

Instructions for Completing Concept Paper

(Review the complete 2015 Grant Manual for comprehensive details, examples, and further information on how to prepare your Completing Concept Paper. Sample applications are available starting on page four of this USDA website.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5080825>

The Three (3) Forms and Templates needed to fill out this Concept Paper along with all supporting documents are available online at:

<http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/scgrant/forms.htm>

Please use the North Carolina Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Project Profile Template as your guide. You should fill out the information for each question then delete the instructions in each section keeping all formatting consistent.

Complete all information requested. Proposals that are incomplete and do not satisfy all the requirements may be disqualified and returned to the proposing organization without selection committee review. Information for each section should be specific and brief. There is a maximum limit of 12 pages exclusive of supplemental material [i.e. line item budget and support letters]. Each proposal must be in the following format with numbered pages:

Submit one (1) printed complete original Concept Paper packet signed in BLUE INK, and five (5) complete copies of the Concept Paper packet

Concept Papers should contain the following:

A. Concept Paper Cover

B. Project Profile

I. PROJECT TITLE:

The title shall adequately describe the project. (Limit to six words)

II. ABSTRACT:

Include a project summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public. It should include the need for the project, a brief description of the goals and outcomes, and your plan for evaluating and measuring the success of the project or program.

III. PROJECT PARTNER ORGANIZATION:

Include the name of the applicant organization that will establish an agreement or contractual relationship with the NCDA&CS to lead and execute the project.

IV. PROJECT PURPOSE:

This section shall address the following questions.

- What is the specific issue, problem or need that the project will address?
- Why is the project important and timely?
- What are the objectives of the project?
- If any of the project activities or costs has the potential to enhance the competitiveness of non-specialty crops (ex: farmers market, general buy local, CSA etc.) describe the methods or processes you will implement to verify all grant funds are expended on activities and costs that only enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops. If you propose a cost-share or match to cover non-specialty crop activities and costs, include the specific costs or contributions proposed to meet the cost-share or match, the source of funding or contributions, and describe how you determined the appropriate amount of cost-share or match. See the [Request for Applications](#) section 3.8 Cost Sharing and Matching for guidance on documentation standards.
- If the project is a continuation of a project that the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funded previously, describe how the project differs from and builds on the previous project's efforts. Describe also the likelihood of the project becoming self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent on grant funds. Specifically, provide a summary (3 to 5 sentences per project) of the accomplishments of the previous project that have led you to seek continued funding.
- Have you submitted the project to another Federal or State grant program other than the SCBGP for funding and/or is another Federal or State grant program other than the SCBGP funding the project currently?
 - If no, indicate that you have not.
 - If yes, identify the Federal and/or State grant program by name and describe how the new project differs from and supplements efforts of the SCBGP and the other Federal or State grant program rather than duplicates funding efforts. The SCBGP will not fund duplicative projects.

V. POTENTIAL IMPACT:

- Who are the specialty crop beneficiaries of the project?
- How many specialty crop beneficiaries will the project benefit?
- How will the project benefit the specialty crop beneficiaries?
- What is the potential economic impact of the project if it can be estimated?
- If applicable, how will the project have a multi-state (benefitting two more or states) or national impact?

VI. EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

Provide at least one distinct, quantifiable, measurable project outcome that solely supports enhancing the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops. If the outcome measures are

long-term and occur after the project's completion, then identify an intermediate outcome that occurs before the end of the grant period and that is expected to help lead to the fulfillment of long-term outcomes. For further information on expected measurable outcomes, please see the [Outcomes Model](#) or this [Educational Bulletin](#).

- Provide a GOAL - A goal is what you hope to achieve as a result of conducting the activities and producing the outputs (tangible results that can be seen, touched, handled, or moved about) of the project. Examples of outcome-oriented goals could include a change in knowledge, change in behavior, and/or change in conditions that make a difference for the beneficiaries of the project.
- Provide a PERFORMANCE MEASURE - Identify a performance measure for each goal that you will use to measure the actual project results compared to the expected results. These are usually expressed in quantifiable terms and should be objective and measurable (numeric values, percentages, scores and indices, although in certain circumstances qualitative measures are appropriate).
- Provide a BENCHMARK - For each performance measure provided, include benchmark. The benchmark is the baseline data against which you will measure your success. Examples of a benchmark could include current or initial level of knowledge, current behavior, or current conditions.
- Provide a TARGET- For each benchmark provided, indicate the TARGET. The TARGET is the level of change that you anticipate by the completion of the project. This is NOT the target audience or target population.
- Provide your PERFORMANCE MONITORING PLAN - How will you monitor your progress toward achieving each GOAL?
- What are your data sources for monitoring performance? For example, will you conduct surveys or use questionnaires?
- How will you collect the required data? Be sure to include the frequency of your data collection.
- Describe how you will share the results of the project with specialty crop growers and other interested specialty crop stakeholders.

Examples of outcome measures may include, but are not limited to: per capita consumption, consumer awareness as a percent of target market reached, market penetration based on sales by geographic region, dollar value of exports, or website hits. For research grants they may include generation of new knowledge, research quality, attainment of leadership in the field, or the development of human resources (e.g., providing opportunities for graduate students).

VII. WORK PLAN:

The following questions shall be addressed in this section.

<p>Project Activity - Describe the project activities that are necessary to accomplish the</p>	<p>Who will do the work? Indicate the project participants who will do the work of each activity, including</p>	<p>When will the activity be accomplished? Include a timeline that indicates when each</p>
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objectives. Make sure you include your performance monitoring/data collection activities.	subrecipients, and/or contractors. If you request grant funds for personnel and contractors, you must include them in the work plan to demonstrate the requested funding is warranted. If you request funds for travel, these activities must also be included.	activity will occur (at least month and year) and beginning and end dates for the project. Make sure the work plan timeline shows that the project will be completed within the allowable grant period.

Include all workshops, training, field trips, seminars, etc.

The first activity should not have a start date earlier than January 2016, and the last activity should have an end date no later than December 2017.

VIII. PROJECT COMMITMENT:

Describe the specialty crop stakeholders other than the applicant, individuals and organizations involved in the project who support this project and why.

- What specialty crop stakeholders outside the lead organization support this project and how?
- How will all project stakeholders work toward the goals and outcomes of the project?
- Who or what organization will oversee the project activities?
- How will oversight be performed? For example, will weekly or monthly meetings be held to discuss performance toward the completion of the project?

IX. BUDGET:

All expenses described in this Budget Narrative must be associated with expenses that will be covered by the SCBGP. If any matching funds will be used and a description of their use is required by the State department of agriculture, the expenses to be covered with matching funds must be described separately. Applicants should review the Request for Applications section 4.6 Funding Restrictions prior to developing their budget narrative.

Examples are presented below for a BUDGET NARRATIVE in your Project Profile. The narrative description should be in paragraph **format**, be very detailed and verbally

express the information that is contained in the LINE ITEM BUDGET. DO NOT Include Matching Funds, they are not a Program requirement.

Travel - Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. Travel expenses associated with the project shall follow the North Carolina State Travel Policy. The approved travel rate sheet has a link on the [NC-SCBGP web page](#). See the [Request for Applications](#) section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Travel, and Foreign Travel for further guidance.

Each trip may require multiple lines to adequately capture all travel expenses. Provide the following information in the Budget Narrative:

- a) Trip Destination
- b) Purpose of Trip
- c) Type of expense (airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.)
- d) Unit of Measure (days, nights, miles)
- e) Number of Units
- f) Cost per Unit
- g) Number of travelers claiming the expense
- h) Total cost of this lines expense.

Travel expenses associated with the project shall follow the North Carolina State Travel Policy. Be sure to use the current State fiscal year costs; the one presented below may or may not be current.

Example

TRAVEL:

#1 A meeting is scheduled to be held in Smithfield, NC, in May to present the most current safe handling procedures required by both the USDA and the State of NC. The Project Technician will make the presentation and handout safe handling brochures to the local farming community; including individual farmers, county agents, local farming organizations and associations.

#2 A Specialty Crop Field Day is scheduled to be held in Burgaw, NC, in June spotlighting new practices for planting and growing blueberries in NC, that have proven to increase the production and shelf life of the fruit. A mass mailing will be sent to all the State's blueberry growers and

organizations, as well regional county agents; both state and federal.

Trip Destination	Purpose of the Trip	Type of Expense (airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.)	Unit of Measure (days, nights, miles)	Number of Units	Cost per Unit	Number of Travelers Claiming the Expense	Funds Requested
From office in Raleigh to meeting destination in Smithfield, NC	Project Meeting to present the most current safe handling procedures required by both the USDA and the State of NC	Association vehicle	miles	50	\$0.575	1	\$28.75
Burgaw, NC	Blueberry Crop Field Day	<i>In State Lodging</i>	nights	1	\$55.50	2	\$111.00

Supplies - List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts, anything from office supplies to educational or lab supplies costing less than \$5,000 per unit.

Describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the proposal and solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. For non-typical materials and supplies items, include a brief narrative of how this fits with the project.

Provide an itemized list and estimate the dollar amount for each item.

Example:

Supplies –Paper is need to print SCBGP project correspondence, bulletins and mass mailings. Some of the paper will be used to post project bulletins in strategic County locations to advertise meetings and demonstrations; and mass mailings.

Office Supplies – 10 reams of paper @ \$20.00 p/r = \$200

Other - Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit. Expenses in this section include, but are not limited to, meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, printing publication costs, and data collection.

Examples:

Other - A “Food Safety” brochure will be printed to inform specialty crop growers on the most current safe handling procedures required by the USDA and the State of North Carolina. These brochures will be handed out at meetings, demonstrations, and field days.

Printing – 400 safe handling brochures @ 1.00 each = \$400.00

Space is needed to accommodate the “NC Peach” exhibit at the national meeting of peach growers to be held in Atlanta, Georgia on 5-5-15. The space is approximately 10X10, and will be rented for the entire 2 days of the meeting.

Rental of Space – Flat rate = \$200, exhibit space

C. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Provide a resume or biographical sketch of each person who has primary responsibility for developing and implementing the proposal. Information should clarify each person’s project responsibilities and highlight their qualifications.

D. CONCEPT PAPER SIGNATURE PAGE

By signing the signature page, the Authorizing Agent is guaranteeing that the information contained in the Concept Paper is correct and verifiable.

E. LETTERS OF SUPPORT (Optional)

Attach any letters providing evidence of support for the project.