



Agricultural Marketing and Development, Ph: 651-201-6539 or 651-201-6646

2012 Minnesota Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Application

NAME OF ORGANIZATION			
CONTACT NAME		CONTACT TITLE	
MAILING ADDRESS			
CITY		STATE MN	ZIP
PHONE		FAX	
EMAIL	DUNS NUMBER	PROJECT TIMELINE NOV. 2012 THRU _____	
INDUSTRY SECTOR AND SPECIFIC COMMODITY/FOOD FOR PROMOTION: (e.g. Tree-fruit: Apples)			
PROJECT TITLE(S):			
Attach items to application cover sheet in order listed below. See Grant Manual for detail.			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Abstract 2. Project Purpose 3. Potential Impact 4. Expected Measurable Outcomes 5. Work Plan 6. Budget Summary and Budget Narrative 7. Project Oversight 8. Project Commitment 9. Letters of Support 			
Grant Request Amount : \$			
<p><i>Certification: I certify to the best of my knowledge that the information in this application is true and correct and that I am legally authorized to sign and submit this application on behalf of this organization, which is legally eligible to enter into a grant contract.</i></p>			

X Authorized Signature _____

Title _____ Date _____

Check all applicable statements

The following proposals will benefit the following groups:

- Beginning Farmer or Rancher. An individual or entity who has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation. (Please provide details within your proposal on how you will serve this group. Points will only be awarded if the application can fully detail how proposal will serve this group.)
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher. A farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A “Socially Disadvantaged Group” is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program. (Please provide details within your proposal on how you will serve this group. Points will only be awarded if the application can fully detail how proposal will serve this group.)
- Multi-State Project. Provide details of which state(s) as well as a brief summary of the proposal and funds requested.

IF THE PROPOSED PROJECT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO OR FUNDED BY ANOTHER FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAM, PLEASE SPECIFY:

Project Abstract

In an abstract of 200 or fewer words, summarize the proposed project in a way suitable for dissemination to the public. It should be a self-contained description of the project and should contain a statement of objectives and methods to be employed.

Project Purpose (See the RFP, page 7 for examples)

Clearly state the specific issue, problem, interest or need to be addressed. Describe what makes this project important and timely. List out the project objectives and how this project compliments work done previously or other projects submitted to or funded by another Federal or State grant program.

Project Potential Impact (See the RFP, page 8 for examples)

Discuss the number of people or operations affected, the intended beneficiaries of each project, and/or the potential economic impact, if such data is available and relevant to the project(s). This section should show how the project potentially impacts the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.

Expected Measurable Outcomes (See the RFP, page 8-9 for examples)

Identify at least one distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcome that directly and meaningfully supports the project’s purpose and is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries. Include the following for each measurable outcome: goal, performance measures, benchmark, target and how the outcome performance will be monitored.

Work Plan (See the RFP, page 10-11 for examples)

Identify activities necessary to accomplish the project objectives, who will do the work of each activity and how they are qualified to do this work. Include timelines for accomplishing each activity.

<i>Example: Project Activity</i>	<i>Example: Who</i>	<i>Example: Timeline</i>
<i>Administer survey to about 200 vegetable growers at annual regional meetings</i>	<i>Cooperative Extension</i>	<i>February-March</i>
<i>Conduct literature review on post-harvest nutritional content of speciality crops and report gaps to steering committee</i>	<i>ABC Consulting</i>	<i>4-5 months</i>

Project Activity	Who	Timeline

Budget Summary and Narrative (See the RFP, page 11-12 for examples)

For example: The Specialty Crop Grower Association will be responsible for implementing a media campaign to educate consumers on why they should "Buy Local" when selecting fruits and vegetables.

<i>Example: Category</i>	<i>Example: Estimated Total Project Expense</i>	<i>Example: Matching Dollars (Not Required)</i>
<i>Contractual - media advertising</i>	<i>\$60,000</i>	<i>\$6,000 - match</i>
Category	Estimated Project Expense	Matching Dollars (not required)
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Other		
Project Income		
Total		

Budget Narrative (See the RFP, page 11-12 for examples)

- 1) PERSONNEL –List persons employed by the grantee or subgrantee organization in this category. Indicate their title, percent of full time equivalents (FTE), and corresponding salary for the FTE. General administrative or accounting duties are not considered acceptable. The duties must be directly related to the project application.
- 2) FRINGE BENEFITS – Provide the rate of fringe benefits for each project participant’s salary described in the personnel section.
- 3) EQUIPMENT –Provide an itemized list of equipment rentals, along with a brief narrative on the intended use of each equipment item. Please see Sections H and I for further guidance on equipment.
- 4) SUPPLIES –Provide an itemized list and estimate the dollar amount for each item.
- 5) CONTRACTUAL – Provide a short description of the contracted services required for completion of project work.
- 6) OTHER – Provide a detailed description of all other direct costs.

Project Oversight: (See the RFP, page 13 for examples)

Describe who will oversee the project activities and how this will be done.

Project Oversight: (See the RFP, page 13 for examples)

Provide information about how the Minnesota Specialty Crop Industry will demonstrate its support. Describe how the grant partners will work toward the goals and outcomes of the project.

Letters of support and commitment are encouraged from impacted industry partners and can be added to the end of the project application.



2012 Minnesota Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Manual

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Packet includes general program information, application instructions, evaluation sheet and application template.

Invitation to submit grant applications: February 1, 2012		Application Due Date: April 20, 2012, 4:00 P.M.
CFDA # 10.170	For questions about the grant program or completing the application:	
Brian Erickson Ag Marketing & Developments Phone: (651)-201-6539 Email: Brian.J.Erickson@state.mn.us	David Weinand Ag Marketing & Development Phone: (651)-201-6646 Email: David.Weinand@state.mn.us	Mary Hanks, Director Ag Marketing & Development Phone: (651)-201-6277 Email: Mary.Hanks@state.mn.us

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Background

On December 21, 2004, the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note) authorized the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide grants to State departments of agriculture solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) amended the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 and authorized the USDA to provide grants to States for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012 to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

All Minnesota specialty crop industry applications will be received and reviewed by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). Selected applications will be included into one Minnesota state plan and submitted to the USDA for final approval.

B. Funding Source and Available Funds

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is charged with distributing approximately \$55 million in block grant funds to state departments of agriculture, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in fiscal year 2012. AMS is in the process of announcing its notice on 2012 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program-Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB) funding. The funding cycle allocation for Minnesota is estimated at \$703,253.61.

Minnesota SCBGP – FB program funds will be distributed to the specialty crop industry through a competitive review process. Competitive grant awards are capped at \$100,000 for a specific project. SCBGP-FB grant funds will be awarded for projects up to three years in duration. Applications that build on a previously funded SCBGP project may be submitted. In such cases, the application should clearly indicate how the project complements previous work.

More than one project application per applicant may be submitted. Projects may be submitted by a single organization or for combined specialty crop efforts. Multi-state projects are also encouraged and are eligible to provide a growing need for solutions to problems that cross state boundaries. Project topics may include, but are not limited to: addressing good agricultural practices, research on crop productivity or quality, enhancing access to federal nutrition programs, increasing the competitiveness of specialty crop farmers, including Native American and disadvantaged farmers, improving food access in underserved communities, developing local and rural agricultural economies, pest and disease management, or commodity-specific projects addressing common issues. * If more than one proposal is submitted for a specific specialty crop, industry / grower input may be considered as a part of the grant evaluation process. Organizations submitting multiple applications may be asked to rank their proposals.

C. Application & Funding Timing

MDA is requesting proposals for fiscal year 2012-FB grant cycles. Funds will be disbursed when program applications have been submitted and approved by both MDA and the USDA.

Selected grant projects will not be able to begin project activity and incur eligible project expenses until this approval has been received. It is anticipated this will be late fall or early winter 2012.

Timeline

Applications Due to MDA April 20, 2012

Applications Reviewed by MDA May 21, 2012

Selected Applications Notified by MDA May 25, 2012

State Application Submitted to USDA July 9, 2012

Anticipated USDA Approval October/November 2012

D. Eligible Projects – Program Goals

To be eligible for a grant, the project(s) must enhance the competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. territory grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. The USDA encourages projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops pertaining to the following issues affecting the specialty crop industry:

- increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems;
- assisting all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain in developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”;
- investing in specialty crop research, including organic research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- enhancing food safety;
- developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
- pest and disease control; and

SCBGP funds must be used for projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops or that benefit a specialty crop industry as a whole. **Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.**

Applications for grant funds should show how the project potentially impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. The following are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable projects:

Examples of Unacceptable Projects

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop for the purpose of making a profit, or to expand production of a single business.
- A State requests grant funds to make grants to individual specialty crop businesses or roadside stands to promote their individual business.

Examples of Acceptable Projects

- A commodity organization or university submits a proposal to conduct research on the feasibility of planting, cultivating, and growing a specialty crop in a particular area, the results of which can be shared with many growers throughout the State.
- A State requests grant funds to help improve and expand domestic farmers markets which benefit a wide array of specialty crop producers.

E. Eligible Specialty Crops

Specialty crops are defined in law as “fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.” The tables below list plants commonly considered fruits and tree nuts, vegetables, culinary herbs and spices, medicinal plants, and nursery, floriculture, and horticulture crops. This list is not intended to be all inclusive, but rather intended to give examples of common Minnesota specialty crops. The USDA maintains a list of eligible specialty crops on its website that will be updated as USDA gets new questions. See: www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp

F. Eligible Applicants

Proposed projects must be supported by the impacted specialty crop growers or industry sector. This may be illustrated by support from the industry sector organization or by individual letters of support from impacted growers.

Proposals will be accepted from individuals, groups, businesses and organizations involved in Minnesota agriculture. Proposals may involve collaborations or partnerships between producers, industry, academia or agricultural organizations. Applicants may cooperate with any public or private organization. Projects should benefit the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, individual or commercial product. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are eligible to participate as project partners.

G. Eligible Expenses - Allowable Costs (See CFR Part 225 for all allowable costs).

All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Failure to mention a particular item of cost in these sections is not intended to imply that it is unallowable. See 2 CFR Part 225 for further guidance on cost principles.

Eligible project expenses include, but are not limited to:

- **Compensation for Personnel Services** – (salaries, wages and fringe benefits)
Compensation for personnel services during the period of performance under the grant project, including salaries, wages, and fringe benefits to the extent that they are reasonable for the services rendered. Specific federal requirements may be found on the Office of Management & Budget website “Circulars” information area (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>).
- **Consultant Services or Subcontractors** –
 - o Advertising and public relations costs that solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops.
 - o Costs incurred by advisory councils or committees.
 - o Costs of professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill.
- **Materials and Supplies** - Costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out the grant project. Purchased materials and supplies shall be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits. Withdrawals from general stores or stockrooms should be charged at their actual net cost under any recognized method of pricing inventory withdrawals, consistently applied. Incoming transportation charges are a proper part of materials and supplies costs.

- **Equipment and other Capital Expenditures** - (lease/rental or depreciation costs)
 - Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs, provided that items with a unit cost of \$5000 or more have the prior approval of AMS. "Special purpose equipment" means equipment which is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Examples of special purpose equipment include microscopes, spectrometers, and produce coolers.
 - Rental costs of buildings and equipment are allowable as direct costs in accordance with the cost principles in Subpart T of 7 CFR 3015. To the extent that the rates are reasonable in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased. Rental arrangements should be reviewed periodically to determine if circumstances have changed and other options are available.
- **Travel costs** -
 - All expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence and related items incurred by the competitive grant recipient as long as the expenses are directly related to the fulfillment of the duties relating to the project.
- **Other Miscellaneous Costs** – (i.e. telephone, meetings, publications, etc.).
 - Costs incurred for telephone services, local and long distance telephone calls, telegrams, postage, messenger, electronic or computer transmittal services and the like.
 - Costs of meetings and conferences with the primary purpose of dissemination of technical information. This includes costs of rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences with the exception of entertainment costs as described under unallowable costs.
 - Publication costs include the costs of printing (including the processes of composition, plate-making, press work, binding, and the end products produced by such processes), distribution, promotion, mailing, and general handling. Page charges for professional journal publications are allowable as a necessary part of research costs where: (1) The research papers report work supported by the Federal Government; and (2) The charges are levied impartially on all research papers published by the journal, whether or not by federally-sponsored authors.
 - The cost of training provided for employee development or agricultural producers.

H. Ineligible Expenses - Unallowable Costs

All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Failure to mention a particular item of cost in this section is not intended to imply that it is allowable. Please see 2 CFR Part 225 for further guidance on cost principles.

Ineligible expenses include:

- **Capital Expenditures for General Purpose Equipment, Buildings and Land** -
 - Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable as direct and indirect charges.
 - Capital expenditures means expenditures for the acquisition cost of capital assets (equipment, buildings, land), or expenditures to make improvements to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life. Acquisition cost means the cost of the asset including the cost to put it in place. Acquisition cost for equipment, for example, means the net invoice price of the equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired.
 - "General purpose equipment" means equipment, which is not limited to research, medical, scientific or other technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.
 - Equipment means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the governmental unit for financial statement purposes, or \$5000.
- **Bad debts** - Paying off existing debt.
 - Including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs.
- **Lobbying, political and other governmental activities** -
 - Development or participation in lobbying activities including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying are not allowed.
 - Development or participation in political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7326) is not allowed.

- **Entertainment and alcohol -**
 - o Alcoholic beverages except when the costs are associated with enhancing the competitiveness of wine grapes and prior approval is given from the awarding agency.
 - o Amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are not allowed.
- **Other expenses -**
 - o Contributions to a contingency reserve or any similar provision.
 - o Donated or volunteer services may be furnished to a governmental unit by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor. The value of these services is not reimbursable either as a direct or indirect cost.
 - o Contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the governmental unit, regardless of the recipient.
 - o Fines, penalties, damages, and other settlements resulting from violations (or alleged violations) of, or failure of the governmental unit to comply with, Federal, State, local, or Indian tribal laws and regulations.
 - o Organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used.
 - o Costs of goods or services for personal use of the governmental unit's employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.
 - o Costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments.
 - o Grant funds shall supplement the expenditure of State funds in support of specialty crops grown in that State, rather than replace State funds.
 - o Indirect (administrative support) costs,
 - o Tuition.

I. General Compliance

All awarded grant projects must comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and the terms of the grant award. Specific federal requirements may be found on the Office of Management & Budget website "Circulars" information area <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. Each applicant is responsible for identifying and complying with all circulars relevant to the applicant's specialty crop industry.

J. Records Requirements

The grantee will be responsible for setting up and maintaining a project file that contains all records of correspondence with MDA, receipts, invoices and copies of all reports and documents associated with the project. The grantee shall retain all data and other records relating to the acquisition and performance of the Grant Award Agreement for a period of three years after the completion of the agreement. All records shall be subject to inspection and audit by state personnel at reasonable times. Upon request, the grantee shall produce a legible copy of any or all such records.

K. Monitoring

MDA reserves the ability to perform site monitoring visits to any and all grantees to ensure that work is progressing within the required time frame and that fiscal procedures are followed accurately and appropriately. Monitoring includes both financial and program information as well as site visits.

L. Liability

MDA will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any work performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

M. Open Records

Proposals submitted for funding and all related contracts and reports shall be subject to disclosure under the Public Records law. The grant applicant or recipient must clearly mark any information deemed a 'trade secret' that is included in the proposal, progress reports or final reports as "Confidential – Trade Secret – Not For Public Disclosure" at the time of submission. The Department shall notify the Grant Recipient if a public records request is made for the information claimed to be trade secret by the Grant Recipient. The Grant Recipient may then proceed to obtain judicial protection for the information.

N. Other Considerations

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP become the property of MDA. MDA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, otherwise use, and to authorize others to use materials produced under this grant agreement.

MDA also reserves the right to:

- Post funded proposals or final reports to the MDA website;
- Reject any or all proposals received;
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and agreement of applicant;
- Use any or all ideas submitted unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights;
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the RFP requirement and with appropriate notice to potential applicants, to best serve the interests of the State of Minnesota;
- Amend program specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to potential applicants;
- Require a good faith effort on part of the project sponsor to work with MDA subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results in Minnesota;
- Withhold any payments when contract conditions are not met.

II. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS & REQUIREMENTS

A. Application Packet Requirements

All applicants must adhere to the following instructions, in addition to other requirements as stated in this grant manual to be considered eligible for grants. Please use the attached proposal template. Applications missing any of the subsequent information may be deemed ineligible.

- 1. Cover page and abstract** – Please use the cover page in the attached proposal template to provide the name and contact information for the applicant (or lead agency in the case of multi-agency projects) administering the project, a title that adequately describes the project, and an abstract of 200 or fewer words describing the proposed project.

The project abstract must contain a summary of the proposed project suitable for dissemination to the public. It should be a self-contained description of the project and should contain a statement of objectives and methods to be employed.

- 2. Project Purpose** – Clearly state the specific issue, problem, interest or need to be addressed. The following questions should be addressed in this section:

- What is the specific issue, problem or need to be addressed by the project?
- Why is the project important and timely?
- What are the objectives of the project?
- If the project builds on a previously approved project, how does this project complement work done previously? Provide a summary (3 to 5 sentences per project) of the results of the completed work on this project, the long-term quantifiable effects of these results (especially as they impact on the specialty crop industry), and how this year's funding will supplement or build on previous funding from the SCBGP or SCBGP-FB.
- Has the project been submitted to or funded by another Federal or State grant program? If yes, indicate funding source.

Example

The recent introduction of X virus has threatened specialty crop production; the virus has already caused enormous crop losses in many States (PROBLEM). This research proposal will assess the likely spread of the virus from the initial introduction point and will identify plant reservoir hosts for the disease to form the basis for an integrated pest management strategy to prevent further crop losses (IMPORTANCE and OBJECTIVE). This project has not been submitted or funded by another Federal or State grant program.

- 3. Potential Impact** – Discuss the number of people or operations affected, the intended beneficiaries of each project, and/or the potential economic impact, if such data is available and relevant to the project(s). This section should show how the project potentially impacts the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. The following questions should be answered:

- Who are the beneficiaries of the project?
- How many beneficiaries will be impacted?
- How will the beneficiaries be impacted by the project?
- What is the potential economic impact of the project if available?

Example

This project will impact the State's approximately 3000 farms involved in growing the specialty crops (BENEFICIARIES IMPACTED AND #'s). These crops represent approximately \$1 billion in farm income and are the largest crop in the State (ECONOMIC IMPACT). In order to continue the growth this industry has experienced in recent years, this project will develop and conduct marketing efforts to increase their market share (HOW BENEFICIARIES WILL BE IMPACTED).

4. **Expected Measurable Outcomes** – The following questions should be answered in this section.

- What is at least one distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcome that directly and meaningfully supports the project's purpose and is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries? The measurable outcome, when possible, should include the following:
 - GOAL
 - PERFORMANCE MEASURE
 - BENCHMARK
 - TARGET
- How will performance toward meeting the outcome(s) be monitored?
 - Who are your data sources?
 - How will data be collected?
 - If using a survey, provide information on the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used, and the population to be surveyed.
 - If a draft questionnaire is available, you may want to include a copy with your application.
- How will data gathered be used to correct deficiencies and improve performance, both as it is gathered and analyzed and in subsequent project periods?

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 web site 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).

Steps to Developing Outcome Measures

Whenever possible, the outcomes should include a goal, performance measure, baseline, and a target. The following four steps provide guidance on how to develop outcome measures.

- 1) *Determine what the project will accomplish, i.e., the intended results of the project, generally expressed as a GOAL or OBJECTIVE.*

Goals or objectives should be: a) based on a needs analysis and be specific, realistic results you hope to achieve through the project activities; b) specific; and c) outcome-oriented. Outcome oriented objectives identify the ultimate result, while the work plan activities identify how you intend to achieve the objectives. When developing outcome-oriented objectives, ask yourself “why” you are performing each grant activity; and specify not only what will be achieved, but also when those results will be achieved.

- 2) *Figure out how to measure the results and select the PERFORMANCE MEASURE.*

For each objective identified in step 1, select the performance measure. Performance measures are measures/indicators used to observe progress and measure actual results compared to expected results. They 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.

- 3) *Determine the BASELINE for each measure and set TARGET goals for future performance.*

For each measure identified in step 2, determine the baselines against which you will measure. Baselines are usually determined by researching past circumstances in the area you are trying to measure. As an alternative, you may use benchmarks established by third parties accepted as the standard-setters in your industry. If data does not exist, describe the lack of data. It may be appropriate in the first year to set less specific targets, such as “improvement” where any increase represents outcome achievement, and set more concrete targets in subsequent years when baseline data is available.

Use the baseline data to set targets for the quantity of change expected. Targets may be framed in terms of:
a) Absolute level of achievement (ex: feed 150 homeless people);
b) Change in level of achievement (ex: feed 150 homeless people, 35 more than last year); or
c) Change in relation to the scale of the problem (ex: feed 150 homeless people, approximately 10% of the city's homeless population.)

If you are starting up a new project or trying new approaches remember that little or no measurable progress will be evident in the project start-up phase. This delay in seeing measurable results should be reflected in target-setting. When setting targets, you should take into account external factors that influence your success. You may have a grand ultimate goal, but you should view annual targets as small steps toward that ultimate goal.

You may also want to set stretch goals by using benchmarks as your targets. Benchmarks tell you how the rest of the industry is doing; when you gather data for benchmarks, you look at the results of other organizations serving your type(s) of customers, doing your type of work. Another alternative is to include minimum and maximum targets in your application. For example, “We plan, at a minimum, for a 5% increase. However, we will strive for a 10% increase, which our data shows is possible if all external factors work in our favor and our new methodology yields the same results in the demonstration phase.”

4) *Develop your performance monitoring plan or data collection plan.*

Define who your data sources are and how the data will be collected. If the project involves a survey, provide some information about the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used and the population to be surveyed. If a draft questionnaire is available, you may want to include a copy with the application. Outline how data gathered will be used to correct deficiencies and improve performance, both as it is gathered and analyzed and in subsequent project periods. This data collection plan should be integrated into your work plan and budget.

Examples of Outcome Measures

The following are examples of outcome measures. They do not include examples of a performance monitoring plan.

Example 1

The GOAL of this project is to promote specialty crop X in Mexico in order to increase the volume.

Volume Increase:

BASELINE 2009: Actual volume (20# equiv. cases) of specialty crop exported to Mexico: 53,969

TARGET 2010: 60,000

TARGET 2011: 70,000

TARGET 2012: 80,000

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Derive from specialty crop commission assessment reports at the end of each year.

Example 2

Increase the number of specialty crop farmers following Good Agricultural Practices (GOAL) from the current 18 (BENCHMARK) to 55 in two years (TARGET) measured by the number of GAP audits passed (PERFORMANCE MEASURE).

Example 3

Increase consumer awareness of specialty crops by distributing 1000 pieces of informational materials containing locations where to purchase specialty crops (GOAL). Six months after distribution, survey 50 locations (PERFORMANCE MEASURE) to determine if sales increased by 25% (TARGET) from the level before distribution of marketing materials (BENCHMARK).

5. Work Plan –The following information should be included in this section.

- Identify the activities necessary to accomplish the project objectives. Make sure to include your performance monitoring/data collection plan activity described in the expected measurable outcome section in the work plan.
- Indicate who will do the work of each activity and how they are qualified to do this work. If collaborative arrangements or subcontracts are used, make sure you specify their role and responsibilities in performing project activities.
- Include timelines for accomplishing each activity. Make sure to include the month and year the project is scheduled to begin.

The work plan section may be in any format you choose as long as it contains the appropriate information. The following is a **Work Plan Example**:

Project Activity	Who	Timeline
Assemble the specialty crop steering committee to provide direction throughout project	Agricultural Marketing Council, specialty crop industry representatives from the mushroom, apple, and peach councils	January 2013
Develop statement of work for literature review	Ag Marketing Council	January 2013
Procure literature reviewer	Ag Marketing Council	January – February 2013
Conduct literature review on the post-harvest nutritional content of specialty crops and report gaps to steering committee	ABC Consultant	February – March 2013
Prioritize research gaps; develop/issue Request for Proposals (RFP) for original research	ABC Consultant	March – April 2013
Receive proposals; distribute to steering committee	ABC Consultant	April – May 2013
Review and select proposals	Specialty crop steering committee	April – May 2013
As appropriate, refer proposals to individual commodity research and promotion programs	Specialty crop steering committee and individual research and promotion programs	April – May 2013
Develop and execute research grant agreements for selected projects	Ag Marketing Council	May – June 2013
Obtain progress reports from researchers; synthesize for steering committee	Ag Marketing Council	September, December, March, June 2013
Disseminate research results to steering committee and SCBGP-FB showing progress toward project outcomes	Ag Marketing Council	June 2013

6. Budget Summary & Budget Narrative. The budget should contain a table summary and a narrative in paragraph format for each project in order for AMS to determine the costs are reasonable and allowable.

Budget Summary Table Category	Description	Total Project Expenses Requested
PERSONNEL		
FRINGE BENEFITS		
EQUIPMENT		
SUPPLIES		
CONTRACTUAL		
OTHER		
PROJECT INCOME		
TOTAL		

1) PERSONNEL – Persons employed by the grantee or sub-grantee organization should be listed in this category. Those employed elsewhere would be listed as subcontractors or consultants category.

In order for secretarial and clerical salaries to be allowable as direct charges to the awards, a justification of how that person will be directly involved in the project must be included in the narrative. General administrative or accounting duties are not considered acceptable. The duties must be directly related to the project application.

For each project participant, indicate their title, percent of full time equivalents (FTE), and corresponding salary for the FTE.

For example, if a project participant's salary is \$50,000 and they are participating 50% of their time on the project, the total budgeted salary cost would be \$25,000.

2) FRINGE BENEFITS – Provide the rate of fringe benefits for each project participant's salary described in the personnel section.

3) EQUIPMENT – This category includes items of property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more. If the cost is under \$5,000, then include these items under SUPPLIES.

Provide an itemized list of equipment purchases or rentals, along with a brief narrative on the intended use of each equipment item, and the cost for all the equipment purchases or rentals.

Please see Sections H and I for further guidance on equipment.

- Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable as direct and indirect charges.
- Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs, provided that items with a unit cost of \$5000 or more have the prior approval of AMS.
- Rental costs of buildings and equipment are allowable as direct costs in accordance with the cost principles in Subpart T of 7 CFR Part 3015.

4) SUPPLIES – This is anything with acquisition cost under \$5,000 and could be anything from office supplies and software to educational or field supplies. For non-typical materials & 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.

For example, office supplies such as pens, paper, toner, etc - \$500; Gardening supplies such as soil and fertilizer - \$500.

Items such as telephone, postage, fax and express mail are more appropriately listed under the "Other" category.

5) CONTRACTUAL – Provide a short description of the services each contract covers and include the flat rate fee OR the total hourly rate fee for each contract.

Compensation for contractor/consultant services should be reasonable and consistent with that paid for similar services in the marketplace. Contractor/consultant rates shall not exceed \$130,000 or \$500 per eight-hour day.

If the contract is for service or maintenance, costs should be in direct correlation to the use of the equipment for the project (i.e., if a particular machine is used 50% of the time for the project, the project should only be charged 50% of the service contract paid from grant funds.)

6) OTHER – Provide a detailed description of all other direct costs such as:

- a) Conferences/Meeting - Costs of holding a conference or meeting are included in this category. Some examples are the rental of facilities or equipment for the meeting. Details of costs for each conference or meeting should be broken out and provided in the budget.
- b) Communications – Mailings, postage, express mail, faxes, and telephone long distance charges. Provide the estimated cost for this category.
- c) Speaker/Trainer Fees- Provide the amount of the speaker's fees and a description of the services they are providing.
- d) Publication Costs –Provide the estimated cost of printing of brochures and other program materials or scientific or technical journals.
- e) Data collection - Provide the estimated cost of collecting performance data to measure the project outcome measures.

7) PROJECT INCOME – Indicate the nature or source of program income (for ex: registration fees) If program income is earned it may be used for:

- 1) expanding the project or program;
- 2) continuing the project or program after the grant or sub grant support ends; and
- 3) supporting other projects or programs that further the broad objectives of the grant program.

7. **Project Oversight** –The following questions and information should be addressed in this section:

- Who will oversee the project activities?
- How will oversight be performed? Include timelines.

Example

The Director of Marketing and Development, John Doe, will work directly with the individuals identified as representing each partnering entity. Mr. Doe will coordinate the execution of cooperative agreements with each participating entity and monitor progress throughout the year long grant period. He will contact the principles of each project by phone at least once during each quarter to determine if the projects are on-track.

8. **Project Commitment** – Letters of support and commitment are encouraged from impacted industry partners. Letters of support and commitment can be added to the end of the project application. Provide the following information in this section:

- Who supports this project?
- How is the Minnesota Specialty Crop Industry support demonstrated?
- How will grant partners work toward the goals and outcomes of the project?

B. Exclusions

- Grant funds may not be used to fund political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7326).

C. Application Details and Format

- Proposals must be submitted in entirety with a DUNS number. (A DUNS number application process is attached to the end of this RFP. This process can take 3-5 days.)
- Proposals must be organized and have the requested information in the sequence presented in the Application Packets Requirements of this manual. Incomplete applications will not be given further consideration.
- Proposals should be typed, single spaced with 12 pt. Times New Roman font.
- Each page should be numbered.
- Proposals should not exceed 7 pages in length. (Does not include cover page or supporting documents.) Selected applications
- The person authorized to receive funds must sign the original copy of the application and all subsequent documents in the grant process.
- One hard copy as well as the electronic version of the application and supporting documents is required.
- Proposals must provide detailed financials reflecting expenditures during the fiscal year.
- An entity may submit more than one application packet, but only if the application packets are for completely different projects or for two separate years.
- University entities that are applying for grant funds must now have a letter(s) of support from the specialty crop industry representative.

D. Application Due Date

MDA must receive completed applications no later than 4:00 p.m., April 20, 2012

E Contact Information

Applications must be emailed and/or delivered to:

Brian Erickson
Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture
625 Robert St. N
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538
Email: Brian.J.Erickson@state.mn.us
Phone: 651-201-6539
Fax: 651-201-6114

-- OR --

David Weinand
Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture
625 Robert St. N
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538
Email: David.Weinand@state.mn.us
Phone: 651-201-6646
Fax: 651-201-6114

III. GRANT AWARDS AND REPORTING

A. Application Packet Evaluation

All applications will be reviewed by a review panel of MDA after the grant application submittal deadline. Applicants will be notified during the review process if monetary adjustments to grant requests, project proposal scope of work and/or project budgets are necessary. All applicants will be notified by MDA during the application process whether or not the proposal was selected for submission to USDA. Proposals that are approved by MDA will be included in the Minnesota State Plan which will be submitted to USDA AMS no later than July 2012 for approval.

B. Notification of Award

Upon approval of the Minnesota State Plan by USDA AMS, applicants will be notified in writing as to whether or not they received a grant award. Successful applicants will also be sent a Grant Award Agreement to sign. MDA anticipates that grant awards and notification will be made in late 2012.

C. Grant Award Agreement and Payment

Prior to beginning work on the proposed project or receiving funding, successful applicants will be required to sign a Grant Award Agreement with the MDA indicating their intention to complete the proposed tasks and authorizing MDA to monitor the progress of the proposed project.

Grant Award Agreements must be signed and returned to MDA within 30 days of receipt. Failure to submit an executed copy of the Grant Award Agreement within 30 days of receipt will result in the loss of awarded grant funds, unless the delay was caused by circumstances outside the control of the grantee.

Requests for reimbursements will be accepted on a quarterly basis. Each reimbursement request must include an itemized invoice, a brief interim progress report and documentation of the work or expenses for which payment is requested. Itemization shall include the purpose, amount and date incurred.

To receive reimbursement, grantees must provide assurance that the work has been completed (i.e. include receipts, invoices) and clearly outline expenditures on the Request for Reimbursement Form. Twenty five percent of the total grant funds will be retained until receipt of the complete final report including receipts for all expenditures.

D. Reporting Requirements

MDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Information submitted in any report to the Department will be a public record. If the Grant Recipient considers any information in the report to be a trade secret protected, the Grant Recipient may request that trade secret information be kept confidential and must specifically label the information for which the claim is made. The Department shall notify the Grant Recipient if a public records request is made for the information claimed as protected by the Grant Recipient. The Grant Recipient may then proceed to obtain judicial protection for the information.

Interim Progress Reports – Grantees are required to submit a brief project activity overview with each request for reimbursement. These reports shall summarize project activities and progress made since the last report submitted, timeliness of project (ahead or behind proposed timeline), externalities that effected progress/delays, expectations for the next quarter and a summary of costs and reimbursement requested.

Annual Reports - Annual performance reports are required 90 days after the end of the first year of the date of the signed grant agreement and each year until the expiration date of the grant period. Reports must detail the project status and how grant monies were used to achieve project outcomes outlined in the project proposal submitted with the grant application packet. Reports must also include a detailed financial report that tracks all expenditures against the project budget submitted with the grant proposal.

The annual performance report should be organized under, but not limited to, the following headings for each project:

Activities Performed

Briefly summarize activities performed, targets, and/or performance goals achieved during the reporting period for each project. Include favorable or unusual developments. It is encouraged to clearly convey progress toward achieving outcomes by graphing baseline data and showing the progress toward achieving set targets. If targets have already been achieved, amend the outcome measure to a “stretch goal” where the organization is challenged to go beyond what it is already doing. Identify the amended measurable outcome in the performance report.

Problems and Delays

Note unexpected delays or impediments for each project. Make sure to review measurable outcomes to determine if targets are realistic and attainable. An objective that is too stringent should be scaled back and identified in the performance report. Keep in mind that targets may slip due to all kinds of factors, such as employee turn-over and bad weather. Include revised work plan timelines.

Future Project Plans

Summarize activities performed, targets, and/or performance goals to be achieved during the next reporting period for each project. Describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Describe any changes that are anticipated in the project.

Funding Expended To Date

Provide information regarding the level of grant funds expended to date. In the event that a project gained income as a result of planned activities, provide the amount of this supplemental funding and how it will be reinvested into the project.

Final Reports - A final performance report will be required within 90 days following the end date of the grant agreement. The final report will be posted on the SCBGP-FB web site and represents an important vehicle for sharing project findings with Federal and State agencies and the public.

The final report should be organized under, but not limited to, the following headings for each project:

Project Summary

An outline of the issue, problem, interest, or need for each project.

Project Approach

How the issue or problem was approached via the project.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

How the performance goals and measurable outcomes were achieved for each project(s). If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement. It is encouraged to clearly convey progress toward achieving outcome measures by graphing baseline data and showing the progress toward achieving set targets.

Beneficiaries

Provide a description and quantitative data for the number of people or operations that have benefited from the project's accomplishments, and/or the potential economic impact of each project.

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned, results, conclusions, for each project. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.

Contact Person

Contact person for each project with telephone number and email address.

Additional Information

Additional information available (e.g. publications, web sites, photographs).

In addition to the final project report, MDA reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts of the project.

Reporting Compliance – Applicants who do not submit the semi-annual reports or who submit reports that do not meet all of the above reporting requirements will be required to return all previously disbursed funds to MDA.

Budget Adjustments – If a material change (10% or greater) in the budget is needed during the project period, a written request may be made to MDA to reallocate budget funds between budget categories. However, the total budget amount as dictated by the approved grant award cannot be adjusted.

Timeline

Applications Due to MDA April 20, 2012

Applications Reviewed by MDA May 21, 2012

Selected Applications Notified by MDA May 25, 2012

State Application Submitted to USDA July 9, 2012

Anticipated USDA Approval October/November 2012

Obtaining a DUNS Number

A Guide for Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Applicants

The Federal government requires that all applicants for Federal grants and cooperative agreements with the exception of individuals other than sole proprietors have a DUNS number. (See policy at: http://www.omb.gov/grants/grants_docs). The Federal government will use the DUNS number to better identify related organizations that are receiving funding under grants and cooperative agreements, and to provide consistent name and address data for electronic grant application systems.

Data Universal Number System (DUNS) Number

- The Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit identification number provided by Dun & Bradstreet (D&B).
- The DUNS Number is site-specific. Therefore, each distinct physical location of an entity (such as branches, divisions, and headquarters) may be assigned a DUNS number. Organizations should try and keep DUNS numbers to a minimum. In many instances, a central DUNS number with a DUNS number for each major division/department/agency that applies for a grant may be sufficient.
- In order to provide on-the-spot DUNS number assignment, the requestor should do this by telephone. (See telephone number below.)

Obtaining a DUNS Number

- You should verify that you have a DUNS number or take the steps needed to obtain one as soon as possible, if there is a possibility you will be applying for future Federal grants or cooperative agreements. There is no need to wait until you are submitting a particular application.
- *If you already have a DUNS number.* If you, as the entity applying for a Federal grant or cooperative agreement, previously obtained a DUNS number in connection with the Federal acquisition process or requested or had one assigned to you for another purpose, you should use that number on all of your applications. It is not necessary to request another DUNS number from D&B. You may request D&B to supply a family-tree report of the DUNS numbers associated with your organization. Organizations should work with D&B to ensure the right information is on the report. Organizations should not establish new numbers, but use existing numbers and update/validate the information associated with the number.
- *If you are not sure if you have a DUNS number.* Call D&B using the toll-free number, **1-866-705-5711** and indicate that you are a Federal grant applicant/prospective applicant. D&B will tell you if you already have a number. If you do not have a DUNS number, D&B will ask you to provide the information listed below and will immediately assign you a number, free of charge.
- *If you know you do not have a DUNS number.* Call D&B using the toll-free number, **1-866-705-5711** and indicate that you are a Federal grant applicant/prospective applicant. D&B will ask you to provide the information listed below and will immediately assign you a number, free of charge.

Managing Your DUNS Number

- D&B periodically contacts organizations with DUNS numbers to verify that their information is current. Organizations with multiple DUNS numbers may request a free family tree listing from D&B to help determine what branches/divisions have numbers and whether the information is current. Please call the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 to request your family tree.
- D&B recommends that organizations with multiple DUNS numbers have a single point of contact for controlling DUNS number requests to ensure that the appropriate branches/divisions have DUNS numbers for Federal purposes.
- As a result of obtaining a DUNS number you have the option to be included on D&B's marketing list that is sold to other companies. If you do not want your name/organization included on this marketing list, request to be de-listed from D&B's marketing file when you are speaking with a D&B representative during your DUNS number telephone application.

Obtaining a DUNS number is absolutely Free for all entities doing business with the Federal government. This includes grant and cooperative agreement applicants/prospective applicants and Federal contractors. Be certain that you identify yourself as a Federal grant applicant/prospective applicant.

To Obtain Your DUNS Number

Please call the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line for Federal grant and cooperative agreement applicants or prospective grant applicants at:

1-866-705-5711

The number is staffed from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time of the caller when calling from within the continental United States) Calls placed to the above number outside of those hours will receive a recorded message requesting the caller to call back between the operating hours.

- The process to request number takes about 5-10 minutes.
- A DUNS number will be assigned at the conclusion of the call.
- You will need to provide the following information:
 - Legal Name
 - Headquarters name and address for your organization
 - Doing business as (DBA) or other name by which your organization is commonly known or recognized
 - Physical Address, City, State and Zip Code
 - Mailing Address(is separate from Headquarters and/or physical address)
 - Telephone Number
 - Contact Name and Title
 - Number of Employees at your physical location

2012 Minnesota Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Evaluation Sheet

Proposal Title: _____ Signature: _____

Reviewer (Print): _____ Date: _____

<p>1. Enhanced Competitiveness of Specialty Crops and Sector Benefit (30 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal targets eligible specialty crops and has a well-defined purpose that includes a specific issue, problem or need to be addressed. The proposal identifies why the project is important and timely to the impacted specialty crop. The proposed project will provide useful results or information for a sector of Minnesota agriculture. The proposed project creates a new approach or solution to a problem facing the development and growth of the impacted specialty crops. The impacted industry sector is involved and will contribute support and resources to the project. The proposed project addresses one or more of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program goals. (Found on page 2 of this manual.) If the proposal is from a university, they must also supply letters of support from the specialty crop industry representatives 	SCORE
<p>2. Measurable Outcomes (30 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed project will increase the sales and consumption of the impacted specialty crops. The proposed project will generate private investment into Minnesota agriculture business. The proposal identifies at least one distinct and measurable outcome that is directly related to the project's goals and objectives. The measurable outcome includes a goal, performance measure, benchmark and target. The proposal identifies how to monitor performance towards meeting the outcome(s). The proposed project creates a new business opportunity through the development of new markets, new products or new technology within Minnesota agriculture. 	SCORE
<p>3. Team Strength (20 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed project demonstrates an appropriate balance of skills needed to successfully complete project work. Project team demonstrates a commitment and aptitude to complete project tasks. 	SCORE
<p>4. Quality of Proposal (10 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal is complete and well thought-out and written. The applicant has demonstrated in the proposal an appropriate amount of preliminary work to justify further research and development work on the project. 	SCORE
<p>5. Budget (10 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed budget is cost effective, appropriate & demonstrates a good use of potential grant investment. Proposal includes a detailed budget table with a summary & narrative for each budget category expense. Proposed budget exhibits some level of match. 	SCORE
Total (100 points)	
Additional Points: If the proposal will benefit the following groups:	
A beginning farmer or rancher ¹	(5 points)
Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher ²	(5 points)
Multi-state proposals that meet stakeholder needs to complete project work. ³	(5 points)
Producer impact ⁴	(10 points)

¹ An individual or entity who has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation. (Provide detail within your project narrative.)

² A farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A "Socially disadvantaged Group" is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Provide detail within your project narrative.)

³ Applications that provide a solution to problems that cross state boundaries. (Provide detail within your project narrative.)

⁴ Up to 10 points will be awarded to projects that demonstrate a high degree of support and involvement from a specialty crop growers and grower associations.