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for exclusion to ascertain whether the proposed project may fall within one or more of the exclusions, and should indicate if it does so on the National Environmental Policy Act Exclusions Form (Form CSRS-1234) provided in the NRICGP Application Kit.

(14) Even though the applicant considers that a proposed project may fall within a categorical exclusion, CSREES may determine that an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for a proposed project should substantial controversy on environmental grounds exist or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present that may cause such activity to have a significant environmental effect.

[56 FR 57952, Nov. 14, 1991. Redesignated and amended at 60 FR 63368, 63369, Dec. 8, 1995; 61 FR 45319, Aug. 29, 1996]

### § 3411.5 Evaluation and disposition of applications.

(a) *Evaluation.* All proposals received from eligible applicants and post-marked in accordance with deadlines established in the annual program solicitation shall be evaluated by the Administrator through such officers, employees, and others as the Administrator determines are uniquely qualified in the areas represented by particular projects. To assist in equitably and objectively evaluating proposals and to obtain the best possible balance of viewpoints, the Administrator shall solicit the advice of peer scientists, *ad hoc* reviewers, and/or others who are recognized specialists in the areas covered by the applications received and whose general roles are defined in §§ 3411.2(j) and 3411.2(k). Specific evaluations will be based upon the criteria established in subpart B, § 3411.15, unless CSRS determines that different criteria are necessary for the proper evaluation of proposals in one or more specific program areas, or for specific types of projects to be supported, and announces such criteria and their relative importance in the annual program solicitation. The overriding purpose of these evaluations is to provide information upon which the Administrator may make informed judgments in selecting proposals for ultimate sup-

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port. Incomplete, unclear, or poorly organized applications will work to the detriment of applicants during the peer evaluation process. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation, all applications should be written with the care and thoroughness accorded papers for publication.

(b) *Disposition.* On the basis of the Administrator's evaluation of an application in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section, the Administrator will (1) approve support using currently available funds, (2) defer support due to lack of funds or a need for further evaluations, or (3) disapprove support for the proposed project in whole or in part. With respect to approved projects, the Administrator will determine the project period (subject to extension as provided in § 3411.7(c)) during which the project may be supported. Any deferral or disapproval of an application will not preclude its reconsideration or a reapplication during subsequent fiscal years.

[56 FR 57952, Nov. 14, 1991. Redesignated at 60 FR 63368, Dec. 8, 1995, as amended at 61 FR 45319, Aug. 29, 1996]

### § 3411.6 Grant awards.

(a) *General.* Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose proposals are judged most meritorious in the announced program areas under the evaluation criteria and procedures set forth in this part. The date specified by the Administrator as the beginning of the project period shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. All funds granted under this part shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations of this part, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's "Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations" (part 3015 of this title) and the Department's "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to

State and Local Governments'' (part 3016 of this title).

(b) *Grant award document and notice of grant award*—(1) *Grant award document*. The grant award document shall include at a minimum the following:

(i) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has awarded a competitive grant under the terms of this part;

(ii) Title of project;

(iii) Name(s) and address(es) of principal investigator(s) chosen to direct and control approved activities;

(iv) Identifying grant number assigned by the Department;

(v) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;

(vi) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;

(vii) Legal authority(ies) under which the grant is awarded;

(viii) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the grant award; and

(ix) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by the Department to carry out its granting activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular grant.

(2) *Notice of grant award*. The notice of grant award, in the form of a letter, will be prepared and will provide pertinent instructions or information to the grantee that is not included in the grant award document.

(c) *Types of grant instruments*. The major types of grant instruments shall be as follows:

(1) *New grant*. This is a grant instrument by which the Department agrees to support a specified level of effort for a project that generally has not been supported previously under this program. This type of grant is approved on the basis of peer review recommendation.

(2) *Renewal grant*. This is a grant instrument by which the Department agrees to provide additional funding for a project period beyond that approved in an original or amended award, provided that the cumulative period does

not exceed the statutory limitation. When a renewal application is submitted, it should include a summary of progress to date from the previous granting period. A renewal grant shall be based upon new application, *de novo* peer review and staff evaluation, new recommendation and approval, and a new award instrument.

(3) *Supplemental grant*. This is an instrument by which the Department agrees to provide small amounts of additional funding under a new or renewal grant as specified in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section and may involve a short-term (usually six months or less) extension of the project period beyond that approved in an original or amended award, but in no case may the cumulative period for the project exceed the statutory limitation. A supplement is awarded only if required to assure adequate completion of the original scope of work and if there is sufficient justification to warrant such action. A request of this nature normally will not require additional peer review.

(d) *Funding mechanisms*. The two mechanisms by which new, renewal, and supplemental grants shall be awarded are as follows:

(1) *Standard grant*. This is a funding mechanism whereby the Department agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined time period without the announced intention of providing additional support at a future date.

(2) *Continuation grant*. This is a funding mechanism whereby the Department agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interests of the Federal government and the public. This kind of mechanism normally will be awarded for an initial one-year period, and any subsequent continuation project grants will also be awarded in one-year increments. The award of a continuation project grant to fund an initial or succeeding budget

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period does not constitute an obligation to fund any subsequent budget period. Unless prescribed otherwise by CSRS, a grantee must submit a separate application for continued support for each subsequent fiscal year. Requests for such continued support must be submitted in duplicate at least three months prior to the expiration date of the budget period currently being funded. Decisions regarding continued support and the actual funding levels of such support in future years usually will be made administratively after consideration of such factors as the grantee's progress and management practices and the availability of funds. Since initial peer reviews are based upon the full term and scope of the original special grant application, additional evaluations of this type generally are not required prior to successive years' support. However, in unusual cases (e.g., when the nature of the project or key personnel change or when the amount of future support requested substantially exceeds the grant application originally reviewed and approved), additional reviews may be required prior to approving continued funding.

(e) *Obligation of the Federal Government.* Neither the approval of any application nor the award of any project grant shall commit or obligate the United States in any way to make any renewal, supplemental, continuation, or other award with respect to any approved application or portion of an approved application.

(f) *Current Research Information Service (CRIS).* For each project funded, CRIS Form AD-416, "Research Work Unit/Project Description-Research Resume" and CRIS Form AD-417, "Research Work Unit/Project Description-Classification of Research" and specific instructions for their completion will be sent to the grantee for completion and return. Grant funds will not be released until the completed forms are received in CSREES.

[56 FR 57952, Nov. 14, 1991. Redesignated and amended at 60 FR 63368, 63370, Dec. 8, 1995]

### § 3411.7 Use of funds; changes.

(a) *Delegation of fiscal responsibility.* The grantee may not, in whole or in part, delegate or transfer to another

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person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of grant funds.

(b) *Change in project plans.* (1) The permissible changes by the grantee, principal investigator(s), or other key project personnel in the approved grant shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the grantee and/or the principal investigator(s) is uncertain whether a particular change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Administrator for a final determination.

(2) Changes in approved goals, or objectives, shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the Department prior to effecting such changes. Normally, no requests for such changes that are outside the scope of the original approved project will be approved.

(3) Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the Department prior to effecting such changes.

(4) Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the Department prior to effecting such changes, except as may be allowed in the terms and conditions of a grant award.

(c) *Changes in project period.* The project period determined pursuant to § 3411.5(b) may be extended by the Administrator without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the Administrator determines may be necessary to complete, or fulfill the purposes of, an approved project. Any extension, when combined with the originally approved or amended project period, shall not exceed five (5) years (the limitation established by statute) and shall be further conditioned upon prior request by the grantee and approval in writing by the Department, except as may be allowed in the terms and conditions of a grant award.