



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

# Program Solicitation

## International Science and Education (ISE) Competitive Grants Program

National Institute of  
Food and Agriculture

**Fiscal Year 2010**

**Closing Date: January 28, 2010**

**ISE Program:**

**Telephone: 202-720-3801**

**Email: [ISE@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:ISE@nifa.usda.gov)**

**Internet:**

**<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/educationinternationalscience.cfm>**

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA)**

**10.305 International Science and Education Grants**

**NIFA Funding Opportunity Number**

**USDA-NIFA-SERDIP-002675**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE;  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION COMPETITIVE GRANTS  
PROGRAM (ISE)**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.305, International Science and Education Grants.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by Grants.gov by close of business (COB) on January 28, 2010 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

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

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Oversight Branch; Office of Extramural Programs; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: [RFP-OEP@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:RFP-OEP@nifa.usda.gov). (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the International Science and Education Competitive Grants Program RFA.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA announces the availability of funding and requests applications for the International Science and Education Competitive Grants Program (ISE) for fiscal year (FY) 2010 to support research, extension, and teaching activities that will enhance the capabilities of American colleges and universities to conduct international collaborative research, extension and teaching. NIFA anticipates making approximately \$2.9 million available for ISE awards.

This notice identifies the objectives for ISE projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an ISE grant. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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## **PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority and Background**

Section 229 of the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) amended Section 1459 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. §3292b) to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to make competitive grants to colleges and universities in order to strengthen United States economic competitiveness and to promote international market development.

Section 7141 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8701 note) reauthorized the International Science and Education Competitive Grants Program (ISE).

ISE projects are expected to enhance the international content of curricula; ensure that faculty work beyond the U.S. and bring lessons learned back home; promote international research partnerships; enhance the use of application of foreign technologies in the U.S., and strengthen the role that colleges and universities play in maintaining U.S. competitiveness.

### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

The purpose of ISE is to support the internationalization of food, agriculture and related programs at U.S. universities and colleges. It is intended that ISE will improve the ability of American students, business people, and community members to compete more effectively in the global world of agriculture. ISE projects are to strengthen the global competence and competitiveness of American colleges, universities and businesses in the food, agriculture, and related sectors. In addition, ISE projects must be directed to agricultural research, extension, and/or teaching activities that enhance the capabilities of American colleges and universities to conduct international collaborative research, extension and teaching.

Our success in the global arena will increasingly require U.S. colleges and universities to produce graduates who can operate competently in domestic and international settings. Through their outreach efforts, universities and colleges also play a critical role in helping U.S. producers successfully operate in foreign markets.

In response to these national needs, ISE is designed to foster innovative campus-based programs. For descriptions of previously funded projects, please visit our website at ([http://cris.nifa.usda.gov/cgi-bin/starfinder/0?path=isecglink.txt&id=anon&pass=&search=CG=\\*-51160\\*%20and%20gy%3e2002&format=WEBTITLES](http://cris.nifa.usda.gov/cgi-bin/starfinder/0?path=isecglink.txt&id=anon&pass=&search=CG=*-51160*%20and%20gy%3e2002&format=WEBTITLES)). Examples of issue areas that could be addressed include but are not limited to sustainable energy, global food security and hunger, childhood nutrition, climate change, food safety, and sustainable rural economies.

Proposals should demonstrate how the proposed work responds to the specific needs and strengths of the university or college in addressing one or both of the following areas:

## **1. Strengthening the Global Competence of Students, Faculty, and Staff in Agriculture and Related Areas**

Students, faculty, and staff should clearly understand international factors that affect U.S. food and agriculture, and faculty and staff should convey an understanding of the international dimensions of agricultural and related sciences to students. Areas of emphasis may include but are not limited to: (a) planning, implementing and evaluating initiatives that enhance the international content of the curricula in colleges and universities so as to ensure that United States students acquire an understanding of the international dimensions and trade implication of their studies; (b) ensuring that U.S. scientists, extension agents, and educators convey the implications of their international findings to students, peers and other users in the United States; or (c) enhancing the capabilities of colleges and universities to conduct collaborative research with other countries, in cooperation with other Federal agencies, on issues relevant to U.S. agricultural performance.

## **2. Enhancing Business Performance in International Agriculture and Related Sectors**

Through extension, research and/or teaching programs, enhance the ability of American agricultural producers, marketers and others in the agricultural community to operate effectively in the global arena. Supportable activities include but are not limited to: (a) enhancing the capabilities of U.S. colleges and universities to provide cooperative extension education that promotes the application of new technology developed in foreign countries to U.S. agriculture; or (b) enhancing the capability of U.S. colleges and universities, in cooperation with other Federal agencies, to provide leadership and education programs in market identification, international trade policies, new or existing markets, and production efficiencies. Such programs should strengthen the ability of American natural resources and food production, processing, and distribution businesses and industries to compete internationally.

## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Approximately \$2.9 million is available to fund applications submitted in response to this RFA.

### **B. Types of Applications**

In FY 2010, applications may be submitted to the ISE Program as one of the following two types of requests:

1. **New application.** This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the ISE Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.
2. **Resubmitted application.** This is an application that had previously been submitted to the ISE Program but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (use R&R Other Project Information, Field 11 on the Form.). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate areas to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

### **C. Project Types**

Multi-year proposals, up to a maximum of four years, may be submitted. The maximum amount under this program is \$150,000 per award, and no Project Director (PD) or co-PD may receive and/or participate in more than one ISE grant concurrently. In addition, no institution may receive and/or participate in more than one ISE grant as the lead organization.

Partnerships with minority serving institutions and/or community colleges are encouraged but not required.

Funding levels may be adjusted based on the technical review of the projects.

**For project budget and timeline purposes, the project start date should not occur prior to August 2010.**

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Applications may be submitted by colleges and universities as defined in section 1404 of NARETPA. The terms “college” and “university” mean an educational institution in any State which (1) admits as regular students only person having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate, (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education, (3) provides an education program for which a bachelor’s degree or any other higher degree is awarded, (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution, and (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

For the purposes of this program, the individual branches of a State university or other system of higher education that are separately accredited as degree-granting institutions are treated as separate institutions, and are therefore eligible for ISE Grants Program awards. Separate branches or campuses of a college or university that are not individually accredited as degree-granting institutions are not treated as separate institutions. An institution eligible to receive an award under this program includes a research foundation maintained by an eligible college or university. Accreditation must be by an agency or association recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

NIFA does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

## PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AR should see [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see [http://www.grants.gov/help/download\\_software.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp). To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package:  
<http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on “**Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions**,” enter the funding opportunity number, **USDA-NIFA-SERDIP-002675**, in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

**If assistance is needed to access the application package** (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

Grants.gov customer support

Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [Federal Holidays](#).

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

## **B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

Electronic applications should be prepared following Part V and VI of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

Note: Some forms will contain a field with instructions to attach additional information in a separate file. All such attachments must be in PDF file format. Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide (Part III. 3.1) for how to attach files using the proper format.

### **1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**

**Complete all applicable fields. The following, additional information may be helpful:**

**Field 2. Applicant Identifier** – This field is provided for the Applicant’s use if they have an internal tracking system they would like to use in tracking applications they have submitted. This field is not required.

**Field 3. Date received by State and State Application Identifier** – This is not applicable for ISE applications; these fields do not need to be completed.

**Field 5. Applicant Information** – **This must be the legal name of the eligible college or university (See Part III. A, Eligible Applicant).** Official correspondence will be directed to either the Project Director (Field 14) or the Authorized Representative (Field 19).

**Field 8. Type of Application** – Only ‘New’ or ‘Resubmitted’ applications are permitted.

**Field 12. Proposed Project Start Date and End Date** – The project start date should not occur prior to August 2010. Choose the end date to correspond to the correct duration of the project.

**Field 15. Estimated Project Funding** – Total Estimated Project Funding = Amount of Federal funds requested.

**Field 20. Pre-application** – Not applicable to the ISE program. No attachments needed.

### **2. R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

### **3. R&R Other Project Information Form**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

**Note: If a ‘Yes’ response is provided for Fields 1, 2, or 4.a, the applicant must provide the necessary assurances prior to an award being made.**

**Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)**

The Project Summary is limited to **250 words**. Title the attachment as ‘Project Summary’ in the document header and save file as ‘Project Summary’.

The summary should be a self contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on: overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives; plans to accomplish project goal(s); and relevance of the project to the goals of the ISE.

**Field 8. Project Narrative – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format).** Title the attachment as ‘Project Narrative’ in the document header and save file as ‘Project Narrative’.

**PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed fifteen (15) pages of written text and up to a maximum of five (5) additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (20 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Reviewers will not be required to review material in excess of this limit. PROPOSALS THAT DO NOT CONFORM TO THE PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW.** Appendices are not counted toward the 20-page Project Narrative limit.

**The Project Narrative must include all of the following:**

- i) An introduction which states the goals and objectives of the proposed activities, documents needs, describes ongoing related activities and includes relevant data;
- ii) A description of the project’s overall approach and any proposed cooperation. This section should 1) identify proposed activities and methods in clear and sufficient detail to be understood by expert reviewers, 2) explain any proposed cooperators, how they will contribute to the project and how they will be coordinated, and 3) describe institutional commitment to the project. Cooperators may be from organizations located outside of the U.S.; and
- iii) A description of the project’s potential for contributing to internationalization which includes 1) a description of expected short and longer term impacts, products and results, 2) indicators which will allow program results to be evaluated and verified, 3) a timetable with completion dates for phases of the project, 4) a dissemination plan, and 5) continuation plans that describe post-project activities.

**Field 9. Bibliography & References Cited – PDF Attachment. No page limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Bibliography & References Cited’ in the document header and save file as ‘Bibliography & References Cited’.

All works cited, including that of key personnel, should be referenced in this section of the application. All references to works cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an acceptable journal format. References should be listed in alphabetical

order using the last name of the first author. References are not considered in the page-limitation for the Project Narrative.

#### **Field 12. Other Attachments (Must be PDF Format)**

- **Response to Previous Review - PDF Attachment. 1 Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Response to Previous Review’ in the document header and save file as ‘Response to Previous Review’. This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part II, B., “Types of Applications”. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on **no more than one page**, titled, “RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW.” If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.
- **Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as ‘Appendices’ in the document header and save file as ‘Appendices’. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.
- **Collaborative Arrangements – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Collaborative Arrangements’ in the document header and save file as ‘Collaborative Arrangements’. If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of the application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support signed by the AR) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.

#### **4. R&R Senior/Key Personnel Profile (Expanded)**

**Complete all applicable fields.** Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

A R&R Senior/Key Person Profile should be completed, at a minimum, for the PD, each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. A paraprofessional is an individual who through formal education, work experience and/or training has the knowledge and expertise to assist a professional person.

Also, **you must attach** ‘Current and Pending Support’ information (see NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide p. 32, item 5.3, for guidelines and information format) for each senior/key person identified above. **Note: Even if no other funding is currently reported under the ‘Active’ section of this attachment, you must still list information for this grant application under the ‘Pending’ section of this attachment for each senior/key person identified above. Make sure time commitment does not exceed 100% for all current and pending projects.**

#### **5. R&R Personal Data**

**Complete all applicable fields.** Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions. If you choose to submit this optional form, please **DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**

## **6. R&R Budget**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This form (accompanied by the required Budget Justification attachment) contains the itemized listing and description of your project's budget. Complete all applicable fields. Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

The following, additional information may be helpful:

**a) Use the R&R Budget Form for the ISE Program.** Prepare a separate budget for each year of requested support. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable under the authorizing legislation, the applicable statutes, regulations, and Federal cost principles, and these program guidelines, and can be justified as necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed project (see Part IV, D. for some applicable funding restrictions).

### **Field H. Indirect Costs –**

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, amended the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), limiting indirect costs to 22 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

### **b) Field K. Budget Justification – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF Format)**

Provide a Budget Justification that reflects each 12-month period, plus a cumulative budget justification for the entire project. The cumulative budget justification should include a cost breakdown and justification for each budget category.

## **7. NIFA Supplemental Information Form**

**Complete all applicable fields.** Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

**a) Field 2. Program Code -** Enter the Program Code name as International Science and Education Grants Program and the Program Code as AA-N.

### **b) Field 8. Conflict of Interest List (Required Attachment – Must be in PDF format)**

See format in NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, Section VI, 1.8, p. 47, for instructions. Include this one-page attachment even if your responses to the questions are "N/A".

### **C. Submission Date and Time**

**Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.**

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on January 28, 2010 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received a confirmation message from NIFA within 30 days of submission of the application, please contact the agency contact identified in Part VII of this RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

### **D. Funding Restrictions**

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, amended the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), limiting indirect costs to 22 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

**Each institution may submit no more than two proposals as the lead institution. No institution acting as the principal or lead institution will receive more than one grant during the current competition. Therefore, institutions are encouraged to establish on-campus quality control mechanisms to ensure that only the highest quality proposals are submitted for consideration.**

Program funds *may not* be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities (i.e., greenhouses, laboratories, or other structures).

### **E. Other Submission Requirements**

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled "A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov."

## **PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. General**

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

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

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

The following evaluation criteria and weights will be used to evaluate proposals submitted for funding (**weight is in parentheses; 100 total points**):

**1. Overall Approach and Collaboration.** This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach and the quality of cooperation.

(a) **Proposed Approach** - Do the objectives and plan of operation appear to be sound and appropriate relative to the issues being addressed? Are the procedures sound? Does the project build upon relevant faculty/university domestic and international experiences? Is the overall plan integrated with existing campus-based food and agricultural programs? Does the timetable appear to be realistic? **(15 points)**

(b) **Cooperation** - If institutional partnerships are proposed, are there clear and appropriate levels of coordination between the lead institution and other partner institutions in the U.S. or overseas? Will the partnership clearly benefit U.S. institutions? If no institutional partnerships are proposed, will the proposing institution be able to effectively implement the activities on its own? **(7 points)**

(c) **Institutional Commitment** - Is there evidence that the lead and any partnering institutions attribute a high priority to the project, that the project is linked to the achievement of the institutions' long-term globalization strategies? Will the project have reasonable access to other

needed resources such as equipment, facilities, computer services, library and other support resources? (3 points)

**2. Potential for Contributing to Internationalization** -This criterion highlights the likelihood that the proposed activity will strengthen the ability of American faculty, staff, students, businesses and communities to understand the global dimensions of food, agriculture and related sectors so as to operate effectively in an international arena. **Emphasis will be given to proposals which offer new programs in internationalization; however, consideration will also be given to proposals that introduce new innovative approaches to ongoing programs.**

(a) **Impact** - Does the project address an important opportunity or constraint to internationalization in a college's or university's food, agriculture or related programs? Will it strengthen the capacity of the applicant institution(s) to conduct and participate in internationalization activities? Will it provide the means to raise student, faculty and/or private sector's awareness of the international dimensions of agriculture? Does it respond to the needs of private sector and/or communities in ways that can be addressed by the university or college? Is the problem or opportunity clearly documented? Will the project serve as a model for other activities? (20 points)

(b) **Products and Results** - Are the expected products and results of the project clearly defined and likely to be of high quality? Will the project contribute to a better understanding of, or an improvement in, the use of international approaches and programs in extension, teaching and/or research? (15 points)

(c) **Evaluation** - Are the evaluation plans adequate and reasonable for demonstrating overall success of project objectives? Do they allow for continuous or frequent feedback during the life of the project? Are the individuals involved in project evaluation skilled in evaluation strategies and procedures? Can they provide an objective evaluation based on strategies proposed in the project? Do evaluation plans facilitate the measurement of project progress and results? (15 points)

(d) **Dissemination** - Does the proposed project include clearly outlined and realistic mechanisms that will lead to widespread dissemination of project results, including national electronic communication systems, publications, presentations at professional conferences, or use by faculty development or research/extension/teaching skills workshops? (5 points)

(e) **Continuation Plans** - Are there plans for continuing or expanding the project after USDA support ends? Will the project lead to long-term relationships or cooperative partnerships, including those with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and/or international partners that are likely to enhance program impacts? Will the benefits to be derived from the project transcend the grant period? (5 points)

**3. Personnel Resources** - This criterion relates to the number and qualifications of the key persons who will carry out the project. Are designated project personnel qualified to carry out a

successful project? Are there appropriate numbers of personnel associated with the project to achieve the state's objectives and the anticipated outcomes? **(10 points)**

**4. Budget and Cost Effectiveness** - This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective. Is the budget request clear and adequately justified? Are costs reasonable and necessary? Will the budget be adequate to carry out project activities? Does the budget maximize value per dollar of USDA support? **(5 points)**

### **C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

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

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

### **D. Organizational Management Information**

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

## **PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of NIFA shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of NIFA as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (2 CFR 215, 2 CFR 220 and 2 CFR 230), and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015, 3019 and 3430 of 7 CFR).

### **B. Award Notice**

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

### **C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

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

2 CFR Part 215—Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-110).

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

7 CFR Part 3—USDA debt collection regulation.

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

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

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

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

7 CFR Part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).

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

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

7 CFR Part 3430—NIFA procedures to implement Competitive and Noncompetitive Nonformula Grant Programs—General Grant Administrative Provisions and Program-Specific Administrative Provisions for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative.

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

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

## **D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

### **1. Project Directors Conference**

During the tenure of a grant, Project Directors are encouraged to attend at least one national Project Directors’ meeting, if offered, in Washington, D.C., or any other announced location. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting should be included in the application’s budget under travel expenses.

### **2. Annual Performance Reports**

An Annual Performance Report must be submitted within 90 days after the completion of the first year of the project, and annually thereafter during the life of the grant. Generally, the Annual Performance Reports should include a summary of the overall progress toward project objectives, current problems or unusual developments, the next year's activities, and any other information that is pertinent to the ongoing project or which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award. Annual Performance Reports are to be submitted through the CRIS system described in paragraph 4., below.

### **3. Final Performance Report**

A Final Performance Report must be submitted within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. The expiration date is specified in the award documents and modifications thereto, if any. Generally, the Final Performance Report should be a summary of the completed project, including: a review of project objectives, accomplishments and impacts; a description of any products and outcomes resulting from the project; activities undertaken to disseminate products and outcomes; partnerships and collaborative ventures that resulted from the project; future initiatives that are planned as a result of the project; the impact of the project on the PDs, students, the departments, the institution, and the food and agricultural sciences higher education system; and data on project personnel and beneficiaries. The report must document how project accomplishments (products, results and impacts, etc.) have been published or otherwise disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. The Final Performance Report should be accompanied by samples or copies of any products or publications resulting from or developed by the project. The Final Performance Report also must contain any other information which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award. The Final

Performance Report is to be submitted through the CRIS system described in paragraph 4., below.

#### **4. Current Research Information System (CRIS) Reports**

Grantees are required to submit initial project information via the NIFA Current Research Information System (CRIS). The CRIS database contains narrative project information, progress/impact statements, and final technical reports that are made available to the public. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparing and submission of project documentation will be provided to the applicant by the agency contact. Documentation must be submitted to CRIS before NIFA funds will be released. Project reports will be requested by the CRIS office when required. For more information about CRIS, visit <http://cris.nifa.usda.gov>.

#### **5. Other Reports**

Grantees should be aware that NIFA may, as a part of its own program evaluation activities, carry out in-depth evaluations of assisted activities. Thus, grantees should be prepared to cooperate with NIFA personnel, or persons retained by NIFA, in evaluating the institutional context and the impact of any supported project.

## **PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Patty Fulton, International Programs, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA; STOP 2203; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2203; telephone: (202) 690-3852; fax: (202) 690-2355; e-mail: [pfulton@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:pfulton@nifa.usda.gov).

## **PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Access To Review Information**

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

### **B. Use of Funds; Changes**

#### **1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility**

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

#### **2. Changes in Project Plans**

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the agency contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. Changes in Project Period: The project period may be extended by NIFA without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

### **C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards**

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

### **D. Regulatory Information**

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

### **E. Definitions**

Please refer to 7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs-- General Grant Administrative Provisions, for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

Collaboration or Cooperative effort means a joint effort among two or more institutions, organizations and/or other entities with the capacity to conduct projects intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program.

### **Application Submission Checklist**

The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the application is complete prior to submission:

- Have all attachments been submitted in the portable document format (PDF)?** NIFA will only accept PDF attachments. See Part III of the NIFA Application Guide.
  - Do all submitted PDF documents have one-inch margins and are typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point regardless of line spacing? Are all PDF documents

numbered sequentially on each page of the attachment? Are all page limitations for a given attachment followed? Submitted applications that do not meet these requirements for PDF attachments will be at risk of being excluded from NIFA review.

- ❑ Have all required components of the SF 424 Research and Related (R&R) Application Package been completed?
  - ❑ SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet
  - ❑ R&R Performance/Site Location(s)
  - ❑ R&R Other Project Information
  - ❑ R&R Senior/Key Person (Expanded)
  - ❑ R&R Personal Data
  - ❑ R&R Budget
  - ❑ R&R Subaward Attachment
  - ❑ NIFA Supplemental Information

◆ **SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**

- Have all required fields been completed?

◆ **R&R Performance/Site Location(s)**

- Have all required fields been completed?

◆ **R&R Other Project Information**

- Have the fields describing project potential or actual environmental impact been properly completed?
- Project Summary/Abstract  
Has the Project Summary PDF been attached to this form in Field 7?  
Are the names and affiliated organizations of all Project Directors listed at the top of the page in addition to the title of the project?  
Does this section adhere to the format?
- Project Narrative  
Has the Project Narrative PDF been attached to this form in Field 8?  
Is the project fully described?  
Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations?
- Bibliography & References Cited  
Has the Bibliography & References Cited PDF been attached to this form in Field 9?  
Are all references cited and are all citations referenced?  
Do all citations contain a title, the names of all authors, and are they in accepted journal format?
- Response to Previous Review (for resubmitted applications)  
Has the Response to Previous Review PDF been attached to this form in Field 12?  
Has the application been clearly and meaningfully revised and are the revisions briefly described?  
Are comments from the previous review addressed?
- Appendices to Project Narrative  
Has the Appendices to Project Narrative PDF been attached to this form in Field 12?

◆ **R&R Senior/Key Person Profile Expanded**

- **Biographical Sketch**  
Has the biographical sketch (vitae) PDF for the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel been attached?
- **Current and Pending Support**  
Has the current and pending support PDF for the PD or co-PD(s) been attached?  
Have all current and pending projects been listed and summarized, **including this proposal?**

◆ **R&R Personal Data DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**

- Have all fields been completed except for the social security number?

◆ **R&R Budget**

- Have all fields been completed for each PD and co-PD(s)?
- **Budget Justification**  
Has the Budget Justification PDF been attached to this form in Field K?  
Are budget items individually justified?  
For multi-institutional applications, has a budget justification been included for each institution involved?

◆ **NIFA Supplemental Information Form**

- Has Field 1 been pre-populated such that “International Science and Education Grants Program” appears under Funding Opportunity Name and “**USDA-NIFA-SERDIP-002675**” for Funding Opportunity Number?
- Does Field 2 indicate the Program Code Name and Program Code to which you are applying?
- **Conflict of Interest List**  
Has the Conflict of Interest List PDF been attached to this form in Field 8?  
Has a Conflict of Interest List been provided for all individuals who have submitted a Biographical Sketch?  
Does the Conflict of Interest list include the four categories as appropriate?