

Notice of Request for Initial Proposals for Projects to be Funded From the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Strategic Ag Initiative (CFDA 66.716), Surveys, Studies, Investigations, Demonstrations, and Special Purpose Projects within the Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances

SUMMARY

EPA is soliciting proposals to help implement the Food Quality Protection Act and to support “transition” to using less and lower risk pesticides in food production. The program supports innovative efforts that enable growers to decrease reliance on agricultural pesticides while maintaining economical outcomes, by developing, demonstrating and/or applying reduced-risk alternatives and ecologically-based integrated approaches to pest management.

This grant program encourages “systems” approaches that integrate pest, soil and crop management practices. Although the focus is on reducing dependency on pesticides and developing alternatives to pesticides targeted under FQPA, a broader approach to problem-solving is encouraged in the development of project proposals under the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) and Section 20 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as amended.

1. Amount of Funding Available

Approximately \$85,000 in Federal funds is available for award for projects; individual grant awards range from \$5,000 to \$50,000;

The number of awards will depend on individual proposal cost; the final aggregate amount of federal funding for all proposals; and the total amount of federal funding available.

Should additional funding become available for award the Agency may award additional grants based on this solicitation and in accordance with the final selection process, without further notice or competition.

2. Right to Reject all Initial Proposals

The Agency reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

3. Matching/Cost Share Requirements:

There are no cost share requirements for these projects. However, matching funds are encouraged.

4. Project Period Time frame

Project period duration should not exceed two years.

5. Eligible Applicants:

Grant funds are available to non-profit groups, including commodity groups/associations and farmers’ groups, State agencies, Tribal Governments, Cooperative Extension, Universities, and Institutes of Higher Learning. Ineligible groups are encouraged to work

with an eligible organization to submit proposals. Implementation of all projects must occur within one of the four states of EPA Region 7: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri or Nebraska.

The EPA will consider only one proposal by an applicant.

6. Proposal Submittal - Due Dates

All proposals should be mailed or delivered to:

Environmental Protection Agency
Attention: Brad Horchem (WWPD/PEST)
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

Email: horchem.brad@epa.gov

EPA will consider all proposals which are post-marked by the U.S. Postal Service, hand-delivered, or electronically delivered to the Agency, or include official delivery service documentation indicating EPA acceptance from a delivery service, on or before the deadline published in the request for initial proposals. This due date is on or before 5 p.m. Central Time, March 13, 2003. Proposals received after the due date will not be considered for funding.

7. Statutory Authority and Applicable Regulations

Food Quality Protection Act Strategic Agriculture Initiative grants are awarded under the authority of Section 20 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide (FIFRA) Act as amended by the Food Quality Protection Act.

8. Allowable Costs

EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants, lobbying, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB Circular A-87; A-122; and A-21, as appropriate. Ineligible costs will be reduced from final grant award.

9. Federal Requirements

An applicant whose proposal is selected for federal funding must complete additional forms prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10). In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in Federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

10. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or the consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

11. Pre application Assistance

None planned.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

12. Purpose of This Request Is for Proposals

The Environmental Protection Agency, Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division, Pesticides Programs Branch, Region 7, is requesting proposals which will help implement requirements of the Food Quality Protection Act, and to support transition to using less and lower risk pesticides in food production. The program supports innovative efforts that enable growers to decrease reliance on agricultural pesticides while maintaining economical outcomes, by developing, demonstration and/or applying reduced-risk alternatives and ecologically-based integrated approaches to pest management.

13. High Priority Areas for Consideration

EPA will award Food Quality Protection Act Strategic Agriculture Initiative grants under the authority of Section 20 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide (FIFRA) Act as amended by the Food Quality Protection Act, for projects involving investigations, studies, demonstrations, research and training efforts that enable growers to decrease reliance on agricultural pesticides while maintaining economical outcomes, by developing, demonstration and/or applying reduced-risk alternatives and ecologically-based integrated approaches to pest management. These proposals should incorporate the following techniques:

- Utilize demonstration projects, outreach and/or education to increase the adoption of integrated or sustainable agricultural production practices which provide alternatives to pesticides impacted negatively by FQPA decisions.
- Work collaboratively with producers, commodity groups and other stakeholders by making the best use of expert field consultants, USDA research, EPA's safer substitutes, and university technical support on alternatives and integrated pest management practices.
- Actively engage scientists, farmers, industry, and local, state and federal partners in the specifics of implementing FQPA.
- Demonstrate region-specific pest management technologies and integrated crop management systems to replace pesticide uses which may be canceled under FQPA.
- Use "farmer to farmer" training and communication methods, community participation, and/or other forms of public-private cooperation.

14. Request for Proposal Format and Contents

Proposals must be typewritten, double spaced in 12 point or larger print using 8.5 x 11 inch paper with minimum 1 inch horizontal and vertical margins. Pages must be numbered in order starting with the cover page and continuing through the appendices. One original and one electronic copy is required. All proposals must include:

- Completed Page 1 of Standard Form SF 424*, Application for Federal Assistance, please include organization fax number and e-mail address.
- Completed Page 2 of Standard Form SF-424A*, Budget Information - Section B (See Allowable Cost)
- Detailed itemization of the amounts budgeted by individual Object Class Categories (See Allowable Cost)
- Statement Regarding whether this proposal is a continuation of a previously funded project (if so, please provide the assistance number and status of the current grant/cooperative agreement).

Executive Summary. The Executive Summary shall be a stand-alone document, not to exceed one page, containing the specifics of what is proposed and what you expect to accomplish regarding measuring or movement toward achieving project goals. This summary should

identify the measurable environmental results you expect including potential human health and ecological benefits.

Table of Contents. A one page table listing the different parts of your proposal and the page number on which each part begins.

Proposal Narrative includes parts I - VI. (Parts I through VI listed below are not to exceed 10 pages).

Part I: Project Title. Self-explanatory.

Part II. Objectives. A numbered list (1, 2, etc.) of concisely written project objectives - in most cases, each objective can be stated in a single sentence.

Part III: Justification. For each objective listed in Part II above, discuss the potential outcome in terms of environmental, human health, pesticide risk and/or use reduction or pollution prevention. If appropriate the target pest(s) and crop(s) should be explicitly stated. This section should be numbered with a justification corresponding to each objective.

Part IV: Literature Review. Briefly describe relevant information currently available. This should also include information on projects currently in progress that are relevant to or provide the basis for either the experimental design or the validation of a new approach to pest management.

Part V: Approach and Methods. Describe in detail how the program will be carried out. Describe how the system or approach will support the program goals.

Part VI: Impact Assessment. Please state how you will evaluate the success of the program in terms of measurable environmental results. How and with what measures will humans or ecosystems be better protected as a result of the program.

Proposal Appendices. These appendices must be included in the grant proposal. Additional appendices are not permitted.

- A. Literature Cited List cited key literature references alphabetically by author.
- B. Timetable A timetable that includes what will be accomplished under each of the objectives during the project and when completion of each objective is anticipated.
- C. Major Participants This appendix should list all farmers/ranchers, farm/ranch organizations, researchers, educators, and conservationists and others having a major role in the proposal. Provide name, organizational affiliation or occupation (such as farmer) and a description of the role each will play in the project. A brief resume (not to exceed two pages) should be submitted for each major researcher or other educator.

The electronic copy should be e-mailed to Horchem.Brad@epa.gov or submitted on a 3.5" disk, IBM compatible, readable in MS Word or Word Perfect, WP6/7/8/9 for Windows. The electronic copy should be consolidated into a single file.

- Original copy and/or disk should be sent to:
U.S. EPA Region VII, WWPD/PEST
% Brad Horchem
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101-2728
- Disks will be checked for computer viruses; proposals that are submitted with viruses will be disqualified. To be considered both the paper and electronic copy must be received by the due date.

15. Preliminary Eligibility Screening Requirements

To be eligible for consideration, applicants *must meet* all of the following criteria. Failure to meet the following criteria will result in the automatic disqualification of the proposal for funding consideration:

1. Be an applicant who is eligible to receive funding under this announcement;
2. The proposal must address one or more of the High Priority Areas for Consideration;
3. The proposal must meet all format and content requirements contained in this notice; and
4. The proposal must comply with the directions for submittal contained in this notice.

16. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria and weights:

1. Qualification and experience of the applicant relative to the proposed project activity. (13 pts);
2. Project proposal is consistent with the goals of FQPA Strategic Ag Initiative (38 pts);
3. Provisions for measuring and documenting the projects results quantitatively and qualitatively (24 pts); and
4. Likelihood that the project can be replicated in other areas by other organizations to benefit other communities. (25 pts).

17. Evaluation Process

Applicants will be screened to ensure that they meet all eligibility criteria and will be disqualified if they do not meet the criteria. All proposals will be reviewed, evaluated and ranked by a selected panel of EPA reviewers based on the above evaluation criteria.

18. Selection Process

The funding decision will be made from this group of top rated proposals based on the following additional factors:

1. R7 environmental priorities which are a) Agriculture b) Sensitive Populations c) Critical Ecosystems ; and
2. Extent of anticipated environmental impact of the project in Region 7.

19. Selection Official

Final selection of initial proposals will be made by the Region 7, Director, Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division.

20. Notification

The Region 7 EPA office will mail acknowledgments to applicants upon receipt of the proposal. Once proposals have been reviewed, evaluated and ranked, applicants will be notified regarding the outcome of the competition.

A listing of the successful proposals will be posted on the R7 website address at the conclusion of the competition. This website may also contain additional information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications.

21. Dispute Resolution Process

Procedures at 40 CFR 30.63 and 40 CFR 31.70 apply.

22. Confidential Business Information

Applicants should clearly mark information contained in their proposal which they consider confidential business information. EPA reserves the right to make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR Part 2, Subpart B. If no such claim accompanies the proposal when it is received by the EPA, it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the applicant.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Brad Horchem, R7 Project Officer at horchem.brad@epa.gov; Telephone (913) 551-7137; Fax (913) 551-7165
Karen Sherrill, R7 Competition Advocate at sherrill.karen@epa.gov. Telephone (913) 551-7461