



**SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
HUGH E. WEATHERS, COMMISSIONER**

**Specialty Crop Block Grant Program  
2015 Guidance/Instruction Document**

P.O. Box 11280  
Columbia, SC 29211

[www.agriculture.sc.gov](http://www.agriculture.sc.gov)

(803)734-2210  
Fax: (803) 734-2192

## Overview

---

Applications for Specialty Crop Block Grant funding should describe how the project potentially impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution or individual. All projects must demonstrate strong justification for the requested budget as well as the potential for providing significant demonstrable benefits to South Carolina specialty crops.

Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution or individual. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Projects will be funded at varying levels depending on the nature of the project. Selected projects will receive funding on a cost reimbursement basis only.

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) will select project proposals to be included in the State Plan submitted to the Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA for funding. Projects will not begin until after October 1, 2015.

SCDA reserves the right to fund proposals partially or fully. Where more than one proposal on an eligible research topic is acceptable for funding, SCDA may request cooperation between grantees or revisions/adjustments to a proposal in order to avoid duplication and to realize the maximum benefit to the state.

Each section outlined below is expanded to assist you in preparing your grant proposal. Please refer to each section as each has specific requirements that must be included in your grant proposal.

- Contact Information
- Proposal Requirements
- Project Purpose
- Potential Impact
- Developing Expected Measureable Outcomes
- Oversight and Commitment
- Work Plan
- Budget Narrative Format

## Proposal Requirements

---

The acceptable font is Calibri, size eleven (11) point, and all margins must be one (1) inch. Information for each section should be specific but brief. Each proposal may not exceed six (6) pages (this does not include supporting documents or the Application Form). Proposals must include the following information.

See official Request for Application (RFA) for submission instructions.

### Project Purpose

---

Clearly state the purpose of the project:

- What is the specific issue, problem or need to be addressed by the project?
- Why is the project important and timely?
- What are the objectives of the project?
- Does the project build on a previous SCBGP project? How does this project compliment the work done previously?
  - Specifically, provide a three (3) to five (5) sentence summary per SCBGP Agreement of the accomplishments of the previous project(s) that have led you to seek continued funding.
  - Include how the new funding will supplement or build on previous funding from the SCBGP.
  - Describe the likelihood of the project becoming self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent on grant funds.
- Do any of the project activities or budget items have the potential to enhance the competitiveness of non-specialty crops? If yes, then the methods and/or the processes and internal controls your organization will implement to verify that all SCBGP funds are spent on activities and costs to only enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops must be described in detail. If you propose a cost-share or match to cover non-specialty crop activities and costs, include the specific costs for contributions proposed to meet the cost-share or match, the source of funding or contributions, and describe how the appropriate amount of cost-share or match was determined.
- Has the project been submitted to or funded by another Federal or State grant program?
  - If NO, indicate that it has not.
  - If YES, identify which Federal or State grant program and describe how the project differs from and supplements, but not duplicates the other Federal or State grant program funding efforts.

## Potential Impact

---

This section should show how the project potentially impacts the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution or individual. The following questions should be answered:

1. Who are the beneficiaries of the project?
2. How many beneficiaries will be impacted?
3. How will the beneficiaries be impacted?
4. When will the beneficiaries be impacted?
5. What is the potential economic impact of the project, if available?

## Expected Measurable Outcomes

---

Expected measurable outcomes are the results that you hope to achieve through your project activities. Outcomes identify the ultimate results, while your Work Plan activities identify how you intend to achieve these results. For assistance with Expected Measurable Outcomes, see below:

Each of the following questions must be addressed in this section:

- Describe each Expected Measurable Outcome that directly supports the project's purpose and is of direct importance to the beneficiaries. Each Expected Measurable Outcome should include a Goal, Target, Benchmark and Performance Measure.
  - GOAL – the goal is defined as what you hope to achieve as a result of conducting the activities and producing the outputs (tangible results that can be seen, touched, handled or moved about) of the project. Examples of outcome oriented goals could include a change (increase) in knowledge, a change in behavior, or changes in conditions that make a difference for the beneficiaries of the project.
  - TARGET – the specific number, dollar amount, etc. that you are hoping to achieve. This is NOT the target audience or target population. Examples would be a 10% increase in sales within one year; 250 participating growers certified by the end of the project.
  - BENCHMARK – the baseline number from which you are starting. Example: 2010 sales in this market were \$1.5 million; this is the benchmark for the project.
  - PERFORMANCE MEASURE – the tool you will use to measure whether the goals and targets are achieved. Performance measures are measures or indicators used to observe progress and measure actual results compared to the expected results. Example of a performance measure would be “follow-up surveys will be sent to participating growers to measure certifications achieved”.
  - MONITORING PLAN – include how performance towards meeting the outcomes will be monitored. Define who your data sources are and how the data will be collected. If the project involves a survey, provide some information about the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used and the population to be surveyed. How will the results of the project be shared with specialty crop growers and other interested parties? Outline how data gathered will be used to correct deficiencies and improve performance, both as it is gathered and analyzed and in subsequent project periods. The data collection plan should be integrated into your work plan and budget.

## Oversight and Commitment/Long Term Plan

---

### **Project Oversight**

- Who will oversee the project activities?
- How will oversight be performed? Include timelines, such as weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually.

#### Example of appropriate information for this section:

*The project will be overseen through well-established project management practices at the Specialty Crop Association (SCA) Training Association. Primary oversight responsibility lies with the Food Systems Program Manager, who has more than seven years of experience with SCA with more than four years in her current position. Every SCA program uses a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan with distinct performance measures, benchmarks and success indicators established for 2-3 distinct projects in each. Another tool for project M&E is the Workshop Planning Template that guides the goals, design, target competencies and other objectives of grower workshops. This project will also use a process wherein partner organizations are required to both initially inform and perform under shared evaluation targets. The program manager reports monthly project performance and the Healthy Local Foods committee will assess progress on a quarterly basis.*

### **Project Commitment**

- Who supports the project?
- Are industry stakeholders involved in the project and what role will they play?
- Will additional individuals or organizations be involved in the project and what role will they play?
- How will all grant partners work to meet the objectives of the project?

#### Example of appropriate information for this section:

*The Farm Extension and Research Center is a successful collaboration between County Cooperative Extension and Economic Development, with support from State University's College of Agriculture and Life Science as well as the Center for Environmental Farming Systems. The Farm Planning Committee includes representation from the partner institutions and agencies and has a monthly meeting schedule to plan and implement programs at the Farm. Programs during the past 2 years demonstrate a strong commitment to developing the capacity at the Farm and promoting educational activities that support farm vitality.*

### **Long Term Plan**

- Provide 2-3 sentences about the long-term goals of your organization or this project with regards to specialty crops and the benefits to the specialty crop industry after the project is complete.

## Work Plan

---

The following questions shall be addressed in this section:

1. When will each activity be accomplished?
  - a. Include progressive timelines for accomplishing each activity with month and year details
2. Who will perform the work of each activity?
  - a. If collaborative arrangements or subcontracts are used, make sure you specify their role and responsibilities in performing project activities.
3. Some items to consider:
  - i. Be sure to include performance monitoring activities.
  - ii. Include when data collection will be accomplished.
  - iii. Will outcome measures be completed or measured outside the grant period?

## Budget Narrative and Justification Format

---

The budget should contain a narrative, in paragraph format, so SCDA can determine if the costs are reasonable and allowable. This section allows you to explain the need for each line item in the budget, as well as show the breakdown of calculations used to arrive at the amount in each line of the budget. The budget narrative should clearly show the federal funds that support the project. If matching funds are budgeted, please do not commingle non-federal funds with federal funds in each budget section. If matching funds (not a requirement) are included, please show these funds separately. A total category expense spread sheet with the following cost categories must be included:

- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Contractual
- Other
- Program Income

Remember, all costs must be REASONABLE, ALLOWABLE and ALLOCABLE:

- Reasonable refers to actions a prudent business person would employ.
- Allowable refers to costs that may be charged to a grant or contract.
- Allocable refers to costs that provide a sole benefit to the project.

INDIRECT COSTS ARE NOT ALLOWABLE COSTS IN THE SCDA SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

## **General Compliance Information**

---

All applications submitted under this program are subject to release as public information. Each application will be an official record of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. These records are open to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to, and subject to any limitations of, the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), S.C. Code Ann. 30-4-10 et seq. (1976, as amended). The Department is committed to following both the letter and spirit of the FOIA.

The Applicant is required to disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest relative to this grant program. Failure to disclose any such relationship may result in the Applicant's disqualification or termination of agreement.

Grantees must comply with SCDA's reporting requirements and financial procedures outlined in the grant agreement. Any delegation by the Grantee to a subcontractor regarding any duties and responsibilities imposed by the grant award must be approved in advance by SCDA and shall not relieve the Grantee of its responsibilities to SCDA for their performance.

Grantees must remain in full compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Non-compliance may result in termination of the grant or ineligibility for reimbursement of expenses.

Grantees must keep a separate bookkeeping account with a complete record of all expenditures relating to the project. Records shall be maintained for three (3) years after the completion of the project, or as otherwise agreed upon with SCDA. SCDA and the South Carolina Auditor's Office reserve the right to examine all books, documents, records, and accounts relating to the project at any time throughout the duration of the agreement and for three years immediately following completion of the project. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action is initiated prior to the expiration of the retention period, then the records must be retained until authorized by SCDA. SCDA and the SC Auditor Office shall have access to the physical locations related to project activities.

## **Contact Information**

---

Amy London  
SCDA Grants Administrator  
PO Box 11280  
Columbia, SC 29211

(803) 734-7209  
(803) 734-2192 – FAX  
alondon@scda.sc.gov