



SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION RESEARCH PROGRAM (SCRP)

FISCAL YEAR 2012 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Application Deadline: Wednesday, April 18, 2012

Telephone: (202) 720-3160

Email: SCRPProposals@fas.usda.gov

Website: www.fas.usda.gov/icd/SCRP/default.asp

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA)

- 10.961 – Scientific Cooperation Research Program

USDA Funding Opportunity Number:
SCRP-2012-RFA

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**FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION RESEARCH PROGRAM (SCRP)

Executive Summary:

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) announces the availability of funding through cost reimbursable agreements for the Scientific Cooperation Research Program (SCRP) for fiscal year (FY) 2012. The objective of SCRCP is to reduce global poverty and hunger by supporting applied scientific research, extension, or education projects that aim to address challenges faced by smallholder farmers in emerging economies.

All proposals should focus on addressing agricultural challenges to smallholders. The definition of smallholders differs between countries and agro-ecological zones. For the purposes of this announcement smallholders, as defined by the World Bank, are farmers that own or lease less than 124 acres of land (less than 50 hectares). This land must be used to support subsistence or cash crop farming.

All proposals should address one of the three focus areas: improving agricultural productivity, creating sustainable agricultural systems, or building regional or global trade capacities. All proposals should also utilize the scientific communities' accumulated knowledge and technologies to help aid in developing "practical" solutions to these challenges. All proposals must include foreign collaborations and may not exceed two years. Funding may be allocated to foreign collaborators through sub-awards.

Priority consideration will be given to:

- Minority Serving Institutions (MSI)
- Countries defined by the World Bank as low or lower middle income, hereinafter referred to as emerging economies: <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/country-and-lending-groups>
- Proposals that address challenges to women

This notice identifies the SCRCP deadline, legislative authority, eligibility and proposal requirements, funding restrictions, cost share requirements, allowable and unallowable costs, reporting requirements, program purpose and priorities, focus areas and recommended topics, application and submission information, application review, selection, and notification process, agency program contact information, mailing address, and frequently asked questions.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance:

This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.961.

Deadline:

Applications must be received by close of business (5:00 p. m. Eastern Time) Wednesday, April 18, 2012. Applications received after this deadline normally will not be considered for funding.

Legislative Authority:

The legislative authority for SCRP may be found in the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 enacted as Title XIV of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977; 7 U.S.C. 3319a and 7 U.S.C. Section 3291, Title 7, Agriculture, Chapter 64, Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching, Subchapter VIII, International Research, Extension, and Teaching, as amended on February 01, 2010. We reserve the right to issue against any of the above authorities but will not use more than one authority per agreement.

FAS reviews proposed project costs to make certain those costs are reasonable to the project and allowable per applicable federal regulations, including: Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations); OMB Circular A-21 (Cost Principles for Educational Institutions); OMB Circular A-122 (Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations); 7 CFR Part 3015; 7 CFR 3019 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Organizations); and other statutory regulations as applicable.

Eligibility Requirements:

Proposals may be received from academic institutions such as universities and colleges, including community colleges, accredited in and having a campus located in the United States, acting on behalf of their institution. U.S. non-profit research organizations, including research laboratories, professional societies, or similar organizations in the United States that are directly associated with education, extension, research, or capacity building activities; Private organizations; Federal and state agencies; or Consortia led by the eligible organizations listed here are also eligible.

A proposal from a consortium of organizations must be submitted as a single proposal with one U.S. organization serving as the lead and all other organizations as team members and sub-awardees, when applicable.

All proposals must include foreign collaborations with institutions in emerging economies that have diplomatic relations with the United States.

Sub-awards may be made to U.S. or foreign academic institutions, research organizations, international organizations, research laboratories, professional societies, and similar organizations that are directly associated with trade capacity building, education, or research activities pursuant with the OMB circulars listed in the "Legislative Authority" section of this announcement.

The Principal Investigator (PI) must hold a position at an eligible U.S. institution. Especially encouraged are proposals from smaller academic institutions, MSIs, in particular American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Asian American, and African American institutions. Also encouraged are proposals from researchers early in their career, extension agents, and women that hold positions at an eligible institution.

Funding Restrictions:

This is a cost reimbursable agreement issued under 7 U.S.C. 3319a. Funding request may not exceed \$40,000. Projects may not exceed two years. **FAS reserves the right to allocate partial funding or terminate funding at any time. Such decisions will be based primarily upon the availability of SCRP funding and the recipient's ability to meet reporting requirements.**

Cost Share:

Cash and in-kind (non-cash) contributions are not required but will be considered from the recipient organization. Third party (institution other than recipient organization) cash and in-kind contributions must include a letter, on official letterhead, signed by the contributing organization's Authorizing Representative (AR) and counter-signed by the recipient organization's AR in order for it to be recognized as a matching contribution.

Allowable Costs:

To help in this review, as well as to expedite the award process, budgets must include a narrative detailing all line items. The categories listed below are examples of some of the more common items found in project budgets. All items should be described in sufficient detail that would enable FAS to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project per federal regulations.

1. Salaries and Fringe Benefits:

No more than 20% of the requested funds may be allocated toward salaries, fringe benefits, or the combination thereof. Only individuals that hold positions at eligible U.S. institutions should be listed in this category.

2. Equipment:

This category includes items of equipment equal to or in excess of \$5,000 (or lower depending on the institutional policy) and having a utility and meaningful use of more than one year. Details such as the type of equipment, costs, and a brief narrative detailing the intended use of the equipment for project objectives and application beyond the life of the project are required. Purchases of less than \$5,000 may be listed under "Other Direct Costs."

3. Travel:

For foreign and domestic travel, provide the purpose of the travel and information used in estimating the cost, such as the destination, number of travelers, and estimated cost per trip. There are several restrictions associated with traveling on federal funds. In most cases, airfare must be purchased in economy class from a U.S. carrier. Travelers must also adhere to federally mandated domestic and foreign per diem guidelines. Additional information

may be found in the circulars listed in the “Legislative Authority” section of this announcement.

4. Other Direct Costs:

Other Direct Costs are those anticipated charges not included in other budget categories, including materials and supplies, publication costs, reasonable consultant fees, computer services, sub-awards (the level of detail required for the sub-award budget is the same as the recipient organization), equipment rental, facility rental, conferences and meetings, speaker fees, honorariums, and constructing of equipment (developing equipment or restructuring existing equipment).

Unallowable Costs:

Scholarships, stipends, sabbaticals, tuition, tuition remission, general purpose equipment (no particular scientific, technical, or programmatic purpose), entertainment, capital improvements, thank you gifts, and other expenses not directly related to the project are not allowed under SCRP.

Reporting Requirements:

PIs are required to submit quarterly technical report to the SCRP Program Officers. A mid-term evaluation update should be received within 30 days after the midpoint of the project completion, and other reports upon request. Additional funding, where applicable, will not be granted if reports are not received. PIs also are required to submit a final project report and final evaluation report no later than 60 days after the project completion date as listed in the original proposal or no cost extension request.

Program Purpose and Priorities:

For the purposes of this announcement smallholders, as defined by the World Bank, are farmers that own or lease less than 124 acres of land (less than 50 hectares). This land must be used to support subsistence or cash crop farming.

SCRP provides a mechanism to gain a better understanding of the constraints faced by smallholders, particularly women, in accessing and utilizing applied research, extension, and education. SCRP also supports the achievement of practical solutions for use by smallholder farmers to advance the productivity frontier, transform agricultural production systems, and integrate rural producers into increasingly regional and global market structures.

The primary objective of SCRP is to improve the livelihoods of rural citizens as an effective means of reducing global poverty and hunger. A second objective is to build regional and global trade capacities, so as to help rural citizens understand the importance of trade in a global economy. Finally, SCRP creates opportunities for partnerships between U.S. and foreign institutions to address global issues facing smallholder farmers in agriculture.

SCRP will support applied research, extension, and education projects that create “practical” solutions to challenges faced by smallholders and build regional or global trade capacities in emerging economies. The SCRP focus areas are: **improving agricultural productivity, creating sustainable agricultural systems, and building local and regional trade capacity.**

Following are examples of proposal topics that may be considered under the SCRP focus areas; however applications are not limited to such topics:

Improving Agricultural Productivity:

- improve storage and handling practices via low cost technologies or strategies
- create or strengthen value-added agricultural activities via low cost technologies or strategies
- develop cropping systems that include high-value crops

Creating Sustainable Agricultural Systems:

- promote the use of biotechnology and other emerging technologies
- create or improve irrigation systems via low cost technologies or strategies
- improve plant and herd management practices via low cost technologies or strategies
- utilize agricultural waste to create renewable energy via low cost technologies or strategies

Building Regional and Global Trade Capacity:

- create or strengthen market information systems through industry, village, or group associations
- create or strengthen market information systems through E-extension technology or strategies
- create or strengthen mechanisms that allow smallholders to interact with regional and global buyers and consumers
- improve agribusiness management skills

Proposal Requirements:

SCRP recommends a bottom-up approach. The project plan should clearly illustrate the smallholder's role in defining the problem and crafting the solution. PIs may utilize and improve upon published research and non-patent technologies. In addition, the PI must clearly explain how the enhanced research and technologies will be shared with smallholder producers.

The project plan must include a U.S. and foreign collaborator. Proposals may not exceed 12 pages, including the biographical information for each team member. All proposals must also include the following components:

- Executive Summary: Highlight the main points of the proposal—problems, impacts, objectives (i.e. proposed solution), cost share components, deliverables, and evaluation mechanisms. Please limit this section to one (1) page.
- Project Objectives: Outline the short and long term objectives of the project. Discuss each objective and highlight specific and societal benefits. Link activities and objectives to long term impacts on rural agricultural development and hunger reduction.
- Problem Statement: Clearly state issues to be addressed that are of reasonable dimensions. This section should refer to appropriate studies, statistics, and information gathered from discussions with the agricultural community.
- Project Description: Explain the proposed practical solution to the problem statement listed above. Describe the procedures and activities that will be used to create a “practical”

solution to the smallholder's challenge. Explain how these methods were tailored to meet the specific needs of smallholders. Also explain how these methods support short and long term objectives. The proposal should include a project implementation timeline.

- **Evaluation:** Include an evaluation plan that clearly states the objectives and identifies possible unintended effects. The evaluation plan will define measurement criteria, including qualitative and quantitative measures, describe data collection methods that will be employed, including baseline data (e.g. interviews, focus groups, control groups, improved yield records, cost savings, greater profit, etc.) and how it will be analyzed.
- **Team Description:** Identify the PI and all other team members. Explain each team member's role. Provide biographical information for each team member—not to exceed one page per member.
- **Budget:** Include a line item budget, which includes a narrative. All line items should be described in sufficient detail that would enable FAS to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project per federal regulations.

Application and Submission Information:

Please submit all proposals to the email listed below. Please also include the Standard Form (SF) 424 with all proposals. The application deadline is Wednesday, April 18, 2012.

Note: The SF-424 may be found on the grants.gov website. Funding opportunities will be advertised on the grants.gov website; however, all proposals must be submitted to the email address below with an accompanying SF-424. Proposals submitted directly to grants.gov will not be accepted.

- SCRP Email: SCRPProposals@fas.usda.gov
- SCRP Website: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/SCRP/default.asp>

Application Review, Selection, and Notification Process:

All proposals are carefully reviewed by USDA/FAS Program Officers' and other FAS staff against the criteria listed below, including others who are experts in a particular field, as appropriate.

Merit Review Criteria

All proposals must include foreign collaborations with institutions in emerging economies that have diplomatic relations with the United States.

- *What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?*
How important is the proposed activity to advancing the knowledge and understanding of smallholders in emerging economies regarding effective strategies to mitigate poverty and hunger? How well qualified is the individual or team to conduct the project? To what extent

does the proposed activity suggest and explore practical concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

- *What are the specific impacts of the proposed activity?*

Will the project help smallholders generate a higher income or a more stable return on their investment? Will the project create a multiplier effect (e.g. increased income levels will lead to healthy well balanced diets, help smallholders purchase essential non-food items, create economically viable non-farm enterprises, and create educational opportunities)? Will the project help smallholders improve their confidence and recognition in a business context, enable them to collect and respond to market information, and integrate them into business networks?

- *What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?*

How well does the activity advance understanding while promoting applied research, extension, education, and trade capacity building? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of MSIs (as previously defined)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for smallholder agricultural training and trade capacity building (e.g. information sharing, collaboration, partnerships, and networks)? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to the larger society?

Notification Process

After review by appropriate offices, it is expected that all applicants will be notified within two months after the closing date for applications.

SCRIP Points of Contact:

- Jamilah Fagbene Tel: 202-720-3160; Email: Jamilah.Fagbene@fas.usda.gov
- Khaliaka Meardry, Tel: 202-731-6191; Email: Khaliaka.Meardry@fas.usda.gov

Mailing Address

Attn: Ms. Jamilah Fagbene
USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service
Office of Capacity Building and Development/Trade and Scientific Exchanges Division
Room 3229, South Building
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250
Mail Stop-1031

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. How do I know if I am eligible or my organization is eligible to apply to Scientific Cooperation Research Program (SCRP)?

Eligibility is determined by the legislative authorities and OMB circulars listed in the “Legislative Authority” of the SCRCP announcement, which is explained in the “Eligibility Requirements” section of the announcement.

2. Will SCRCP accept applications that do not address a priority focus area or recommended topic?

SCRCP will not accept proposals that do not fall under the three focus areas, which are improving agricultural productivity, creating sustainable agricultural systems, and building regional or global trade capacity. SCRCP will, however, accept proposals that address topics under the three focus areas beyond the examples included in this announcement.

3. May I include salary and fringe benefits in my application budget?

Yes, salary and fringe benefits may be included, but must not exceed 20% of the requested program budget.

4. Does SCRCP require cost sharing?

SCRCP does not require cost sharing; however, cash and in-kind contributions will be considered. Third party contributions must include a letter, on official letterhead, signed by the contributing organization’s AR and counter-signed by the recipient organization’s AR.

5. Where can I find the Standard Form (SF) 424 form?

The Application for Federal Assistance is available through www.grants.gov.

6. May I submit my application directly to the www.grants.gov portal?

No, FAS will only accept applications that are submitted to the SCRCP email, which is SCRPPProposals@fas.usda.gov.

7. What process does FAS use to evaluate SCRCP applications?

USDA/FAS reviews proposals submitted to SCRCP using a programmatic and technical review process. The merit review process is explained in the “Application Review, Selection, and Notification Process” section of the SCRCP announcement.

8. When will I be notified if my application was accepted?

It is expected that the appropriate SCRCP Program Officers will notify applicants within two months of the closing date for applications.

9. How soon after notification that my proposal has been accepted can I begin charging expenses against the project?

Successful applicants are not permitted to charge expenses against the project until both the USDA/FAS AR and the recipient’s AR have signed the cost reimbursable agreement and the start date of the agreement is effective. Charges associated with the agreement prior to complete signature are at the expense of the institution.

10. What should I expect regarding reimbursements?

Reimbursements will be made on a monthly or quarterly basis through treasurer checks or electronic funds transfers. Payments will be made with proper request for reimbursement, using SF-270, Request for Advance or Reimbursement, at least monthly or quarterly.

11. What is the process to receive final payment and/or officially closing out the agreement?

Final billing must be made within 60 days of the end of the cooperative agreement period. Final payments will not be made until all activities identified in the agreement have been completed, including submission of any documentation.