

PROPOSED PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

For

HATCH NATIONAL MULTI-STATE RESEARCH COMPETITIVE ALLOCATION PROGRAM

Report by the Hatch Working Group

Introduction and Background

Overview of President's Budget Proposal

The President's FY2007 budget proposed an initiative to move Hatch-funded multi-state projects from a formula driven allocation to one based on competition and to increase the proportion of Hatch funding to such projects. Over a five-year period, the Hatch formula funds would be redirected to nationally, competitively awarded multi-state/multi-institutional projects from the current base of twenty five percent to fifty-five and sixth tenths percent. The funding for nationally, competitively awarded multi-state/multi-institutional projects allows institutions to focus on program strengths and sustain those programs through linking local issues to broad national goals.

The budget proposal noted that Hatch Act funding will continue to support research at the State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAES) related to production, marketing, distribution, and utilization of crops and resources, enhancing nutrition, and improving rural living conditions. Hatch Act funds could also be used to support research in forest and natural resources; crop resources; animal resources; people, communities, and institutions; competition, trade, adjustment, price, and income policy; and food science and human nutrition.

CSREES and ESCOP Involvement

Hatch Act allocations to the SAES are managed by the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Recognizing the significance of the proposed restructuring of Hatch funds, CSREES leadership noted the need to work with land grant university partners in developing a feasible implementation program for the proposed budget. CSREES invited the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) to participate in the development of the Hatch Competitive Allocation Program.

ESCOP agreed to participate, but in so doing noted that it neither supported any changes to the current allocation process nor supported changing the process to a competitive one through which funds would be allocated for multi-state research. ESCOP and CSREES each appointed six representatives to a working group to develop a Hatch Multi-State Research Competitive Allocation Program (See Appendix 1).

Guiding Principles

In her charge to the Hatch Working Group, the CSREES Administrator worked from the proposed budget language in identifying the following attributes of a nationally competitive multi-State project allocation program:

1. Projects must go through a credible nationally competitive process focusing on peer review to determine scientific merit and project management quality;
2. The program's focus and direction must be on issues of national importance which, in many cases, can be addressed through locally relevant concerns (e.g., water quality/ availability, rural development and resilience, etc.); and,
3. Funds allocated to the SAES be under the same conditions as Hatch over the full life (5 years) of effort.

CSREES leadership noted its continuing commitment to cooperation and its interest in developing this competitive program within a cooperative system that enables experiment stations to sustain capacity. If structured successfully, the program would provide a synergistic potential to enhancing multidisciplinary/multi-institutional work on challenges of national significance with local relevancy.

Program Description

Through a series of meetings and conference calls the twelve member Hatch Working Group developed the program process listed below.

Types of Hatch Competitive Multi-State Projects

The Hatch Multi-State Competitive Allocation Program will support the following three types of research projects:

1. **Multi-State Research Projects:** Research activity that involves cooperative, jointly planned research employing multidisciplinary approaches in which a SAES, cooperates with other SAESs, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), a college or university, the Cooperative Extension System (CES) or the private sector to solve problems that concern more than one state and usually more than one region. The membership of a Multi-State Research project is called the technical committee, and is made up of SAES scientists, an Administrative Advisor (AA), a CSREES liaison (after the project is approved), ARS scientists (if involved) other public and private scientists (if involved), and as applicable, extension specialists and/or extension agents/extension county educators. These projects have a time limit not to exceed 5 years.
2. **Rapid Response Projects:** This type of research activity provides a mechanism to assure responsiveness to acute crises, emergencies, and opportunities using the multi-state research approach. Activities may range from formally organized research on targeted objectives to very informal research coordination or information exchange activity, depending on the circumstances. The projects are not to exceed two years. Rapid Response Project proposals will be reviewed through an expedited process enabling their submission at any time and requiring approval by the SAES directors and CSREES leadership.
3. **Research Support Projects:** This type of research support activity focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as collecting, assembling, storing and distributing materials, resources and information) or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself, primarily research. As the need may arise, other types of projects may be funded based upon the recommendations of the CSREES/SAES Administrative Review Board (ARB).

Pre-submission Proposal Development and Coordination:

Before submission to CSREES, emphasis is placed upon the multistate proposal announcement and development and formatting of the proposal. A Request for Applications (RFA) will be developed (incorporating stakeholder input) and released by CSREES on an annual basis. Project proposals will be developed using the current SAES system and the National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS). The system will be used to ensure that quality control standards are met in the proposal development. The pre-submission proposal development process will not be used to pre-select or pre-deny submission to CSREES based on scientific merit.

Typically one or more scientists at an institution will come together and suggest a particular topic or problem area be addressed. If approved by the resident SAES Director, a lead institution will be designated and an administrative advisor appointed to ensure the proposed work is relevant to the priorities specified in the RFA (Science Roadmap/USDA-CSREES Strategic Goals) and to facilitate submission of the draft proposal to CSREES.

The nationwide solicitation of eligible participants (SAESs) will encourage them to partner with other organizations and entities that are not eligible to receive Hatch Multi-State Research Funds such as the Association of Research Directors, the Agricultural Research Service, the Cooperative Extension System, and private industry.

Post-submission Peer Review Process:

During the post-submission peer review process emphasis is placed upon relevance and scientific merit. CSREES will administer scientific peer panels which function to evaluate and rank proposals for relevance within subject matter categories and for scientific merit.

Peer panels will be identified within each major topic area contained in the RFA. Criteria for evaluating the proposals will be posted in the RFA. Once all fundable proposals are ranked, by the scientific peer review panels they are then forwarded by topic area to a CSREES/SAES Administrative Review Board (ARB).

Allocating Hatch Multi-State Research Funds:

Final allocation of the Hatch Competitive Multi-State funds to the various SAESs will be recommended by the CSREES/SAES Administrative Review Board. The ARB will be composed of eight (8) members.

AES Directors Representation: two members

The Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors shall appoint two members to the ARB. Initial appointments shall be staggered for two and three year terms to provide for continuity. These appointments shall alternate among the regional associations and with the Executive Director appointments below such that all regions are represented.

AES Regional Associations Executive Directors: two members

Two Executive Directors of the regional associations shall be members of the ARB. These appointments shall alternate with the Director representation above such that all regions are represented.

CSREES Representation: two members

The Administrator of CSREES shall appoint two members.

Stakeholders Representation: two members

Representatives shall be appointed by the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching (CARET).

The ARB will respect the rank ordering of proposals by the peer panels in fulfilling the responsibilities below:

- A. To determine the “Cutoff line” in each topic area such that those proposals above the line will be recommended to the CSREES Administrator for funding and those below the line will not be recommended for funding, subject to the final selection procedures as provided in B, C, and D below.
- B. To ensure funding reflects the scope of priorities identified in the Science Road Map and the USDA-CSREES strategic goals and objectives.
- C. To assure research capacity at a diversity of institutions especially at small and/or developing eligible institutions.
- D. To minimize disruption of on-going research program areas in the initial stages of the program to allow an orderly transition to the new allocation process.

Project Management:

Once a project is approved for funding by the CSREES Administrator, an administrative advisor (AA) and a CSREES National Program Leader (NPL) will be formally assigned to the project. Annual progress reports will be submitted to the Current Research Information System (CRIS) or other reporting system as may be specified in accordance with appropriate schedules and reporting specifications as published in the relevant RFA and/or the Hatch Multi-State Research Allocation Terms and Conditions. In addition, reports of annual meetings shall also be reported using the format included in the relevant RFA and/or the appropriate Allocation Terms and Conditions.

Post Award Project Management:

Experiment Station Directors will be allowed flexibility to expend funds within an approved project for different purposes (e.g., salaries, infrastructure, graduate assistants, etc.) and to adjust funds between competitively approved projects primarily due to changes in participation (e.g., a change in scientists at a station, additions to a project, etc.) and to accommodate unique matching requirements.

Adjustments to participants to existing projects will require review by the existing multi-state committee and the approval of the Director of that SAES in which the new (or departing) participant resides. If Hatch Multi-State Competitive Research allocations need to be adjusted for the affected SAES, CSREES concurrence will be required. If such adjustments are required, those

adjustments will be made in the following fiscal year allocation as recommended by the Administrative Review Board.

Other Program Criteria:

Criteria for identifying and handling conflicts of interests, and confidentiality issues will be published in the relevant RFA.

Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder input will be garnered through listening sessions, outreach and other means to ensure that the Hatch Multi-State Competitive Allocation Program retains relevance to important issues at the local, State, regional and national levels which address in one way or another the Science Road Map and USDA-CSREES strategic Goals and Objectives. Formal “listening sessions” will be scheduled and publicized by CSREES and ESCOP, and will involve SAES representatives, user groups, extension organizations, farmers and various farm and commodity groups, industry, and other interested parties. The listening sessions may be part of a broader listening session that includes more programs than just the Hatch Multi-State Competitive Allocation Program.

Appendix 1: Membership, Hatch Working Group

Dr. Mark Bailey, National Program leader, CSREES, Member

Dr. Thomas Bewick, National Program Leader, CSREES, Member

Dr. Franklin E. Boteler, Deputy Administrator, CSREES, Member

Dr. Mike Harrington, Executive Director, Western Association of Experiment Station Directors, Member

Dr. Dennis Kopp, Assistant Administrator, CSREES, Liaison (from/to the Mc-Stennis Working Group)

Dr. Colin Kaltenbach, Director, Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station, Member and Co-chair

Dr. Marshall Martin, Associate Director, Purdue Agricultural Research Programs, Member (alternate)

Dr. Bruce McPheron, Director, Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station, Member

Dr. Larry R. Miller, Associate Administrator, CSREES, Member and Co-Chair

Mr. Winston Sherman, Office of Extramural Programs, CSREES, Member

Dr. Steve Slack, Director, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Member

Dr. Gregory Weidemann, Director, Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, Member

Dr. Susan Welsh, National Program Leader, CSREES, Member

Dr. Eric Young, Executive Director, Southern Association of Experiment Station Directors, Member

Hatch National Multi-State Research Competitive Allocation Program

FINAL OUTLINE DRAFT

Version 7.0: 13 June 2006

FY 2007 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: _____

Notice: This is a draft outline Request for Applications. Proposals are NOT being accepted for this program.



U.S. Department of Agriculture



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

**COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE;
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**HATCH NATIONAL MULTI-STATE RESEARCH COMPETITIVE ALLOCATION
PROGRAM**

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.203.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on _____ (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). **[Notice: This document is a draft outline. Do NOT submit applications in response to this DRAFT request for applications.]** Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program. Such comments will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFA's for competitive programs. Comments should be submitted as provided for in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy, Oversight, and Funds Management Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Hatch National Multi-State Research Competitive Allocation Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES announces the availability of funds and requests applications for the Hatch National Multi-State Research Competitive Allocation Program (HMR) fiscal year (FY) 2007 to allocate funds to the State Agricultural Research Stations to conduct research bearing directly on and contributing to the establishment and maintenance of a permanent and effective agricultural industry including basic research to the problems of agriculture in its broadest aspects, and for the improvement of the rural home and rural life. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2007 is approximately \$62.6 million. (For FY 2008 the anticipated amount available for allocation is approximately 71.5 million.)

This notice identifies the objectives for HMR projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a HMR alloca-

tion approval. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Land-Grant Colleges were established by the Morrill Land-Grant College Act of July 2, 1862. The Hatch Act of 1887 authorized Federal funds for direct payment to each State that would establish an Agricultural Experiment Station in connection with the Land-Grant College established under the provisions of the Morrill Act.

The passage of the Hatch Act provided research at these institutions by authorizing a State Agricultural Experiment Station (SAES) for each State in support of its educational mission. SAES' are located in every State and territory, covering all the ecological, environmental and socio economic regions of the nation.

Hatch funds, combined with required State matching dollars, supported the Experiment Stations and were used at the discretion of SAES Directors to support teaching and research. The Purnell Act authorized funds for research by agricultural experiment stations on economic and social problems of agriculture. Then in 1906 Congress passed the Adams Act, providing supplemental funding to State Agricultural Experiment Stations to support "original" theoretical research; heretofore, virtually all station investigations had had a practical application (i.e., solving an actual local problem).

Due largely to conditions resulting from the Great Depression, Congress passed the Bankhead-Jones Act of 1935 which established formula funding for the Agricultural Experiment Stations (rather than yearly re-allocations of uncertain dollars).

Modern Hatch Act appropriations were distributed to the States according to a formula based on the current decennial census. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the Hatch funding is distributed for multi-state research activities. Three percent is retained for Federal Administration purposes. The remaining 72% is distributed based on a formula developed in 1977. Twenty percent of this amount is shared equally among the states. Forty percent is distributed based on rural census data. The remaining forty percent is distributed based on farm census data.

The President's FY 2007 Budget proposes an initiative to expand and continuously re-compete Hatch Act multi-state allocations. The base funding of 25% would be incrementally increased over a five year period to 55.6%. The initial (first year) allotment for multi-state research would increase from 25% to 35.4% of the total Hatch allocation. These formula funds are to be directed to nationally competitive multi-state/multi-institutional projects as set forth in this RFA.

This new approach for multi-state programming sustains the matching requirement and the leveraging of Federal funds. It allows institutions to focus on program strengths they identify and sustain through linking local issues to broad national goals. The program also is designed to fund five year projects, thus supporting the goal of continuity for research activities.

B. Purpose and Priorities

CSREES is charged with funding research, education and extension that enables the agency to work toward achieving its strategic goals and objectives. Proposals submitted to this program must clearly indicate which goals and objectives are being addressed. It is likely that proposals will address more than one goal and objective. The CSREES goals and objectives are listed below. A more detailed description can be found at: http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/strat_plan.html.

CSREES Strategic Goals and Objectives

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Enhance Economic Opportunities for Agricultural Producers

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Provide Information, Knowledge, and Education To Help Expand Markets And Reduce Trade Barriers

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Support International Economic Development and Trade Capacity Building

OBJECTIVE 1.3: Provide Science-Based Knowledge and Technologies To Generate New Or Improved High-Quality Products And Processes To Expand Markets For The Agricultural Sector

OBJECTIVE 1.4: Provide Science-Based Information, Knowledge, and Education To Facilitate Risk Management By Farmers And Ranchers

OBJECTIVE 1.5: Contribute Science-Based Information, Analysis, and Education To Promote The Efficiency Of Agricultural Production Systems

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Support Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Quality Of Life in Rural America

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Expand Economic Opportunities in Rural America By Bringing Scientific Insights Into Economic And Business Decision Making

OBJECTIVE 2.2: Provide Science-Based Technology, Products, and Information To Facilitate Informed Decisions Affecting The Quality Of Life In Rural Areas

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Enhance Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Reduce the Incidence of Food-borne Illnesses and Contaminants Through Science-Based Knowledge and Education

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Develop and Deliver Science-Based Information and Technologies to Reduce the Number and Severity of Agricultural Pest and Disease Outbreaks

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: Improve The Nation's Nutrition and Health

OBJECTIVE 4.1: Improve Human Health by Better Understanding the Nutrient Requirements of Individuals and the Nutritional Value of Foods

OBJECTIVE 4.2: Promote Healthier Food Choices and Lifestyles

STRATEGIC GOAL 5: Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment

OBJECTIVE 5.1: Provide Science-Based Knowledge and Education to Improve the Management of Forest And Rangelands

OBJECTIVE 5.2: Provide Science-Based Knowledge and Education to Improve the Management of Soil, Air, and Water Resources to Support Production and Enhance the Environment

C. Priority Funding Areas

Our rapidly evolving world of science and agriculture calls for a new approach in defining the needs and setting the priorities for research. The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) provides a *Science Roadmap* for Agriculture. A complete version of the *Roadmap* can be found at <http://www.cals.ncsu.edu:8050/escop/roadmap2.pdf> and the 2006 Update at <http://www.cals.ncsu.edu:8050/escop/>.

The *Roadmap* sets forth seven challenges each with under-girding goals. Proposals to this program must clearly indicate which of these challenges, or Priority Funding Areas (numbered below), derived from ESCOP's *Science Roadmap* for Agriculture are being addressed.

Food Safety and Human Health

1. Ensure food safety and health through agricultural and food systems.

Preference will be given to proposals that focus on following high priority needs:

- Eliminate food borne illnesses.
- Develop technologies to improve the nutritional value of food and create health-promoting foods.
- Understand the behavioral dimensions (personal, consumption, and policy) that influence personal and family dietary and health decision-making to reduce public health issues, such as obesity.
- Develop policy and strategies to address agro-security, bioterrorism, and invasive species to protect producers and consumers.

The Environment and Natural Resources

2. Provide the information and knowledge needed to further improve environmental stewardship.

Preference will be given to proposals that focus on following high priority needs:

- Develop better methods to protect the environment both on and beyond the farm from any negative impacts of agriculture through optimum use of cropping systems including agroforestry, phytoremediation, and site-specific management.
- Find alternative uses for the wastes generated by agriculture.
- Develop more environmentally friendly crop and livestock production systems that utilize sustainable weed, insect, and pathogen management strategies, along with feeding strategies that promote environmental stewardship.

- Develop better strategies, ecological and socioeconomic systems models and policy analysis to address soil, water, air and energy conservation, biodiversity, ecological services, recycling, and land use policies.

Profitability and Competitiveness

3. Improve the economic return to agricultural producers.

Preference will be given to proposals that focus on following high priority needs:

- Develop sustainable production systems that are profitable and protective of the environment, including finding ways to optimize the integration of crop and livestock production systems.
- Develop strategies for integration of local, regional, national, and global food systems to maximize benefits to both U.S. agriculture producers and consumers throughout the world.
- Design improved decision support systems for risk-based management of farms, ranches, and forests/woodlots.
- Find ways to improve on strategies for community-supported food and fiber production systems.

Families and Communities

4. Strengthen our Families and Communities.

Preference will be given to proposals that focus on following high priority needs:

- Stimulate entrepreneurship and business development in rural communities and new forms of economic activity built around regional trade associations, rural cooperatives, and local production networks.
- Build coalitions among environmental, labor, and community development groups to facilitate democratic social change to ensure that families have access to food, health care, education, and welfare services.
- Enhance the problem solving capacities of rural communities through leadership development.
- Determine strategies to enhance the well-being of families and individuals.

New Products and Markets.

5. Develop new and more competitive crop production practices and products and new uses for diverse crops and novel plant species.

Preference will be given to proposals that focus on following high priority needs:

- Conceive new markets for new plant products, and new uses for those crops.
- Develop technologies to improve processing efficiency of crop bioproducts.
- Support the development of marketing infrastructure for crop bioproducts.
- Improve crop biomass quantities, qualities and agricultural production efficiencies.

6. *Develop new and more competitive animal production practices and products and new uses for animals.*

Preference will be given to proposals that focus on following high priority needs:

- Develop innovative technologies for reducing the impact of animal agriculture on the environment.
- Enhance the value of food and other animal products for both the producer and consumer by using conventional and newly developed technologies that are socially and ethically acceptable.
- Develop new and enhanced technologies for the improved efficiency and welfare of animals that are processed for food.
- Improve conventional technologies as well as developing new technologies to improve the efficiency of animal production.

Climate Change

7. *Reduce the Risks of Local and Global Climatic Change on Food, Fiber, and Fuel Production.*

Preference will be given to proposals that focus on following high priority needs:

- Diminish the rate of long-term global climatic change by increasing the storage of carbon and nitrogen in soil, plants, and plant products.
- Create broad-based, comprehensive models to assess the socioeconomic impacts, risks, and opportunities associated with global climate change and extreme climate events on agriculture and natural resources.
- Integrate long-term weather forecasting, market infrastructures, and cropping and live-stock management systems to rapidly optimize domestic food, fiber, and fuel production in response to global climatic changes.
- Minimize the effects of long-term global climatic changes on production of crops, live-stock, forests, and other natural resource systems.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to approve any particular application. Approximately \$62.6 million will be available to fund projects in FY 2007.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2007, the HMR program will only consider "new applications." A new application is a project application that has not been previously submitted to this Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

Allocations will be made to individual participating eligible institutions based on their total participation commitment (as documented in project proposals) in all multistate projects approved for funding. Each eligible institution will receive an allocation equal to the equivalent of \$400,000 for each 1.0 year of total human resources (scientist, professional, and technical) committed to approved project(s), or the fractional equivalent thereof.

Experiment Station Directors will be allowed the flexibility to adjust funds among approved projects due to faculty shifts resulting in changes in participation (e.g., a change in scientists at a station, additions to a project, etc.), faculty salary levels, changes in support needs from year to year and to accommodate unique matching requirements. An approved project may consist of any of the three Project Types below in any combination.

C. Project Types

For each of the Hatch multi-state projects--Multi-state Research Projects, Rapid Response Projects, or Research Support Projects--it is expected that a single lead institution will submit a multi-state project application (see Part VIII., E., Definitions) or proposal that involves one or more other entities not legally affiliated with the lead institution. Applications may contain any number of Multi-state Research Projects, Rapid Response Projects or Research Support Projects in any reasonable number or combination.

1. Multi-state Research Projects

This type of activity involves cooperative, jointly planned research employing multidisciplinary approaches in which a State Agricultural Experiment Station (SAES), working with other SAES', the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), or a college or university, cooperates to solve problems that concern more than one State and usually more than one region. The membership of a Multi-state Research Project is called the *Technical Committee*, and is made up of SAES scientists, an Administrative Advisor, CSREES representative, ARS scientists, other public and private sector scientists, and as applicable, Extension specialists and/or Extension agents. These projects may be funded up to five years.

2. Rapid Response Projects

This type of activity provides a mechanism to assure responsiveness to acute crises, emergencies, and opportunities using the multistate research approach. Activities may range from formally organized research on targeted objectives to very informal research coordination or information exchange activity, depending on the circumstances. These projects may be funded up to two years.

3. Research Support Projects (RSP)

This type of activity focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research. The activities supported will be similar to National Research Support Projects (NRSP).

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by State Agricultural Research Stations as stipulated under 7 U.S.C. 361a-f., Sections 1 through 6 of the Hatch Act of 1887, as amended. The distribution of approved project funds will be made directly to the participating Hatch institutions.

Competitive allocation recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Allocation recipients of Hatch Multi-State Research Competitive funds must provide matching in accordance with the requirements stated in previous years. Generally, States that have received multi-state allocation in the past must match on a dollar for dollar basis from non-Federal sources. However, those Insular Area recipients that have received multi-state research funds in the past must provide a 50% match based on their FY 2002 allocation.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to Request Application Package

Either electronic applications or paper-based applications (utilizing the paper version of the electronic forms) may be submitted to CSREES in response to this RFA.

Electronic Application Package

If the PD/PI is interested in preparing an electronic application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Organizational Representative to determine if the organization is prepared to submit applications through Grant.gov. See <http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted> for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

To access the electronic application via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, under the “Apply for Grants” heading on the right-hand side of page click on “Download Grant Application Packages,” enter the CFDA number (i.e., 10.203) in the appropriate box to search by CFDA number. From the search results, select the item with CFDA number 10.203. *See Part VIII, F. of this RFA for additional instructions regarding the submission of electronic proposals.*

Paper-based Application Package

The paper-based application package is available from the following web site http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/transition/forms_tr.html. The forms included on this web site are the only forms that are to be used in the preparation of a paper-based application. Applications using any other form will not be accepted for review.

If you do not have electronic access to the application package or have trouble downloading material and you would like a hardcopy, you may contact the Proposal Services Unit, Competitive Programs, USDA/CSREES at (202) 401-5048. When calling the Proposal Services Unit, please indicate that you are requesting the RFA and associated instructions and application forms for the Hatch National Multi-State Research Competitive Allocation Program. These materials also may be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to psb@csrees.usda.gov. State that you want a copy of the RFA and the associated instructions and application forms for Hatch National multi-State Research Competitive Allocation Program.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.” Paper-based applications should be prepared following the document entitled, “[A Guide for Preparation and Submission of Paper-based Applications](#).” These guides are part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA.

1. R&R Other Project Information Form.

a. Project Summary/Abstract (Field 6. on the Form). The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of the program.

b. Project Narrative (Field 7. on the Form).

The Project Narrative shall not exceed 15 pages of written text and up to five additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (20 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Description must include all of the following:

Statement of the Issue(s) and Justification: This section should explain why the work needs to be done, and should include statements on the following points:

- The need as indicated by stakeholders. (That is, explain how the proposed research addresses national priorities developed following stakeholder input.)
- The importance of the work, and what the consequences are if it is not done.
- The technical feasibility of the research.
- The advantages for doing the work as a multistate effort.
- What the likely impacts will be from successfully completing the work.

Related, Current, and Previous Work: Include a brief review, using information from CRIS and elsewhere, of related research on the problem and how the proposed work will supplement and extend it. Specific reference should be made to related research projects or other activities. If there is any apparent duplication, the proposed work should be justified. List essential, cited references (see below). It is expected that the proposal will not include a classical in-depth literature review.

Objectives: Include clear, concise, one-sentence statements for each researchable objective arranged in a logical sequence. Include only objectives on which significant progress can be made during the life of the project with the resources committed. Do not specify the exchange of information, the coordination of research, the development of standardized techniques, or joint publication as objectives, as these are to be organized under other types of activities. Each participant should indicate on the Format for Reporting Projected Participation (see d. below) those objectives in which he/she will participate.

Methods: Briefly summarize the research methods that will be used to address each of the objectives. Explicit information should be included to enable the reviewers to evaluate the approach and to discern joint planning and coordination, the sharing of equipment, possible pooling of data, data analysis, and the summarization of findings, in other words, show that this is a collaborative effort.

Measurement of Progress and Results: This section has three purposes. It is intended to show what the products of the research will be, how these products will affect the stakeholder or end user, and what critical points of achievement are needed for progress toward meeting objectives. To do this you should address the following items:

- **Outputs:** The results of research activities, such as data, information, biological or physical materials, and observations. For example, the output from a plant-breeding program might be a named variety. The output from a survey might be the analyzed survey results.
- **Outcomes or Projected Impacts:** Outcomes describe the significance of the results, showing in what ways the end user will benefit. For example, an outcome from the adoption of a new cultivar might be increased production, or greater profitability. Impacts are the economic, social, health, or environmental benefits derived by the intended users. These are usually quantitatively measured either directly or indirectly as indicators of benefits. An example of an impact would be improved human nutrition to so many individuals through genetically engineering rice to contain the precursors to vitamin A.

- **Milestones:** Timeline-linked accomplishments that need to be completed before subsequent activities can begin, or can be completed. For example, to genetically engineer a crop by 2005 a transformation method needs to be reduced to practice by 2002 (a milestone).

Outreach Plan: Briefly describe how results of the project are to be made available in an accessible manner to the intended users of the information (e.g., refereed publications, non-refereed but peer reviewed publications, workshops, producer field days, etc.). If applicable, include descriptions concerning equality for service, ease of access to services/information, and any focus on under-served and/or under represented communities/consumers that may benefit from this proposed activity and what the plans are for disseminating information to these and other groups.

c. Bibliography and References Cited (Field 8. on the Form).

All work cited, including that of key personnel, should be referenced in this section of the application.

d. Other Attachments (Field 11. on the Form).

(1). Project Management Plan

Cooperative, multi-institutional and multidisciplinary applications are encouraged. Identify and clearly define the role of the lead institution and the roles of each participating unit involved in the project. Identify how this project is coordinated with the efforts of other State and/or National programs.

Projected Participation: Include a completed table of resources utilizing the format on the next page.

Format for Reporting Projected Participation

For each participant in this activity, include name and e-mail address, employing Institution/agency, and department, plus as applicable:

- For research commitment, indicate the CRIS classifications [Knowledge Area(s) (KA), Subject(s) of Investigation (SOI), and Field(s) of Science (FOS)], and estimates of time commitment by Scientists Years (SY) (not less than 0.1 SY), Professional Years (PY), and Technical Years (TY)];
- For extension commitment, indicate FTE and one or more of the seven extension programs (See <http://www.reeusda.gov/1700/programs/baseprog.htm>); and,
- Objective(s) under which each participant will conduct their studies.

Project or Activity Designation and Number (if applicable): _____

Project or Activity Title: _____

Administrative Advisor: _____

| Participant Name and E-mail address | Institution And Department | Research | | | | | | Extension | | Project Objectives | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------|-----|-----------|----|----|-----------|------------------|--------------------|---|---|---|---|
| | | CRIS Codes | | | Personnel | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | KA | SOI | FOS | SY | PY | TY | FTE | National Program | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total SY, PY, TY, and FTE | | xxx | Xx x | xxx | | | | | xxx | x | x | x | x | x |

The table identifies the name and areas of specialization of the researchers and other principal leaders by State and agency/institution. It is also intended to identify the committed average annual input of each cooperating institution in scientist years (SY), professional years (PY), and technical support years (TY). This information is needed to permit others to assess the sufficiency of human resources that are to be devoted to the activity. A minimum of 0.1 SY per participating institution is required and the total resources allocated to the project need to be sufficient to accomplish the stated objectives. The Current Research Information System (CRIS) codes demonstrate the multidisciplinary requirements of AREERA and will assist Administrators in completion of the AD-417 after the project is approved. It will also allow for the classification of the activity within the Federal-State partnership's five goals for USDA.

Hatch competitive multistate research funding allocations will be made to individual SAES' based on their total participation commitment (as documented in project proposals) in all multi-state projects approved for funding. Each eligible institution will receive "one allocation" of Hatch competitive multistate research funding equal to the equivalent of \$400,000 for each 1.0 year of total human resources (scientist, professional, and technical) committed to approved multistate projects, or the fractional equivalent thereof. See Part II, C. Project Types.

Organization and Governance: Provide a very brief description of the organization of a research technical committee (if applicable) with emphasis on unique items such as the formation of an executive committee and its functions, any subcommittees that are planned for specific functions, any anticipated program coordinators/managers and their responsibilities, etc. Describe the processes that will be used for selecting leadership and for decision-making. Finally, applications must describe the roles and responsibilities of central coordinators (if used) and present a management plan for the administration of the project including facilitation of communication, planning, and annual report preparation.

The following should be included, as applicable:

(a) The roles and responsibilities of each participating and/or collaborating institution should be clearly described; and

(b) Vitae of the PD of the lead institution and each co-PD from participating institutions. The vitae should be limited to two (2) pages each in length, excluding publications listings. The vitae should include a presentation of academic and research credentials, as applicable, e.g., earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and documentation of administrative capabilities of research and education leadership.

(2) Appendices to Project Narrative. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

(3) Collaborative Arrangements. If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.

2. Supplemental Information Form

a. Funding Opportunity (Field 1. on the Form). Enter Hatch National Multi-State Research Competitive Allocation Program.

b. Program to Which You Are Applying (Field 2. on the Form). Enter the program code name (i.e. _____) and the program code (i.e. _____).

C. Submission Date and Time

Applications must be received by COB on _____ (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

Hatch Act funds may not be used to fund tuition remission or pay indirect costs.

The use of funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facilities is not allowed. With prior approval, some funds may be used for minor alterations, renovations or repairs deemed necessary to carry out a funded project.

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the applicable guide for preparation and submission of an application; paper-based applications should be submitted as specified in the document entitled, “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of Paper-based Applications” and electronic applications should be submitted as specified in the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.” The following is **additional information** needed in order to submit a paper-based application in response to this RFA.

Paper-based applications. An original and ten copies must be submitted. In addition, submit five copies of the application’s Project Summary. All copies of the application and the Project Summary must be submitted in one package.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a merit review panel. The recommendations of the panel may be adjusted after being reviewed by an Administrative Review Board which will seek to minimize the disruption of on-going research at eligible institutions, foster diversity among institutions selected for funding, and assure research capacity at small and/or developing eligible institutions.

Note: Each participating organization must demonstrate that it will match the requested Federal funding on a dollar for dollar basis. Applications not demonstrating or certifying to cost sharing or matching will not be forwarded to the scientific peer review panel and will be returned to the lead institution without review.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA: [*Hatch Committee: For Rapid Response Projects consider the development of separate evaluation criteria.*]

I. Statement of Issue(s) or Problem(s) and Need for Proposed Project (20%)

A. Does the proposal clearly define, or scope out the issue or problem? Does it convincingly describe its importance, and why it should be addressed? Is there discussion as to the views of stakeholders?

B. Does the proposal include an explicit relationship to the USDA/CSREES strategic goal(s) and objective(s) the project will address? Are the goal(s) or objective(s) noted pertinent and relevant to the issue being addressed?

C. Does the proposal include an explicit relationship with a particular topic area denoted in the ESCOP Scientific *Road Map*? Is the selected topic (and subtopic areas) relevant and pertinent to the issue being addressed?

D. If the proposal relates to a local, State or Regional concern, is this concern of national importance? By successfully accomplishing the aims of the proposal, will the proposed project address the national concern or problem? To what degree? Is there a discussion on what will be lost or other consequences if the work is not undertaken?

E. Is there justification why a multi-state approach is most suitable for this type of project? Does the proposal provide a convincing argument as to the appropriateness of exploring the issue or concern through a multistate project? Why not some other form of research such as a single investigator project, other Hatch, or the NRI?

G. Does the proposal provide a discussion in this section dealing with the expected results and how they will mitigate the issue or concern?

II. Related and Previous Work Related to the Issue or Problem (10%)

A. Does the proposal adequately describe how the proposed work relate to previous work in this area and how the proposed work will supplement and/or extend knowledge in the topic area? Has a CRIS search been conducted? Does the proposal show how the work is different from or how it complements or extends existing work? If potential duplication exists, does the proposal specifically address how it will be avoided?

B. If the proposal is for a renewal of a previous or existing project, are the past accomplishments adequately presented give the original objectives? Are there areas that still need to be addressed or need to be further investigated? Are these areas part of the new set of objectives, and has the applicant integrated the discussion of what has been accomplished and what yet needs to be done?

III. Scientific Merit (40%)

A. Objectives

1. Do the Objectives of the proposed work adequately address the problem or concern that is at the heart of the proposal?

2. Are the objectives expressed clearly, and are they appropriate to achieve the desired outcomes? In other words, if the objectives are attainable and doable, will their accomplishment result in the aims of the project being met?

3. Are the objectives achievable given the resources committed to the project?

B. Methods (Procedures)

1. Are the methods or procedure(s) clearly specified ?

2. If followed, are the proposed methods or procedures appropriate and adequate to accomplish the objectives of the proposed project?

3. Do the methods/procedures follow sound, acceptable scientific principles?

C. Collaboration and Expertise Involvement

1. Is there adequate collaboration and expertise documented in the proposal such that there is a high potential of successfully accomplishing the desired aims of the proposed project?

2. Does the proposal address the complementary of the participating collaborators or interdependency (such as the use of common protocols, central data collection or analysis, sharing of equipment, common use of research samples or data, or other evidence of direct collaboration)?

3. Does the proposed work include the appropriate multidisciplinary sciences to accomplish the aims and objectives of the proposed project?

D. Resource Allocation and Management Plan

1. Does the proposal clearly indicate the level of participation of each institution and other participating entities (e.g., ARS/USDA, Cooperative Extension, private industry, etc.) for each objective? If appropriate, has the particular expertise of participants been identified?

2. Is there a Resource Allocation Plan or a Work Plan that specifies how each collaborator will be employed as to objectives?

3. Are the scientific and other resources dedicated to the project reasonable and justified? Are they adequate?

4. Has the management of the proposed project been adequately discussed such that effective and efficient project operation will be achieved? Has a timeline been developed for the objectives?

V. Measurement of Progress and Results (20%)

A. Outputs: Research outputs result from research activities (data collection and analysis, consolidation and organization of pertinent information). Outputs may be a new variety resulting from a plant breeding or a genomics effort. Another output might be the analyzed results of a survey, presented in some understandable and coherent manner. Does the proposal discuss the specific outputs expected from the proposed project? Do these outputs satisfactorily represent the objectives and aims of the project? (See definition of Outputs in the Definitions Section of this RFA.)

B. Outcomes: Outcomes describe the significance of the outputs that make clear how the end user could benefit. For example, the adoption of a new plant variety may be increased yields, less need for nutrients, drought tolerance, and increased profitability. Does the proposal adequately discuss the expected outcomes of the proposed work? Do the changes in learning (short term) that are expected to occur, and the changes in behavior (medium term, such as practices, decision-making, etc.), and/or the changes in conditions (long term, such as social, economic, civic, and/or environmental) logically follow from the aims and objectives of the proposed work and the outcomes noted previously? (See Part VIII, E., Definitions for outcomes definition/discussion.)

C. Impacts: Impacts are the ultimate positive and negative changes to conditions that occur as a result of the outcomes. These are the economic, social, health or environmental benefits derived by the intended users. An example of consolidating outputs, outcomes and resulting impacts may be as follows. A grain marketing simulation model is developed (output) which is then used to help farmers more effectively market their grain using various marketing strategies that results in increased revenues for the farmers (out-

come). The impacts would be the aggregation of the new increase in revenues from those farmers who adopted the grain marketing simulation model. Does the proposal discuss the potential impacts of the proposed project? While it is difficult to fully understand and appreciate the ultimate impacts of a proposed project, the applicant should discuss the potential impacts that the project may have?

D. Milestones: Have time-linked accomplishments been identified so that progress for the project can be tracked and measured?

VI. Outreach Plan (10%)

Does the proposal adequately discuss how the results of the proposed work will be conveyed to interested audiences? Are these audiences identified? What are the products that will be conveyed? Are the appropriate audiences included in the plan?

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of panelists will be made available in such a way that the panelists cannot be identified with the review of any particular application.

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of CSREES shall make allocations to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of CSREES as the effective date of the allotment 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 allocated by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are allocated in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the allocation, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

B. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the allocation of funds, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-allocation process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

C. Allocation Notice

An allocation notice will provide pertinent instructions and information. Information regarding the drawdown of funds and additional certifications and representations prior to the release of funding will be communicated to applicants successful under this RFA.

It is the intent of CSREES to allocate funding for approved projects directly to the lead institution and other eligible institutions stipulated in the application for funding.

D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to applications considered for review and to projects awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

E. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

1. Final Performance Report

A Final Performance Report must be submitted to the USDA program contact person within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. Generally, the Final Performance Report should be a summary of the completed project, including: a review of project objectives and accomplishments; a description of any products and outcomes resulting from the project; activities undertaken to disseminate products and outcomes; partnerships and collaborative ventures that resulted from the project; future initiatives that are planned as a result of the project; the impact of the project on the project director(s), students, the departments, and the institution; and data on project personnel and beneficiaries. The Final Performance Report should be accompanied by samples or copies of any products or publications resulting from or developed by the project. The Final Performance Report also must contain any other information which may be specified by the Agency Contact.

2. Current Research Information System (CRIS) Reports

Allocation recipients are required to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to CRIS. The CRIS database contains narrative project information, progress/impact statements, and final technical reports that are made available to the public. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparing and submission of project documentation will be provided to the applicant by the Agency Contact. Documentation must be submitted to

CRIS before CSREES funds will be released. Project reports will be requested by the CRIS office when required. For more information about CRIS, visit <http://cris.csrees.usda.gov>.

Forms approved by CSREES [the AD Series (-416, -417, -419, and -421) and others] will serve as the basis for planning, implementing and reporting an individual institution's contribution to a multi-State activity. Project directors will be responsible for submitting appropriate forms at the initiation of an approved project as described in these guidelines.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Larry Miller, Associate Administrator; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2201; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2201; telephone: (202) 720-7441; fax: (202) 720-8987; e-mail: lmiller@csrees.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the lead applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the allocation agreement state otherwise, the allocation recipient may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of allocated funds for approved projects.

2. Changes in Project Plans

a. The permissible changes of key project personnel shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the goals of approved projects. If the allocation recipient is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the allocation document, not the Agency Contact.

b. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part from approved project(s) shall be requested by the allocation recipient(s) and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an allocation of funds, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

Administrator means the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.

Administrative Review Board are those individuals who recommend to the Administrator funding of applications based on the rank ordering of proposals provided by the scientific peer review panels and the institution's total participation commitment (as documented in project proposals) in all multistate projects approved for funding; and will make adjustments or determine a final ranking to: 1) assure research capacity at a diversity of institutions especially at small and/or developing eligible institutions; and 2) minimize the disruption of on-going research programs to allow for an orderly transition to the new competitive allocation process..

Approved project means a research project for which documentation has been submitted and approved by CSREES for the expenditure of Hatch funds.

Authorized departmental officer means the Secretary or any employee of the Department with delegated authority to issue or modify awards on behalf of the Secretary.

Authorized organizational representative means the president or chief executive officer of the applicant organization or the official, designated by the president or chief executive officer of the applicant organization, who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

Budget period means the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which the project period is divided for budgetary and reporting purposes.

Cash contributions means the applicant's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the applicant by non-Federal third parties.

Complementary project application means a application for a project which involves coordination with one or more other projects for which funding was awarded under the same program in a previous fiscal year, or for which funding is requested under the same program in the current fiscal year.

Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Eligible institution or eligible applicant means State Agricultural Experiment Stations of the 1862 land-grant colleges or universities in each of the States, the District of Columbia, and the Insular Area.

Food and agricultural sciences means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in the food and fiber, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, in the broadest sense of these terms, including but not limited to, activities relating to the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, utilization, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally related products and services, and inclusive of programs in agriculture, natural resources, aquaculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, home economics, nutrition, rural human ecology, rural economic, community, or business development, and closely allied disciplines.

Fundamental research is research that tests scientific hypotheses and provides basic knowledge that enables advances in applied research and from which major conceptual breakthroughs are expected to occur.

Human resource year is the proposed and allotted time (see scientist year and technical year) committed by research professionals to proposed and/or approved projects; and for budgetary and funding purposes is equivalent to \$400,000.

Impact means economic, social, health, or environmental consequences derived as benefits for the intended users and are usually quantitatively measured either directly or indirectly as indicators of benefits.

Indicator means surrogate measures of research outcomes or benefits, often used when directly measuring research outcomes or benefits would not be feasible.

Input means resources assigned to a project, program, or activity, usually in the form of finances, human resources, and equipment.

Insular Area means the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

Integrated means to bring the three components of the agricultural knowledge system--research, education, and extension--together around a problem area or activity.

Land-grant colleges and universities means those institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of July 2, 1862 (12 Stat. 503-505, as amended; 7 U.S.C. 301-305, 307 and 308), including the land-grant institutions in the Insular Area.

Matching or Cost-sharing means that portion of allowable project costs not borne by the Federal government, including the value of in-kind contributions made available for research and for the establishment and maintenance of activities necessary for the prosecution of such research as required by 7 U.S.C. 361c(d).

Merit review means evaluation of a proposed activity by professionally knowledgeable users of an intended technology, especially for relevance and responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

Milestone means a time line-linked accomplishment that needs to be completed before subsequent activities can begin, or can be completed.

Multidisciplinary project means research, education and extension projects in which investigators from two or more disciplines are collaborating closely and the project, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical, or social sciences.

Multistate project application means an application for a project: (1) which must involve the applicant or lead institution working in cooperation with **one or more** eligible applicants; (2) that may involve other schools, colleges, universities, community colleges, junior colleges, units of State government, agencies of the Federal government, private sector organizations, or a consortium of institutions; and (3) where the lead institution and each eligible applicant demonstrate substantial involvement and assume a significant role in the conduct of the proposed project.

National Information Management and Support System means an electronic database of all multistate research projects and activities that serves as the official repository of multistate research projects.

Outcomes means specific, measurable project results and benefits that, when assessed and reported, indicate the project's plan of operation has been achieved.

Outputs mean the results of research activities, such as data, information, biological or physical materials and observations.

Peer review means an evaluation of a proposed project for scientific or technical quality and relevance performed by experts with the scientific knowledge and technical skills to conduct the proposed work or to give expert advice on the merits of an application.

Peer reviewers means experts or consultants qualified by training and experience to give expert advice on the scientific and technical merit of grant applications or the relevance of those applications to one or more of the application evaluation criteria.

Plan of operation means a detailed, step-by-step description of how the applicant intends to accomplish the project's outcomes. At a minimum, the plan should include a timetable indicating how outcomes are achieved, a description of resources to be used or acquired, and the responsibilities expected of all project personnel.

Plan of work means an organized statement of planned institutional activities that covers multiple years, usually five, and is composed of several programs.

Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer.

Professional year means the portion of time for persons who hold positions in professional categories (persons who usually hold a bachelors and/or masters degree), and who are assigned to research activities of the project.

Program means a well-defined set of projects or activities that share a common theme or purpose.

Project means a well-defined set of research activities.

Project director or principal investigator means an individual designated by the applying organization and approved by the SAES Director who is responsible for the direction and management of the project.

Project period means the total length of time, as stated in the application and allocation document and modifications thereto, if any, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

Research means any systematic study directed toward new or fuller knowledge and understanding of the subject studied.

Research activity means a scientific investigation or inquiry that results in the generation of knowledge.

Research capacity means the quality and depth of an institution's research infrastructure as evidenced by its: faculty expertise in the natural or social sciences, scientific and technical resources, research environment, library resources, and organizational structures and reward systems for attracting and retaining first-rate research faculty or students at the graduate and post-doctorate levels.

Research program means a set of approved projects which defines the research to be conducted by an eligible institution within a given fiscal year.

Research project means an award (or allocation) in support of a project that addresses one or more of the targeted Priority Funding Areas identified in the RFA related to strengthening research programs including, but not limited to, such initiatives as: studies and experimentation in food and agricultural sciences, centralized research support systems, technology delivery systems, and other creative projects designed to provide needed enhancement of the Nation's food and agricultural research system.

Scientist year means the portion of time for scientists (assistant professor, assistant scientist, and above) who are responsible for creative scientific study, thought, originality, judgments, and accomplishments directly assignable to the activity reported.

Stakeholder means individuals, groups of individuals, or organizations/institutions with a direct interest in the outcome of public investments in agricultural research and education; they could be producers of agricultural products, consumers of agricultural products, or sponsors of research activities from Federal and state governments.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom authority may be delegated.

State means any one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Insular Area.

State Agricultural Experiment Station means an organization established under direction of the college or university or agricultural departments of the college or university in each State in accordance with the Act of July 2, 1892 (7 U.S.C. 301 et seq.) or such other substantially equivalent arrangements as any State shall determine.

Technical committee means research scientists, and as applicable, extension specialists and extension agents, participating in a multistate research project, plus the administrative advisor and the CSREES representative.

Technical year means the portion of time for technicians, aids, and laboratory assistants assigned in support of a project or an activity.

Third party in-kind contributions means non-cash contributions of property or services provided by non-Federal third parties, including real property, equipment, supplies and other expendable property, directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to a funded project or program.

United States means the several States, the territories and possessions of the United States, including the District of Columbia and the Insular Area.

F. CSREES' Grants.gov Implementation Plans

Pub. L. 106-107, the Federal Assistance Management Improvement Act (FAMI), requires agencies to provide a common electronic portal at www.Grants.gov for applicants to find and apply for funding. CSREES recognizes that many of its constituent organizations have electronic award and management data systems, e.g., the National Information Management and Support

System (NIMSS), and is committed to working with those applicant organizations in developing procedures and protocols for the direct submission of proposals to CSREES.

Nevertheless, for FY 2007 USDA will be requiring proposals to be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. This is a significant change, and applicants need to be prepared. Information about the new forms and submission requirements for Grants.gov can be found in Part IV. Proposals must be submitted via Grants.gov by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, on the program deadline as indicated under Part IV, C. of this program solicitation.

USDA electronic application submissions consist of forms and attachments. The CSREES MSNC program will only accept attachments in portable document format (PDF). Reviewers will not be provided non-PDF files in the review process.

If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. On the Grants.gov Customer Support webpage (<http://grants.gov/CustomerSupport>) users will find a link to "Convert Documents to PDF" (<http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>). PDF documents submitted as a part of the application must also adhere to the following guidelines:

- margins not less than 1"; 2.5 cm all sides
- type at least 12 point font size regardless of whether it is single or double spaced.

Proposals that do not follow the guidelines for attachments stated above may not be accepted into the program and may be returned without review.

G. DUNS Number

A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A Federal Register notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. Therefore, potential applicants should verify that they have a DUNS number or take the steps needed to obtain one. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number go to <http://www.grants.gov/RequestaDUNS>. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.

H. Required Registration for Grants.gov

The Central Contract Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database will also be used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. Such organizations must register in the CCR prior to the submission of applications via grants.gov (a DUNS number is needed for CCR registration). For information about how to register in the CCR visit the "Get Started" section at <http://www.grants.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.