

Q&A for the Gulf of Mexico Program Farmer to Farmer Cooperative Agreements 2017 RFP
(EPA-GM-2017-FARMER)

(Version 2 Posted September 13th 2017)

Question: Does the proposal have to be submitted by a farmer's association to the EPA? *(Received 8/22 at GMP-RFP@epa.gov)*

Answer: A proposal may be submitted by any eligible entity as identified in Section III. The proposal will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. which includes "the extent to which the proposal ... demonstrates a successful history of working with farmers to implement demonstration projects with results."

Question: The RFP indicates a preference of innovative, unproven, etc. concepts to improving water quality, but also is results oriented requiring at least a 5% impact on various metrics. My question relates to what would be a better approach to submitting an application:

1. Focus on a proven technology (would know estimated impact on water), but is not implemented at larger scales yet due to newness/unproven methods of delivery?
2. Or Focus on an unproven concept/technology that currently lacks the understanding of its impact on certain WQ parameters? *(Received 9/12 at GMP-RFP@epa.gov)*

Answer: Unfortunately, we cannot specifically recommend an approach while the RFP is active. That being said, innovative approaches can include both the options listed. This is because each landowner can have novel situations on their farm/ranch related to things like land use, crop rotations, management planning and other creative management techniques. Using Farmer-to farmer demonstration of that technology/practices can take innovative approaches in communication/demonstration. The project does have to meet a required measure such as a 5% improvement in water quality. The proposals only needs some type of innovative/novel component in it's delivery.

Question: It states in the RFA that the project must "demonstrate a minimum 5% improvement in at least one water quality parameter in a water body and/or segment by the end of the project period as compared to initial baseline". Does this need to be a measured improvement or can the improvement estimate be modeled based on application of beneficial practices in the chosen geography? *(Received 9/13 at GMP-RFP@epa.gov)*

Answer: The 5% improvement does need to be a measured improvement in at least one of the areas where the project is taking place.

Question: Given the funding in the RFA, do you have a sense as to whether or not an applicant should prioritize the 5% reduction over the education an outreach or is there any guidance on this for effort and budgetary management? *(Received 9/13 at GMP-RFP@epa.gov)*

Answer: While we cannot specifically recommend an approach while the RFP is active, both the 5% measured improvement (the environmental measure of success) as well as farmer-to-farmer led outreach (outreach measure of success) are required. The proposal needs to address both of these

requirements. There are many approaches that can be proposed and the applicant has to consider the best approaches for their farmer partners.