



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Methyl Bromide Transition Program

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2024

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 13, 2024

ANTICIPATED FUNDING: \$1,900,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-ICGP-010334

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.303

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Applicable

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Methyl Bromide Transition (MBT) program is listed in the Assistance Listings under the number 10.303.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, February 13, 2024 [Ref to Part I, C of this RFA]
Letter of Intent:	Not Applicable
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)

Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA). The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when programs are grounded in DEIA. NIFA is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of programs and encourages individuals, institutions, and organizations from underserved communities to apply to funding opportunities as lead, co-lead, or subaward recipient(s), and to engage as leaders in the peer panel review process to support the development of strong networks and collaborations. NIFA encourages applications that engage diverse communities and have broad impacts through research, education, extension, and integrated activities to address current and future challenges.

Stakeholder Input. NIFA seeks comments on all Request for Applications (RFA) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments to the extent possible when developing RFAs, and use comments to help meet the requirements of [Section 103\(c\)\(2\) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 \(7 U.S.C. 7613\(c\)\(2\)\)](#). Applicants may submit written comments to Policy@usda.gov. Please use the following subject line: Response to the MBT RFA.

Centers of Excellence. Applicants are encouraged to visit the NIFA’s [Centers of Excellence \(COE\)](#) for information on COE designation process, including COE criteria, and a list of programs offering COE opportunities. Recording of COE outreach and COE implementation webinars are also available.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NIFA requests applications for the Methyl Bromide Transition (MBT) program for fiscal year (FY) 2024 to support the discovery and implementation of practical pest management alternatives for commodities and uses affected by the methyl bromide phase-out. Traditional ecological knowledge is considered an acceptable topic for projects funded by this RFA.

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2024. Enactment of a continuing resolution, appropriations act, or other authorizing legislation may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. The amount available for grants in FY 2024 is approximately \$1.9 million.

In FY 2024, applications are sought for the following project types:

1. Integrated Projects (Research and Extension only)
2. Extension-Only Projects

This notice identifies the objectives for the MBT projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

In accordance with Section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 ([7 U.S.C. 7626](#)), the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to establish a competitive grants program that provides funding for integrated, multifunctional agricultural research, extension, and education activities.

B. Purpose and Priorities

This RFA solicits applications for the Methyl Bromide Transition (MBT) program, Assistance Listing 10.303. Methyl bromide is an odorless, colorless gas that is used as an agricultural soil and structural fumigant to control a wide variety of pests. Methyl bromide depletes the stratospheric ozone layer and is classified as a Class 1 ozone-depleting substance. In accordance with the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Clean Air Act ([Overview of the Clean Air Act and Air Pollution](#)), the United States government agreed to reduce methyl bromide production and net imports incrementally from the 1991 baseline until the complete phase-out in 2005. Since 2005, the only allowable exemptions are critical use exemptions (CUE) and quarantine and pre-shipment exemptions (QPS).

The primary goal and objective of the MBT program is to support the discovery and implementation of practical pest management alternatives to methyl bromide. The MBT program seeks to solve pest problems in key agricultural production and post-harvest management systems, processing facilities, and transport systems for which methyl bromide has been withdrawn or withdrawal is imminent.

Proposals may integrate research and extension activities or be extension-only and be designed to provide transitional alternatives that address immediate needs resulting from the loss of availability of methyl bromide. The pressure to completely phase-out methyl bromide has created an urgent need for new economical and effective pest control tactics to control soil-borne and postharvest pests, and pests that need to be controlled by the processing and shipping industries to meet regulatory standards. All proposals must include a description of the economic analysis of costs and efficacy of implementing the new replacement technology.

Applications submitted to the MBT program must incorporate appropriate integrated pest management (IPM) concepts of prevention, avoidance, monitoring, and suppression of pest populations. NIFA anticipates that funded projects will cover a broad range of new methodologies, technologies, systems, and strategies for controlling economically important pests for which methyl bromide has been the only effective management option. The MBT program solicits applications that address systems solutions or strategic (multi-tactic) approaches, rather than focusing on any single tactic to replace methyl bromide. Consider and evaluate non-fumigant management options where possible. Promising alternatives to methyl bromide must be evaluated under commercial or field-scale conditions for multiple years to ensure that positive results are not due, in part, to low pest pressure following many years of methyl bromide fumigation or variable environmental conditions. A goal of the MBT program is to demonstrate that performance of alternatives is consistent over several production cycles and is technically and economically feasible when scaled-up from research plots to commercial scale. A priority of integrated and extension-only projects is to enhance

grower/industrial user knowledge and adoption/implementation of appropriate methyl bromide replacement strategies through extension outreach and demonstrations relevant to real-world systems. All applications must include an objective that describes an economic analysis of the costs and efficacy of implementing the new replacement technology, and a description of methods that will be used in the project to complete the economic analysis of the efficacy and affordability of the replacement strategy.

In FY 2024, the MBT program seeks applications for projects to ensure that economically viable and environmentally sound alternatives to methyl bromide are in place and available as soon as possible for commodities that have been impacted by the phase-out of methyl bromide.

Applications also will be accepted to find alternatives for commodities that have current Quarantine and Pre-shipment (QPS) Exemptions. Applications must include an economic analysis of adopting and implementing the alternative methodology and the methods used to evaluate the cost/benefit analysis of the proposed alternative.

Projects supporting the transition to an alternative type of cropping/storage/processing system that avoids the need for disinfestation with methyl bromide (e.g., transition to a covered system using soilless culture) will be considered if the alternative has the potential to serve as a viable short to medium-term solution for operations that are currently dependent on methyl bromide or have been impacted by the phase-out of methyl bromide.

Proposals that address integrated pest management issues in commodities not affected by the phase-out of methyl bromide and research-only proposals may be more appropriate for the Applied Research and Development program area of the [Crop Protection and Pest Management Program](#).

Applications submitted to the MBT program must address one or more of the following questions:

1. How can non-fumigant management options be developed and/or improved as part of a systems-based integrated pest management strategy?
2. What integrated strategies could be used to improve soil health, resulting in improved pest management in crops impacted by the loss of methyl bromide in the pre-harvest environment? Examples include altering the microbial community of the soil to favor beneficial microorganisms that could inhibit pests and pathogens; soil amendments to reduce pests; and use of cover crops and rotations to reduce pest populations.
3. What strategies could be used in a systems-based integrated pest management approach to improve pest management in the post-harvest environments impacted by the loss of methyl bromide?
4. How can current methyl bromide alternatives be improved or combined to improve their effectiveness and economic viability?

Traditional ecological knowledge is considered an acceptable topic of research, education, and extension for projects funded by this RFA, in pursuit to answers of the aforementioned questions.

Handling of baseline data and data collection will be addressed in the Data Management Plan (DMP) in accordance with the [Part IV, B](#) of this RFA.

The MBT program is aligned with the following [USDA Strategic Plan FY2022-2026](#) goal:

1. Strategic Goal 2: Ensure America’s Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous.

The MBT program is aligned with the following [USDA Science and Research Strategy, 2023–2026](#) priority:

1. Priority 4: Cultivating Resilient Ecosystems

For a program informational webinar please visit the [NIFA calendar](#) for dates, event registration, and link. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any of the informational webinars listed, please contact the event host listed no later than 10 days prior to the event.

Table 2: Program Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	112.C
Program Code Name:	Methyl Bromide Transition
CFDA Number	10.303
Project Type:	Integrated, Extension-Only
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline	February 13, 2024
Grant Duration:	24-36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	3-4
Maximum Award Amount:	\$630,000

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2024. Enactment of a continuing resolution, appropriations act, or other authorizing legislation may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. The amount available for grants in FY 2024 is anticipated to be approximately \$1.9 million. USDA is not committed to funding any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

The [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#), operated by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA.

B. Application Restrictions

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA. Applications for FY 2024 are limited to the following application types:

1. *New application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).
2. *Resubmitted application*: Resubmitted applications must include a response to the previous review panel summary and are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Resubmitted applicants must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application in the *Federal Field (Field 4)* on the application form (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).

C. Project Types

The following describes the two types of projects that are eligible for funding. Applicants must propose one of the following project types:

1. **Integrated projects** focus on research for new alternatives and extension to encourage adoption and implementation of methyl bromide alternatives.

Integrated project applications must identify and incorporate both research and extension goals into the proposed project. As a general guideline, no more than two thirds of the project's budget should be devoted to either function. Extension efforts, such as field demonstrations, grower trials, workshops, and distributed information, should result in commercial awareness, understanding, and adoption of new technology and alternatives to methyl bromide fumigation. Economic analysis of the proposed new strategy must be an integral part of the project.

2. **Extension-Only projects** increase levels of adoption and implementation of pest management strategies by producers and growers.

Extension-only projects facilitate the adoption and implementation of practices that will result in effective management of pests without the use of methyl bromide and will lead to measurable behavior changes in the identified audience or stakeholder group. Project proposals may include development of extension materials and information delivery systems for outreach efforts, conducting field-scale or on-farm demonstrations, or delivery of IPM extension outreach, and training. Document the existence of a research base relevant to the extension effort. Include an economic analysis of the proposed new

strategy as an integral part of the project. Analyses of target population risk perception and economic constraints to adoption are required for all extension-only projects.

Requirements for all project type submissions:

- a. Scalability. Research on alternatives must be at the commercial or field-scale over multiple season/cycles. Large-scale trials will be a key component of successful proposals, as they may identify variability, technical problems, and pest relationships pertinent to marketable yields that may not be evident in small plot trials. Extension-only projects must be conducted at the commercial or field scale.
- b. Economic Analysis. Integrated and Extension-only projects must include an economic analysis with direct comparison of cost effectiveness of proposed methyl bromide alternatives to no treatment. Additionally, the following is required:
 1. Analysis of the overall transition cost to a new technology, from acquisition of materials and knowledge to efficacy metrics.
 2. Analyses of profit margins including information on the cost calculation, the cost/amount of the new technology and the value of the labor used, and any equipment needed for the application.
 3. Changes in revenues (e.g., changes in the commodity price or more importantly, changes in quantity of the available commodity for marketing).
 4. The appropriate expertise of the team submitting the application to conduct the economic analysis.
- c. Justification. Provide a justification statement in the Project Narrative (see [Part IV](#) for more information): (1) to explain the issues and economic losses faced by the commodity since the phase-out of methyl bromide and (2) on how the proposed project could result in economically feasible methyl bromide alternatives.
- d. Extension. Clearly identify Extension personnel involved in the project. Clearly delineate formal extension programs to expedite adoption and implementation of proposed alternatives in the proposal and clearly outline funding for these activities in the Budget Narrative.
- e. Timeline. Explicitly describe timelines for completion of the major objectives in the application for the entire project period, which may range from one to three years from the start date. NIFA expects experiments to be replicated in at least two separate trials and results to be presented to the relevant user community within the time period of the project.
- f. Data Management Plan. Applicants should clearly articulate how the PD and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see [Part V, B](#) of this RFA, Part V.320 of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) and [NIFA's Data Management Plan](#))
- g. Logic Model. All applicants are required to: (1) submit a project-specific logic model as part of each application and (2) explain how the proposed work supports the programmatic logic model provided in [Table 3](#). Include in the logic model all the following: inputs, outputs (participants and activities), outcomes, situation, assumptions, and external factors of the proposed project. The pages for the logic model do not count toward the 18-page limit for the project narrative. See Project Types ([Part II, C](#)) and Content and Form of the Application ([Part IV, B](#)) for specific requirements for the inclusion of the logic model within the application including formatting requirements and limitations. More information and resources related to the

logic model planning process are provided at: [Integrated Programs' Logic Model Planning Process](#) and [IPM Planning and Evaluation](#).

- h. Project Director Meeting. For all funded projects, at least one member of the project team is required to attend the annual International Methyl Bromide Alternatives Outreach Conference (MBAO) (www.mbao.org) starting with the second year of funding, or another relevant conference as applicable. For the purposes of budget development, applicants are required to request funds to support participation in at least one MBAO conference or an alternative conference approved by NIFA. Please identify your requests for funds for project director meetings in the budget and budget narrative of the application.

Please note: The programmatic logic model for the MBT program (**Table 3**) incorporates stakeholder input, anticipated outcomes, and all appropriate elements. NIFA will use the programmatic logic model to guide the development of future funding priorities and to document the impact of investments made by the MBT program.

Table 3: Methyl Bromide Transition Program Logic Model Template

Inputs	Outputs: Participants	Outputs: Activities/Products	Outcomes/Impacts: Change in Knowledge (Short Term)	Outcomes/Impacts: Change in Actions/Behavior (Medium Term)	Outcomes/Impacts: Change in Condition (Long Term)
Annual appropriation	Stakeholders Producers and processors	Respond to authorization and appropriation	Gap analysis reveals research needs	New alternatives to methyl bromide both chemical and nonchemical, increasing in usage	Pests are controlled economically without the use of methyl bromide, complying with the Montreal Protocol and Clean Air Act
USDA coordination	Commodity groups	Publish RFA	New options for management of commodity pests developed	Best management practices for integrated pest management adopted	No further Critical Use Nominations (CUNs) or Critical Use Exemptions (CUEs) are needed
USDA intra-agency coordination	General public Colleges and universities	Recruit panel managers and peer review panelists	Existing knowledge adapted to commodity systems	New technologies and innovations for producers and processors being implemented	Increased production due to reduced pest losses
U.S. government interagency coordination	Cooperative Extension University scientists and Extension specialists	Conduct peer review panel meetings	Current knowledge is applied to a strategic plan to eliminate methyl bromide between commodity producer and processors and researchers	Economic feasibility and effective methyl bromide alternatives in use	Reduced environmental risks from environmentally damaging pest control methods
Program Directors	State agencies	Award funds to meritorious applications	Best management practices available for Extension to communicate to stakeholders		Continued production of safe, affordable, and high-quality commodities
Support Staff	Federal agencies	Promote the development of alternatives to methyl bromide	New knowledge applied to an evolving strategic plan		U.S. production practices adopt and implement appropriate alternatives to methyl bromide, assuring U.S. producers a competitive place in the global marketplace
Panel Managers	USDA NIFA	Communicate positive outcomes to key stakeholders			
Review Panels members		Collect and communicate impact data			
Stakeholder and partner comments					

Logic Model Supporting Information:

Assumptions:

Proposals will address commodities and industries negatively impacted by the phase-out of methyl bromide
 Multidisciplinary teams include economic analysis of the tested alternative
 Integrated projects provide best management practices to producers and processors

External Factors:

Congressional funding/appropriations
 EPA Pesticide Registration
 Montreal Protocol and Clean Air Act
 Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee (MBTOC) decisions

D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects

In accordance with sections [2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422](#), institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Award recipients must, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See [Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research](#) for further information.

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants for the Methyl Bromide Transition (MBT) program must meet all the requirements discussed in this RFA. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or, preclude NIFA from making an award. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

Applications may only be submitted by colleges and universities (as defined by Section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 ([7 U.S.C. 3103](#))), as amended, [Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities](#), and 1994 Institutions ([7 U.S.C. 301 note](#)).

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – submission of duplicate or predominantly overlapping applications is not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits multiple applications that are duplicative or substantially overlapping to NIFA programs within the same fiscal year. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Match Required – Applicants **MUST** provide matching contributions at minimum on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all Federal funds awarded under the MBT. By statute, match may include funds from an agricultural commodity promotion, research, and information programs. Non-Federal matching funds may include in-kind support.

NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a grant if one of the following applies:

1. The results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or
2. The project involves a minor commodity, the project deals with scientifically important research, and the grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement.

C. Centers of Excellence (COE)

Pursuant to Section 7214 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 5926), NIFA will recognize and prioritize COE applicants that carry out research, extension, and education activities that relate to the food and agricultural sciences. A COE is composed of one or more of the following entities that provide financial or in-kind support to the COE.

1. State agricultural experiment stations;
2. Colleges and universities;
3. University research foundations;
4. Other research institutions and organizations;
5. Federal agencies;

6. National laboratories;
7. Private organizations, foundations, or corporations;
8. Individuals; or
9. Any group consisting of two or more of the entities described in (1) through (8).

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 4** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process. [The NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is contained in the specific funding opportunity package or a sample of the guide can be found [here](#). When applying for a NIFA award, it is important to reference the version of the guide that is included in the specific funding opportunity application package.

Table 4: Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and Install Adobe Reader (see Adobe Software Compatibility for basic system requirements).
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number USDA-NIFA-ICGP-010334 , search for application here: Opportunity Package .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization's readiness to submit an electronic application.

Table 5: Help and Resources

Grants.gov Support	NIFA Support
Grants.gov Online Support Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: support@grants.gov Self-service customer-based support: Grants.gov iPortal Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except federal holidays .	Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except federal holidays

B. Content and Form of the Application

The [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA overrides the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. Applicants that do not meet the application requirements, to include partial applications, risk being excluded from NIFA's review. NIFA will assign a proposal number to all applications that meet the requirements of this RFA. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Table 6** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 6: Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the <u>NIFA Grants Application Guide</u>)
Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.	Part IV
Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format.	Part IV
Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.	Part IV
Follow the submission instructions.	Part IV
Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R.	Part V
Contact the Grants.gov helpdesk for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.	N/A
Contact NIFA if applicant does not received correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 30 days of the application deadline.	N/A

SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet. See **Part V** the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for the required certifications and assurances.

Please note the start date for FY 2024 MBT awards can be no later than September 1, 2024.

SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s). See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)

R&R Other Project Information Form. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)

1. **Field 7.** Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must list the names and institutions of the Project Director (PD) and co-PDs. In the first line of the summary, state the type of project you are submitting; for example, “This is an integrated project” or “This is an extension-only project.” The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the MBT program. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. **Field 8.** Project Narrative (PN). The PN must not exceed 18 *1.5 spaced* pages of written text including figures and tables. The font size should be no smaller than 12 points Times New Roman. The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. The PN must include the following:
 - a. **Response to Previous Review (if applicable):** The response to previous review must not exceed two pages of *1.5 spaced* text. This does not count towards the page limit for the PN.

b. Introduction:

- i. State the project type (Integrated, Extension-Only).
- ii. Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and list the objectives of the proposed project.
- iii. Summarize the body of knowledge or past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project including information about or reference to the specific critical issue pest management strategy or similar document with identifiable stakeholder input.
- iv. Describe ongoing or recently completed activities significant to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project. Reference all works cited [see Bibliography & References Cited ([Part IV B](#))].

c. Rationale and Significance:

- i. Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project. Provide a justification statement to explain: (1) the issues and economic losses faced by the commodity since the phase-out of methyl bromide; (2) how the proposed project could result in economically feasible methyl bromide alternatives; (3) any novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers.
- ii. Include the economic and yield losses faced by the commodity or industry due to the loss of methyl bromide.
- iii. Present a clear and concise cost/benefit analysis of new approaches. For Extension projects: What is the value of adopting the new technology?

d. Objectives:

- i. Provide clear, concise descriptions of the specific objectives of the proposed project. Clearly number the objectives.
- ii. Include the description of the appropriate economic analysis for the respective project type. Include the methodology and design for the economic analysis.

e. Approach: Clearly state the activities proposed or problems addressed and clearly describe the approaches applied. Specifically include in this section:

- i. A description of the activities proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed.
- ii. Methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the methods.
- iii. Expected outcomes. Provide milestones and verifiable indicators to measure impact across a broad range of criteria (e.g., a timeline for grower adoption of techniques that lead to production, economic, and environmental benefits).
- iv. Means by which results will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted. Describe plans to evaluate the outreach component, including means by which data will be analyzed and interpreted, and details of plans to communicate results to stakeholders and the public.
- v. Describe pitfalls that may be encountered.
- vi. Describe limitations to proposed procedures.
- vii. Describe stakeholder involvement in identification of project priorities, their implementation, and adoption.

f. Project Timeline: Provide a timeline for attainment of objectives and for production of deliverables that includes annual milestones with specific, measurable outcomes. Outline all-important phases as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project, including periods beyond the grant-funding period. Proposals that are non-compliant

with the requirement for a timeline will be at risk of being excluded from NIFA review.

- g. **Cooperation and Institutional Involvement:** Cooperative, multi-institutional and multidisciplinary applications are encouraged. Where applicable, identify each institutional unit contributing to the project and designate the lead institution or institutional unit. Clearly define the programmatic roles, responsibilities, and budget for each institutional partner.
- h. **Data Management Plan:** Two-Page Limit. The pages for the Data Management Plan (DMP) do not count toward the 18-page limit for the project narrative. All applications require submission of a DMP. Applicants should clearly articulate how the PD and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see [Part V, B](#) of this RFA, **Part V.320** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) and [NIFA's Data Management Plan](#)). Title the attachment as 'Data Management Plan' and save file as 'Data Management Plan'. Other Attachments.
- i. **Logic Model:** Three-Page Limit. The pages for the Logic Model (LM) do not count toward the 18-page limit for the project narrative. All applications require submission of a LM. See the specific requirements for the LM in [Part II, C](#). The project-specific LM must provide details for the: inputs, outputs (activities and participants), and outcomes, situation, assumptions, and external factors of the proposed project. The LM planning process may also be used to develop your project before writing your application. Refer to the Logic Model in your project description, evaluation plans, and elsewhere, as applicable. Title the attachment as 'Logic Model' and save file as 'Logic Model'. Other Attachments. The font for the Logic Model may be smaller than the 12-point font required for the project narrative. **Proposals that are non-compliant with the requirements for a Logic Model will be at risk of being excluded from NIFA review.** For samples and templates see [IPM Planning and Evaluation](#); additional information is available on the NIFA web sites: [Integrated Programs' Logic Model Planning Process](#) and [Logic Model Planning Process](#).

Please note: The programmatic Logic Model for the MBT program ([Table 3](#)) incorporates stakeholder input, anticipated outcomes, and all appropriate elements. NIFA will use the programmatic logic model to guide the development of future funding priorities and to document the impact of investments made by the MBT program.

- j. **Summary of Previous Work on Methyl Bromide Alternatives:** Provide a summary of your work on methyl bromide alternatives that was previously funded from all sources (if applicable), progress toward completion, general conclusions, and remaining funds balances.
- k. **Centers of Excellence Justification:** Applicants requesting consideration for COE status for their project must include their justification at the end of their Project Narratives and within the page limits provided for the project narrative.

For consideration as a COE, you must provide a brief justification statement, as part of your Project Narrative and within the page limits provided, which describes how the project meets the standards of a COE, based on the following criteria:

1. The ability of the COE to ensure coordination and cost effectiveness by reducing unnecessarily duplicative efforts in the research, teaching, and extension activities outlined in this application;
2. In addition to any applicable matching requirements, the ability of the COE to leverage available resources by using public-private partnerships among agricultural industry groups, institutions of higher education, and the federal government in the proposed research and/or extension activities outlined in this application. Resources leveraged should be commensurate with the size of the award;
3. The planned scope and capability of the COE to implement teaching initiatives that increase awareness and effectively disseminate solutions to target audiences through extension activities of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application;
4. The ability or capacity of the COE to increase the economic returns to rural communities by identifying, attracting, and directing funds to high-priority agricultural issues in support of and from the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application.

Additionally, where practicable (not required), COE applicants should describe proposed efforts to improve teaching capacity and infrastructure at colleges and universities (including land-grant colleges and universities, cooperating forestry schools, and certified Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA).

3. **Field 9. Bibliography & References Cited:** Required. All applications must have a Bibliography and References Cited document. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)
4. **Field 12. Add Other Attachments.** See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)
 - a. **Mentoring Plan (MP):** A MP is strongly recommended if the proposal requests funding for student or postdoctoral support, including scholarships or fellowships. If various tiers of students or scholars are represented in the proposal, please provide separate MP for each educational or professional level targeted (e.g., undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows). The MP should not exceed a maximum of two pages for each educational level and for all recipients (including subawards). The MP will not count against the limit of the project narrative. The MP should incorporate the following as appropriate: a) the roles and responsibilities of the Project Director and Co-Project Directors in managing the mentoring process; b) a description of mentoring activities that may include, but are not limited to, peer mentoring or layered mentoring, whereby a set of mentees are progressively mentored by others at a higher level in their careers; c) a description of processes to ensure reasonable accommodations for program participants with disabilities or challenges with accessing program activities. Please incorporate mentoring activities into the overall project timeline.

R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded). See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates.

R&R Personal Data. This information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award (see **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)).

R&R Budget. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)

1. Match – If an applicant concludes that the matching requirements described under [Part III, B](#) of this RFA is not applicable to them; the applicant must include an explanation of their conclusion in the *budget justification*. NIFA will consider this justification when determining final matching requirements or if required matching can be waived. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements. Grants that require matching funds as specified under [Part III, B](#) of this RFA must list in their *budget justification* the matching sources, the identification of the entity/entities providing the match, and the total pledged amount. A written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement) is not required. However, applicants are subject to the documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, as specified in [2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards \(the Uniform Guidance\),”](#) and [7 CFR 3430, “Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions.”](#)
2. Indirect costs (IDC) – See [Part IV, C](#) of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding indirect cost, and **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for additional information.
3. Project Director Meeting. MBT awardees are required to have at least one member of the project team attend the annual International Methyl Bromide Alternatives Outreach Conference starting with the second year of funding, or another relevant conference if applicable. Funds must be included in the budget with details included in the budget narrative. See [Part II, C](#) of this RFA.

Supplemental Information Form. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)

1. **Field 2.** Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name “**Methyl Bromide Transition**” and the program code “**112.C.**” Accurate entry is critical.
2. **Field 8.** Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)

C. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Costs (IDC) not to exceed 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded (TFFA). Section 1462(a) and (c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 ([7 U.S.C. 3310\(a\) and \(c\)](#)) limits IDC for the overall award to 30 percent of TFFA under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum IDC rate allowed under the award is determined by calculating the amount of IDC using:

1. the sum of an institution’s negotiated IDC rate and the IDC rate charged by sub-awardees, if any; or
2. 30 percent of TFFA.

The maximum allowable IDC rate under the award, including the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, is the lesser of the two rates above.

If the result of number one above is the lesser of the two rates, the grant recipient is allowed to charge the negotiated IDC rate on the prime award and the sub-award(s), if any. Any sub-awards would be subject to the sub-awardee’s negotiated IDC rate. The sub-awardee may charge its

negotiated IDC rate on its portion of the award, provided the sum of the IDC rate charged under the award by the prime awardee and the sub-awardee(s) does not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

If number two above is the lesser of the two rates, then the maximum IDC rate allowed for the overall award, including any sub-award(s), is limited to 30 percent of the TFFA. That is, the IDC of the prime awardee plus the sum of the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, may not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

In the event of an award, the prime awardee is responsible for ensuring the maximum IDC allowed for the award is not exceeded when combining IDC for the Federal portion (i.e., prime and sub-awardee(s)) and any applicable cost-sharing. Amounts exceeding the maximum allowable IDC are considered unallowable. See sections [408](#) and [410](#) of [2 CFR 200](#).

If the applicant does not have a negotiated rate and NIFA is the cognizant agency, the applicant may request an IDC rate. Applicants are not required to complete the IDC package during the application process and need only to calculate a rate to serve as a basis for requesting IDC. If awarded, the applicant will be required to submit a complete IDC proposal package to obtain a negotiated rate.

Organizations that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, may elect the De Minimis rate ([2 CFR 200.414](#)). The Uniform Guidance offers the option of electing to charge a de Minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total indirect costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described above and in [2 CFR 200.403](#), costs must be charged consistently as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If elected, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which it may do at any time.

See [NIFA Indirect Costs](#) for information including [additional resources](#) and [NIFA Indirect Cost Guidance Chart](#).

PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. NIFA's Evaluation Process

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this RFA. All administrative requirements must be met in order for the application to proceed to the next level of review. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that have met the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [NIFA Peer Review Process](#)).

Scientific Peer Review Process:

NIFA selects reviewers for the review panel based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

1. 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 research, education, or extension activities.
2. The need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.
3. The need to include other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, researchers, public health practitioners, educators, consumers, and commercial reviews) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.
4. The need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations.
5. The need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to race, ethnicity, gender representation, and an equitable age distribution.
6. The need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, NIFA program staff will recommend that your project is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

NIFA reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary (if applicable) of the review panel comments to the PD.

Conflicts of interest. NIFA takes extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may influence the review or evaluation (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

B. Evaluation Criteria

Integrated and Extension-Only Proposals

1. Proposal Technical Merit and Quality (45 points)

This criterion will be used to assess the likelihood that the proposal will have an impact upon and advance the goals of the MBT program. Elements that will be considered include:

- a. The description and documentation of project objectives and outcomes of the problem to be addressed; the needs of the commodity, industry, or regulatory sector; and the problems faced because of the loss of methyl bromide.
- b. The description of the proposed implementation of methyl bromide alternatives and the appropriate extension activities for adoption of the alternatives, and formal extension and economic analysis to expedite the adoption of proposed alternatives delineated in a measurable, outcome-oriented plan in the proposal.
- c. The conceptual soundness of the proposed approach including appropriate research hypotheses.
- d. The description of the suitability, feasibility, originality, and innovation of the proposed approach, procedures, or methodologies; description of potential commercial applications with costs (both fixed and recurring) including the transition costs to the proposed alternative methods; and the inclusion of a comparison of the costs and efficacy of the commercially used quantity of methyl bromide that might be replaced by the alternative methods.
- e. Preliminary data that demonstrates feasibility of the proposed research.
- f. Properly designed economic analysis methodology that clearly demonstrates the cost of the methyl bromide alternative(s). Proposals that simply state that the project will conduct an economic analysis without describing the methodology and participation of appropriate personnel to conduct the analysis do not meet this criterion.
- g. The level of scientific originality and risk-reward balance that indicate a high probability of project success.
- h. Description of the suitability and feasibility of the data management plan.

2. Qualifications of Project Personnel, Adequacy of Facilities, and Project Management (20 points)

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications of key personnel who will plan and carry out the proposed project as well as the institution(s) capability to perform the project. Elements include:

- a. Qualifications of applicants (individual or team), performance record, and potential to conduct the proposed project and achieve proposed objectives.
- b. The institutional capacity and competence to complete the proposed area of work.
- c. The capacity of support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation to complete the proposed work.
- d. Appropriate timelines and key milestones to complete objectives on schedule, administer and manage the project partnerships/collaborations, translate outcomes, and coordinate project participants and institutions.

3. Project Relevance (35 points)

The following criteria will be used to assess the likelihood that the proposal will address the needs of commodities impacted by the loss of methyl bromide and will advance goals of the MBT program.

- a. Adequate documentation that the project is directed toward specific research and/or extension program area priorities identified in this RFA.
- b. The description and documentation of stakeholder needs for the proposed work.
- c. Suitable and feasible plan and methods for evaluating success of project activities and for documenting potential impact(s) with measurable short and mid-term outcomes.
- d. The description of the proposal's plan for adoption and implementation of results generated by the project, and description of cost-effective approaches and criteria to measure and assess the adoption, implementation, and potential impact(s) of the project.

C. Centers of Excellence

In addition to evaluating applicants using the criterion listed in [Part V, B](#) of this RFA, NIFA will use the COE standards described in this RFA to evaluate applicants that rank highly meritorious and requested to be considered as a COE. In instances where applicants are found to be equally meritorious with the application of a non-COE applicant, NIFA will prioritize the COE applicant meeting the COE criteria. NIFA will effectively use the COE prioritization as a “tie breaker.” Applicants that rank highly meritorious but who did not request consideration as a COE or who are not deemed to have met the COE standards may still receive funding.

Applicants that meet the COE requirements will have the COE designation in their notice of award. Entities recognized as COE will maintain that distinction for the duration of their period of performance or as identified in the terms and conditions of that award.

D. Organizational Management Information

Applicants must submit specific management information prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only need to provide an update if there was a change in previously provided information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requisite forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award under this program, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

E. Application Disposition

Applicants may withdraw at any time before NIFA makes a final funding decision. NIFA will retain all applications, including withdrawn applications and unfunded applications.

PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds authorized, the NIFA awarding official will make grants to responsible and eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant must 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. 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 may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and [NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions, 7 CFR Part 3430, subparts A through E](#).

Award Notice. The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.211](#) (see [NIFA's Terms and Conditions](#)).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this RFA (some are listed here: [Federal Regulations](#)). Unless specifically noted by statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Output and reporting requirements are included in the [award terms and conditions](#). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, they will be identified in the Award Notice.

PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget

Delegation of fiscal responsibility. Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees 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.

Changes in Budget or Project Plans. In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring).
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award.
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project.
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), or [45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, \(Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals\)](#), or [48 CFR](#), unless waived by the federal awarding agency, [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
5. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
6. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [2 CFR 200.333, Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
7. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
8. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of NIFA transaction records, which are available to the public. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, applicants should clearly mark any information within the application they wish to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary. NIFA will retain a copy of an application that does not result in an award for three years. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An applicant may withdraw at any time prior to the final action thereon.

C. Regulatory Information

This program is not subject to the provisions of 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](#).

D. Limited English Proficiency

NIFA offers language access services, such as interpretation and translation of vital information, free of charge. If you need interpretation or translation services, please visit [NIFA Language Access Services](#) or contact Lois Tuttle, Equal Opportunity Specialist, at Lois.Tuttle@usda.gov or (443) 386-9488.

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

Program Contacts

Amer Fayad

Amer.Fayad@usda.gov

816-894-7228

For administrative questions related to;

1. Grants.gov, see [Part IV](#) of this RFA
2. Other RFA or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
3. Awards under this RFA, please email awards@usda.gov

U.S. Postal Mailing Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000

Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

Courier/Package Delivery Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture

2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000

Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Assistance Listing Number-ALN
Authorized Representative-AR
Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education reform Act of 1998-AREERA
Awards Management Division-AMD
Center of Excellence-COE
Critical Use Exemptions-CUE
Critical Use Nominations-CUN
Data Management Plan-DMP
Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges & Universities-HSACU
Indirect Costs-IDC
Integrated Pest Management-IPM
Mentoring Plan-MP
Methyl Bromide Alternatives Outreach-MBAO
Methyl Bromide Transition Program-MBT
Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee-MBTOC
National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board-NAREEEAB
National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977-NARETPA
National Institute of Food and Agriculture-NIFA
Portable Document Format-PDF
Project Director-PD
Project Narrative-PN
Project Summary-PS
Quarantine and Pre-shipment-QPS
Request for Application-RFA
Research, Education, and Economics-REE
Total Federal Funds Awarded-TFFA
United States Department of Agriculture-USDA

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

Refer to [7 CFR 3430 Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions](#) for additional definitions.

Definitions

Integrated Pest Management (IPM):

“A sustainable approach to managing pests by combining biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health and environmental risks.” (Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008). The National IPM Roadmap (2018) provides further description of IPM (see A National IPM Road Map.

Integrated Project:

A project incorporating two or three functions of the agricultural knowledge system (research, education, and extension) around a problem or activity. For the MBT program, research and extension must be included in integrated projects.

Matching:

The process through which a grant recipient match awarded USDA funds with cash and in-kind contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The matching funds must derive from non-Federal sources.

Multidisciplinary Project:

A project in which investigators from two or more disciplines collaborate to address a common problem. These collaborations, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical, or social sciences.

New Application:

An application not previously submitted to a program.

Partnership:

Requires that all partners have a substantial involvement in the project throughout the life of the project. If a partnership between multiple entities is proposed, the proposal must clearly identify the following:

1. A narrative of each entity's clearly established role in the project;
2. How each entity involved as a partner on the project will contribute to execution of project objectives, determine experimental design, develop the project work plan and timetable, and submit collaborative, timely reports; and
3. A comprehensive project budget that reflects each entity's financial or in-kind contribution to the total project budget costs.

Resubmitted Application:

A project application that was previously submitted to a program, but the application was not funded.