

SAMPLE WRITTEN NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Request For Applications (RFA): Risk Management Research Partnerships.

This sample narrative does not address all relevant requirements of the RFA and should only be used as supplemental guidance. This sample narrative may be used for additional guidance in the preparation of an application in response to the *Federal Register* announcement for research partnerships that was released May 6, 2005. Complete requirements can only be found in the RFA.

The narrative portion of your application provides you with the opportunity to describe your project in detail to the review panel. The project you describe in the narrative must be designed to help us, the Risk Management Agency (RMA), accomplish the goals and objectives listed in the RFA. In the narrative, you will describe your plan to meet the objectives of the RFA. A well-crafted narrative is important because:

- It will assist the review panel in understanding the merits of your project and
- It will help any partners you are working with understand their specific roles in the project.

We have instructed the review panel members to examine each application with respect to the objectives established in the *Federal Register* notice. To that end, we have asked the panel to disregard information in the narratives that does not directly contribute to an assessment of the application against the evaluation criteria. Therefore, providing extraneous commentary in a narrative will not benefit an applicant.

The only requirement for a narrative is that it be limited to ten single-sided pages. No set format for the narrative is required. We strongly suggest that you number each page of the proposal.

The review panel will want to be able to match the information you provide in the narrative of your application with the review and selection process listed in the *Federal Register* notice, section V.B. We suggest you provide a separate section for each stage of the review process. The first three stages are:

1. Primary Objective

Each proposal must specify a single primary objective for evaluation and funding purposes and must meet the objectives stated in part I.D of the RFA and meet all other requirements in the announcement.

2. Usefulness and benefits

The proposal the proposal must clearly demonstrate the usefulness of the tool and the benefits of the tool to producers of priority commodities and demonstrate that there is

a reasonable expectation that the tool will actually be used by a substantial number of such producers. Any proposal that does not do this will not receive further consideration.

3. Delivery, Maintenance and Support

The plan will be evaluated to ensure that the risk management tool can be delivered to producers and will be supported, maintained, updated or revised as necessary. Any proposal where the plan does not adequately address each of these issues will not receive further consideration. If the plan states that such actions are not necessary, the basis for such a determination will be evaluated and the proposal reviewed to determine if such determination is reasonable. If it is determined that any such actions are required and they are not contained in the plan, the proposal will not receive further consideration

The last stage of the evaluation and review process consists of four sections. We suggest that the remainder of your narrative consist of four sections - one for each of the four criteria found in section V.A: Research Objectives; Indication of RMA Involvement and Non-Financial Benefits; Research Approach, Methodology, Development and Implementation; and Management. The following are suggestions for each of these sections to assist you:

4. Research Objectives

In this section, describe how the proposed research project meets the objectives of the partnerships as defined in the RFA. In preparing this section, it would be useful to refer to the specific project objectives for partnerships as described in the *Federal Register* notice (Part V.A.). Applications that do not address at least one of the project objectives as specified in the *Federal Register* notice will be disqualified.

All of the project objectives specified in the RFA must result in the development of a risk management tool to be used by producers. Development or modification of insurance products and plans of insurance or policies are excluded from consideration under this RFA.

5. Indication of RMA Involvement and Non-Financial Benefits

In this section, describe the areas of **substantial involvement of RMA** (required for all partnerships). Some examples of substantial involvement of RMA could include providing technical assistance, analytical assistance, and materials or data. RMA could also provide relevant feedback and evaluation.

Also, describe the **non-financial benefits** from the partnership that extend beyond the financial benefits of the research proposal. For example, a non-financial benefit for

an educational institution may be the provision of research opportunities to students and enhancing community involvement of the institution.

Another example of non-financial benefits may include language such as "...given the regional focus of this study this research is consistent with the institution's/entities regional mission, helping and improving the state's agriculture. The institution/entity will also benefit from the funding of meaningful research work employing the primary researcher, the research assistant, and several graduate students."

6. Research Approach, Methodology, Development, and Implementation

In this section, you may describe the research approach and the methodology to be used as well as describe the development and implementation of the risk management tool. You might want to include items such as the purpose of the research, pertinent background material, the statement, or description of the work to be performed, technical approach, and a proposed project timetable. You may want to include pilot testing and evaluation of the risk management tool before final development of the tool.

7. Management

In this section, you can introduce yourself to the review panel as the project leader along with the organization you represent and the specific research program goal you are trying to accomplish through this project. If you have assembled a project team, you might introduce the team members and briefly describe their experience. You may include as an appendix, a short resume from key project personnel. Indicate any subcontracting arrangements, identifying the parties and the extent of their involvement.

Please be sure the proposal clearly demonstrates that the applicant has the ability and the resources to coordinate and manage the proposed research and development project. You may include quality assurance plans developed for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the various aspects of the project to ensure that standards of quality are met.