of the SCBGP is to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, the focus of the project proposal should be on the specialty crop in the processed product. Additionally, the specialty crop in the processed product should constitute greater than 50 percent of the product by weight, exclusive of added water. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix B, "Solely Enhancing the Competitiveness of Specialty Crops."
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FUNDING SOURCES

1. If there is potential for funding from another Federal or State grant program for a small percentage of the project, is it necessary to provide the funding information?
Yes, potential funding from another Federal or State grant program should be provided.
 2. Can SCBGP funds be used to build upon or expand on a project funded by another Federal or State grant program?
Yes, SCBGP funds may be used to build upon or expand on a project funded by another Federal or State grant program, as long as the SCBGP funds do not duplicate the activities funded by the other project, but rather supplement or expand efforts.
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POTENTIAL IMPACT

1. The Potential Impact question states the project should not impact "a particular commercial product." If a commercial product solely benefits the majority of the California specialty crop producers in the specific specialty crop industry, is it acceptable under the SCBGP?
Yes, a commercial product that solely benefits California specialty crops is acceptable as long as the project does not benefit a single organization, institution, or individual.
2. Is CDFA able to refer applicants to other sources of information for assistance with quantifying economic impacts?
No, CDFA is unable to provide suggestions to assist applicants in the preparation of Grant Proposals. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, page 6.
3. Should applicants address how their project will have a multistate (benefitting two or more states) or national impact?
If applicable, applicants should address how their project will have a multistate or national impact.

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4. Should applicants address how their project will benefit the specialty crop industry, including potential economic impacts?
Yes, applicants must address how their project will benefit the specialty crop industry, including potential economic impacts.

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5. Does CDFA require applicants to state the potential impact to the public?
No, CDFA does not require applicants to state the potential impact to the public; however, if applicable, applicants should provide the potential economic impact to the specialty crop industry.
6. Are all levels of eligible specialty crop production (i.e., promotion of seeds) considered a benefit to the specialty crop industry?
It is up to each applicant to demonstrate how their project, including all levels of crop production, will benefit the specialty crop industry.
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EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

1. Is there additional information available on how to develop Expected Measurable Outcomes?
Yes, additional information on how to develop Expected Measurable Outcomes is provided in 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix C, pages i-ii.
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PERFORMANCE MONITORING PLAN

1. Is the Performance Monitoring Plan a required attachment?
No, Performance Monitoring Plan is not a required attachment. Performance Monitoring Plan must describe the process of collecting and analyzing data to meet the project's goal(s) of evaluating and monitoring progress in narrative format. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix A, page vi.
2. The Performance Monitoring Plan states that measurable outcomes may be measured outside the grant period. Should we include performance monitoring activities that occur outside of the grant period in the Work Plan and the Budget Narrative?
No, the Performance Monitoring Plan can include measurable outcomes that may be measured outside the grant period, but the Work Plan and Budget Narrative will only include activities and costs that occur within the grant period.
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WORK PLAN

1. What is the Performance Indicator column for in the Work Plan?
The Performance Indicator column in the Work Plan is to describe how data will be used to monitor performance, as well as outreach efforts. Information in this column should align with the Performance Monitoring Plan, but only include performance monitoring activities that will occur within the grant period.
2. Does the Work Plan only need to list activities performed by the Project Director and Co-Project Director?
No, the Work Plan must list all SCBGP grant-funded activities for all staff.

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3. What is the relationship between the Performance Indicator and Work Plan activities?
Performance indicators explain how the activities or process of collecting, analyzing, and distributing data will be done to monitor project performance, and used to correct project deficiencies and improve performance during and after the grant period.

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4. How are job titles and descriptions determined?
Job titles and descriptions should be consistent with the applicant organization's policies. It is up to each applicant to determine the appropriate title and list the applicable duties.
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PROJECT COMMITMENT

1. To whom should Letters of Support (LOS) be addressed?
LOS should be addressed and sent to the Grant Proposal applicant. Applicants can attach LOS in FFAST under the Attachments tab.
2. Are LOS required?
No, LOS are not required, but are **strongly** encouraged.
3. Where should LOS be attached?
LOS relevant to the project should be attached under the Attachments Tab in the FFAST system. Refer to the 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix A, page vii.
4. Can LOS come from Cooperative Entities?
It is up to each applicant to determine who should provide LOS.
5. To whom should LOS affiliated with the applicant organization (i.e., task force, advisory committees, etc.) be addressed to?
Letters of Support affiliated with the applicant organization should be addressed to CDFA, and sent to the Grant Proposal applicant. Applicants can attach LOS in FFAST under the Attachments tab.
6. Are LOS required from Contractors/Consultants participating in the project?
No, LOS are not required from Contractors/Consultants participating in the project.
7. What are applicants required to include under Project Commitment?
Applicants are required to describe how specialty crop stakeholders outside the applicant organization, individuals, and organizations involved in the project support the project and why.

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8. Who should be listed as Cooperating Entities?
Cooperating entities are organizations an applicant is/will be working with to plan and/or implement the proposed project. Cooperating Entities can include individuals who may receive a portion of SCBGP funds and/or provide Matching Funds or In-Kind Contributions.
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BUDGET NARRATIVE

1. Is an Excel Budget Template required for Phase II-Grant Proposal?
No, an Excel Budget Template is not required for Phase II-Grant Proposal.

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2. Is an updated Concept Proposal Budget Template required for submission of Phase II-Grant Proposal?
No, an updated Concept Proposal Budget Template is not required Phase II-Grant Proposal.
3. Is the Budget Narrative Template (Word doc) the only required budget document for Phase II-Grant Proposal?
Yes, the Budget Narrative Template is the only required budget document for Phase II-Grant Proposal.
4. What is the limit for compensation for individual Contractor/Consultants?
Annual and hourly rates or flat fees for individual Contractor/Consultants' compensation may not exceed the salary of the GS-15 step 10 for their locality/area without a reasonable justification, excluding travel and subsistence as established by the Federal government. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix C, page v.
5. What is an example of a justification of individual Contractor/Consultant rates that exceed the salary of the GS-15 step 10?
A justification for an individual Contractor/Consultant rate that exceeds the salary of the GS-15 step 10 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 Contractor/Consultant.
6. If a Contractor/Consultants' maximum hourly rate exceeds the hourly rate of the GS-15 step 10, can the amount by which it is exceeded be paid with Matching Funds?
Yes, Matching Funds may be used to cover the portion in excess of the GS-15 step 10.
7. What is the maximum amount of indirect costs an organization is allowed? Does the maximum amount apply to indirect costs charged by Subcontractors?
Subject to pending United States Department of Agriculture SCBGP regulations, the maximum amount to indirect cost an organization is allowed is 5% of the total Personnel plus Fringe Benefits costs. The 5% includes all indirect costs budgeted by the applicant and its Subcontractors. For example, if Personnel plus Fringe Benefit costs total \$100,000, indirect costs cannot exceed \$5,000. If the organization hires a Subcontractor/Consultant who charges \$1,000 in indirect, the maximum amount the applicant organization may claim in indirect costs is \$4,000.
8. Are product samples for an in-store promotion for a new product an allowable cost?
Yes, product samples for an in-store promotion for a new product may be an allowable cost as long as the costs can be specifically identified; easily and accurately traced to activities that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops; and focus on the specialty crop (must consist of 50 percent of specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water to be covered by SCBGP funds).
9. Are supplies such as desktop or laptop computers for experiments and data analyses allowable under the SCBGP?
Yes, supplies such as desktop or laptop computers may be allowable if the supplies support the purpose and goal of the project and solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix A, page x.

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10. Are applicants required to provide bids for Contractors/Consultants with the Grant Proposal?
Applicants are not required to provide bids for Contractors/Consultants with the Grant Proposal. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix C, page v.
11. Can modifications be made from the Concept Proposal to either increase or decrease the amount requested in the Grant Proposal?
Yes, the amount requested in the Concept Proposal was based on an initial estimation of the SCBGP funds needed to support the Project Purpose and Work Plan activities. Developing a detailed Grant Proposal may result in slight modifications in the original budgeted amount or shifts in budget categories. However, modifications resulting from changes in the Project Purpose or Scope of Work provided in the Concept Proposal are not acceptable.
12. **Revised March 19, 2014.** Which budget category should applicant organization's travel costs associated with attending conferences be listed under?
Applicant organization's travel costs associated with attending conferences should be listed under the 'Travel' budget category. However, fees associated with attending conferences and meetings (i.e. registration fees) should be listed under "Other."
13. Do supplies have to be less than \$5,000?
No, there is no limitation to the total supply costs; however, per unit costs cannot exceed \$5,000.
14. Where should budget modifications to either increase or decrease the amount requested be indicated?
Budget modifications to either increase or decrease the amount requested must be indicated under the 'Project Tab' in FFAST and in the Budget Narrative.
15. What are the maximum allowable per diem rates?
The maximum per diem rates allowable are the rates established by the California Department of Human Resources. Exceptions: University of California applicants must comply with the University Travel Policies (State Contracting Manual, Volume 1, Section 3.18(A)), and Federal applicants must comply with Federal travel policies. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix B, page iv.
16. Do the examples of a justification for individual Contractor rates that exceed the Salary of the GS-15 step 10 under FAQ 4 Budget Narrative apply to flat fee?
Yes, FAQ 4 Budget Narrative examples of a justification for an individual Contractor rate that exceeds the Salary of the GS-15 step 10 applies to flat fee. Refer to Budget Narrative FAQ number 4 for specific examples.
17. Are travel costs associated with international travel allowable?
Yes, travel costs associated with international travel may be allowable if travel supports the purpose and goal of the project and solely enhances the competitiveness of specialty crops. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix C, page iv-v.
18. Can equipment that costs greater than \$5,000 be listed under the Equipment budget category?
Yes, equipment with a useful life of one year or more and a cost greater than \$5,000 must be listed under the Equipment budget category. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix C, page iii.

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19. What budget category should stipends for youth interns/trainees be listed under?
It is up to the applicant to determine whether stipends for youth interns/trainees should be categorized under 'Other' or 'Contractual' costs.
20. Does the SCBGP have requirements on how to reference fees for speakers/trainers or youth interns/trainees (i.e., stipends, honorariums, etc.)?
No, the SCBGP does not have requirements on how to reference fees for speakers/trainers or youth interns/trainees as long as the costs can be easily identified.
21. Are applicants required to list individual names under the Personnel budget category?
No, applicants are not required to list individual names under the Personnel budget category. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix A, page ix.
22. What is the limit for speaker/trainer fees?
There is no specific limit for speaker/trainer fees; however, speaker/trainer fees must be reasonable, allocable and necessary to meet project goals and objectives.
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23. Does CDFA prefer applicants submit a Budget Narrative with or without the instructions under each Budget category?
CDFA prefers applicants submit a Budget Narrative without the instructions under each Budget category. If costs are not budgeted for a specific category, indicate \$0.
24. If an applicant does not charge indirect costs but the Subcontractor does, is the indirect cost rate then calculated based on the Subcontractor's personnel and fringe benefits and limited to 5%?
Yes, if an applicant does not charge indirect costs but the Subcontractor does, the Subcontractor indirect cost rate is limited to 5% of the Subcontractor's personnel and fringe benefits.
25. Can flat rates be listed for Contractual Budget category?
Yes, flat rates can be listed for Contractual. Refer to Budget Narrative FAQ numbers 4 and 16 for examples of Subcontractor rates and justifications.
26. Do applicants need to detail applicable yearly individual Contractor/Consultant rates and services?
Yes, applicants need to detail applicable yearly individual Contractor/Consultant rates and services.
27. Will an increase in the funding request reduce the likelihood of being awarded a SCBGP grant?
No, increasing the funding request may or may not reduce the likelihood of receiving a SCBGP award. Refer to Budget Narrative FAQ number 11.
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MATCHING FUNDS/IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Are Matching Funds and In-Kind Contributions required?
No, Matching Funds and In-Kind Contributions are not required for the SCBGP, but are **strongly** encouraged.

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2. What supporting documentation is required for Matching Funds that have been secured?
Supporting documentation, often written as a letter to the applicant organization, should confirm the contribution source, type, and amount of the contribution, as well as include activities that will be conducted in support of the project.
3. Where can applicants address how Matching Funds will be used to support the project?
Applicants can address how Matching Funds will be used to support the project in FFAST, application questionnaire, Question 13.
4. Can Matching Funds be applied to project activities that occur outside of the grant period?
It is up to the applicant to determine how Matching Funds may be used; however, projects that may have the potential to benefit non-specialty crops must use Matching Funds to support non-specialty crop activities or portion of activities.
5. What are Matching Funds? What are unallowable Matches?
Matching Funds are the portion of project costs that are not borne by the funding source. Matching Funds 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. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix A, page iv, Question 5, Note and Appendix B, "Solely Enhancing Specialty Crops."
6. Should Matching Funds and In-Kind Contributions be included in the Local Cost Match, under Project Budget Section in the FFAST system?
Yes, the Project Budget Section, Local Cost Match in FFAST may include Matching Funds or In-Kind Contributions.
7. Can modifications be made from the Concept Proposal to change the source(s) of Matching Funds/In-Kind Contributions and/or increase or decrease the amount of Matching Funds and In-Kind Contributions contributed to the Grant Proposal?
Yes, Matching Funds and In-Kind Contributions modifications can be made from Concept Proposal to Grant Proposal. Documentation confirming the source, type, and amount must be attached. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix C, page iii.
8. Can a crowd funding platform be used to obtain Matching Funds?
It is up to each applicant to determine how Matching Funds should be obtained. However, SCBGP funds cannot be used to support sponsorship and fundraising activities. Refer to 2014 Grant Proposal Instructions, Appendix C, page iii, "Limitations and Restrictions" and Matching Funds/ In-Kind Contributions FAQ 5.

PROJECT OVERSIGHT

1. Is a narrative required for the Project Oversight question?
No, a narrative is not required for the Project Oversight question; however, applicants may attach a resume or curriculum vitae for the Project Director, Project Manager, Principal Investigator, and/or collaborators who will receive a portion of the project funds or directly manage activities funded through the SCBGP.

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2. Who should provide Curriculum Vitae (CV)s or Resume(R)s?
CVs or Rs—whichever is most applicable—should be provided for Project Directors, Co-Project Directors, or collaborators that *directly* manage activities funded through the SCBGP.
3. Are there page length restrictions for CVs or Rs?
No, there are no page length restrictions for CVs or Rs.
4. Can the Project Director and/or Project Manager Change from the Concept Proposal phase to the Grant Proposal phase?
Yes, the Project Director and/or Project Manager may change from the Concept Proposal phase to the Grant Proposal phase.