SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION RESEARCH PROGRAM

FISCAL YEAR 2015 REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Application Deadline: Friday, April 3, 2015 at 11:59 PM EST
Telephone: (202) 690-1983 and 202-690-0818
Email: Edward.gerard@fas.usda.gov and Molly.rumery@fas.usda.gov
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA) - 10.961
Table of Contents
Summary of Award Opportunity ........................................................................................................ 3
Section I: Funding Opportunity Description .......................................................................................... 4

Section II: Award Information ............................................................................................................. 6
Section III: Eligibility Information ....................................................................................................... 6
Section IV: Application and Submission Information .............................................................................. 8
Section V: Application Review Information .......................................................................................... 9
Section VI: Award Administration Information .................................................................................... 11
Section VII: Agency Contact ............................................................................................................... 11
Frequently Asked Questions.................................................................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Summary of Award Opportunity

The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) announces the availability of funding through cost reimbursable agreements for the Scientific Cooperation Research Program (SCRP) for fiscal year (FY) 2015. The objective of SCRP is to reduce global poverty and hunger by supporting applied scientific research, extension, or education projects that aim to address challenges faced by small farmers in emerging economies.

All proposals should focus on addressing agricultural challenges to small farmers in Feed the Future countries (FTF). The definition of small farmers differs between countries and agro-ecological zones. For the purposes of this announcement small farmers are those that own or lease less than 124 acres of land (less than 50 hectares). This land must be used to support subsistence or cash crop farming.

All proposals must target one or more of the select FTF countries and/or regions referenced in this announcement and at least one applicable FTF strategy: Bangladesh, Ghana, Guatemala, Kenya, East African Community Region, and Central America Region. Approved FTF strategies are available at the FTF website and are also listed within this REI.

All proposals should also utilize the scientific communities’ accumulated knowledge and technologies to help aid in developing “practical” solutions to these challenges. All proposals must include foreign collaborations and may not exceed two years. Funding may be allocated to foreign collaborators through sub-awards. Priority consideration will be given to Minority Serving Institutions (MSI), proposals focused on challenges faced by women, and proposals with cost share.

This notice identifies the SCRP deadline, legislative authority, eligibility and proposal requirements, funding restrictions, cost share requirements, allowable and unallowable costs, reporting requirements, program purpose and priorities, focus areas and recommended topics, application and submission information, application review, selection, and notification process, agency program contact information, mailing address, and frequently asked questions.
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance:
This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.961.

Deadline:
Applications must be received by **April 3, 2015 at 11:59 pm**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

Legislative Authority:
The legislative authority for this funding opportunity may be found in the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 enacted as Title XIV of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. When selecting a proposal for funding, FAS reserves the right to select the applicable authorization for an award. Available authorizations for this opportunity include: 7 USC 3318(b), 7 USC 3318j, 7 USC 3319a, 7 USC 3291a, and 7 USC 3293. Note, FAS grants officials will verify that all proposals and budgets comport with the legal requirements of the selected authorization before an award can be made.

FAS reviews proposals and project costs to make certain they adhere to federal regulations as illustrated in 2 CFR Part 200, grant, cooperative, joint venture, and cost-reimbursable agreement. Recipients/cooperators (including, universities, non-profits, States, Cities/Counties, Tribes, for-profits, and foreign organizations) are subject to Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations and other legal requirements, including, but not limited to:
- 2 CFR Part 25, Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration
- 2 CFR Part 170, Reporting Sub award and Executive Compensation Information
- 2 CFR Part 175, Award Term for Trafficking in Persons
- 2 CFR Part 180 and Part 417, OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement)

Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

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

SCRPs are intended to provide a mechanism to address small farmer constraints, particularly women, in designated FTF countries. SCRP is also intended to encourage practical solutions for use by small farmers to advance productivity, transform agricultural production systems, and integrate rural producers into regional and global market structures.
For the purposes of this announcement small farmers are defined as farmers that own or lease less than 124 acres of land (less than 50 hectares). This land must be used to support subsistence or cash crop farming.

SCRP will support applied research, extension, and education projects that create “practical” solutions to challenges faced by small farmers and build regional or global trade capacities in FTF countries. Permissible FTF countries and strategies are referenced below. The FTF website is [http://www.feedthefuture.gov](http://www.feedthefuture.gov).

a. **Bangladesh:** 1) increase local capacity and strengthen the policy framework to enable a safe and nutritious food system that functions in the public interest and attracts private sector investment; and 2) in partnership with Bangladesh’s research community, support innovations and strengthen capacity to tackle the most difficult technical barriers to agricultural growth;

b. **Ghana:** 1) strengthen the legume and maize value chain (including research and post-harvest technologies), and market information systems that support the private sector; and 2) increase government capacity to implement effective public policies and improve the enabling environment for the private sector, including facilitating trade;

c. **Guatemala:** 1) institutional support at the national or ministry level to drive high-value product value chains and national Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regulatory systems, and targeted support, working through partners to bring this same institution building on SPS and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) to the Western Highlands; and 2) research on productivity and quality of staples such as maize/beans/squash/potato and food safety around mycotoxins to complement the cash generating high-value product chain;

d. **Kenya:** 1) support poultry, dairy, livestock, and horticulture sectors; and 2) develop the capacities of the Kenyan agricultural institutions;

e. **East African Community Region:** 1) strengthen regional trading systems; and 2) strengthen regional agricultural research cooperation; and

f. **Central America Region:** 1) strengthen regional trading systems and improve national SPS regulatory systems through institutional support at the national/ministry level; and 2) improve regional data systems and analysis.
B. PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOST INSTITUTIONS:

Financial Reporting:

- Financial Reporting must be in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements, 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. An itemized invoice must be submitted within 90 days of the Fellowship’s completion date using the standard form 270 (SF-270). This form can be located at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/omb/grants/sf270.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/omb/grants/sf270.pdf)
- A detailed breakdown of expenses must be included with SF-270.
- Payment will not be processed without a break-down of expenses.
- Costs must be reported in accordance with the regulations that govern the agreement, and must follow the applicable Federal cost principles in 2 CFR 200. The institution cannot be reimbursed for costs that are not in accordance to the specific terms and conditions of the agreement, or are outside its scope.

A financial status report (SF-425) must be submitted quarterly and at the end of the life of the reimbursable agreement. This form can be located at: [www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/grants_forms/SF-425.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/grants_forms/SF-425.pdf)

Section II: Award Information

A. ESTIMATE OF FUNDS
Subject to the availability of funds, USDA intends to provide approximately 6 Scientific Cooperation Research Program awards in fiscal year 2015.

B. START DATES AND PERFORMANCE PERIODS
Activities pursuant to this REI will be for a two year period. Applicants should estimate start and end dates at approximately August 30, 2015 through August 30, 2017.

C. TYPE OF AWARD
USDA will enter into a cost reimbursable agreement (7 USC 3319a) with selected institutions as appropriate.

Section III: Eligibility Information

A. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:
Proposals must be submitted by U.S. - based universities, colleges, and state cooperative institutions accredited in the United States, acting on behalf of their institution.

A proposal from a consortium of organizations must be submitted as a single proposal with one U.S. organization serving as the lead and all other organizations as team members and sub-awardees, when applicable.
The proposal must include a U.S. and foreign collaborator i.e. foreign academic or research institutions. A letter from a collaborating foreign institution stating that they are willing and able to serve as a partner on the project must be included in the proposal submission.

Sub-awards may be made to U.S. or foreign academic institutions, research organizations, international organizations, research laboratories, professional societies, and similar organizations that are directly associated with trade capacity building, education, or research activities pursuant with 2 CFR 200 as listed in the “Legislative Authority” section of this announcement.

The Principal Investigator (PI) must hold a position at an eligible U.S. institution.

Especially encouraged are proposals from smaller academic institutions, MSIs, in particular American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Asian American, and African American institutions.

B. COST SHARING AND MATCHING REQUIREMENTS:
This program has no statutory formula.
This program has no matching requirements; however, cost share proposals will receive priority consideration via a points based criteria system.

C. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS:
This is a cost reimbursable agreement issued under 7 U.S.C. 3319a. Funding requests may not exceed a total of $40,000. Projects may not exceed two years.

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

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

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

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

3. **Travel:**
   For foreign and domestic travel, provide the purpose of the travel and information used in estimating the cost, such as the destination, number of travelers, and estimated cost per trip. There are several restrictions associated with traveling on federal funds. In most cases, airfare must be purchased in economy class from a U.S. carrier. Travelers must also adhere to federally mandated domestic and foreign per diem guidelines. Additional information may be found in 2 CFR 200 cited in the “Legislative Authority” section of this announcement.

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

5. **Indirect Costs:**
   Indirect Costs may not exceed 10% of direct costs as stated in 7 USC 3319(a).

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

---

**Section IV: Application and Submission Information**

A. **ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGE**
   This announcement contains all instructions and links to all forms required to complete the application. All applications must be submitted in a single PDF document. The application deadline is **Friday, April 3, 2015 11:59 PM EST**. No paper or fax submissions will be reviewed.

B. **CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION:**
   Institutions may submit multiple proposals that adhere to program guidelines and criteria.

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

The project plan must include a U.S. and foreign collaborator i.e. foreign academic or research institutions. Proposals may not exceed 10 pages, including the biographical information for each team member. All proposals must also include the following components:

- **Executive Summary:** Highlight the main points of the proposal—problems, impacts, objectives (i.e. proposed solution), cost share components, deliverables, and evaluation mechanisms. Please limit this section to one (1) page.

- **Project Objectives:** Outline the short and long term objectives of the project. Discuss each objective and highlight specific and societal benefits. Link activities and objectives to long term impacts on rural agricultural development and hunger reduction.

- **Problem Statement:** Clearly state issues to be addressed that are of reasonable dimensions. This section should refer to appropriate studies, statistics, and information gathered from discussions with the agricultural community.

- **Project Description:** Explain the proposed practical solution to the problem statement listed above. Describe the procedures and activities that will be used to create a “practical” solution to the small farmers’ challenge. Explain how these methods were tailored to meet the specific needs of small farmers. Also explain how these methods support short and long term objectives. The proposal should include a project implementation timeline.

- **Evaluation:** Include an evaluation plan that clearly states the objectives and identifies possible unintended effects. The evaluation plan will define measurement criteria, including qualitative and quantitative measures, describe data collection methods that will be employed, including baseline data (e.g. interviews, focus groups, control groups, improved yield records, cost savings, greater profit, etc.) and how it will be analyzed.

- **Team Description:** Identify the PI and all other team members. Explain each team member’s role. Provide biographical information for each team member.

- **Budget:** Include a line item budget, which includes a detailed narrative explaining how each line item amount will be used and how it was calculated. All line items should be described in sufficient detail that would enable FAS to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project per federal regulations.

- **SF-424 and SF 424a:** These documents are located at: [www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html](http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html).

**C. SUBMISSION DEADLINES AND TIMES**
USDA Request for Expressions of Interest
2015 Scientific Cooperation Research Program

Please also include the Standard Form (SF) 424, and the Standard Form 424A with all proposals. The application deadline is Friday, April 3, 2015 at 11:59 PM EST.

Note: The SF-424 and SF-424A may be found on the grants.gov website. Funding opportunities will be advertised via the NIFA listserv. All proposals must be submitted to the email addresses below with the accompanying required SF-424 forms. Proposals not submitted to the below email address by the stated deadline will not be accepted.

Edward.gerard@fas.usda.gov
Molly.Rumery@fas.usda.gov

Applicants will receive an email confirming receipt of their application package.

Section V: Application Review Information

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

A. REVIEW CRITERIA

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

Merit Review Criteria
All proposals must include foreign collaborations with institutions in the SCRP target countries.

• What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity? (30 point maximum)
  How important is the proposed activity to advancing the knowledge and understanding of small farmers in emerging economies regarding effective strategies to mitigate poverty and hunger? How well qualified is the individual or team to conduct the project? To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore practical concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

• What are the specific impacts of the proposed activity? (40 point maximum)
  Will the project help small farmers generate a higher income or a more stable return on their investment? Will the project create a multiplier effect (e.g. increased income levels will lead to healthy well balanced diets, help small farmers purchase essential non-food items, create economically viable non-farm enterprises, and create educational opportunities)? Will the project help small farmers improve their confidence and recognition in a business context, enable them to collect and respond to market information, and integrate them into business networks?

• What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity? (30 point maximum)
  How well does the activity advance understanding while promoting applied research, extension, education, and trade capacity building? How well does the proposed activity broaden the
participation of MSIs (as previously defined)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for small farmer’s agricultural training and trade capacity building (e.g. information sharing, collaboration, partnerships, and networks)? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to the larger society?

Priority consideration will be given to:
1. Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) (3 additional points)
2. Proposals focused on challenges faced by women (3 additional points)
3. Proposals with cost-share (3 additional points)

**Section VI: Award Administration Information**

**A. AWARD NOTICES**

We estimate that successful candidates will be notified around mid-July.

As necessary, applicants will be contacted by program staff for clarification and additional discussion on any budget related issues before final determination of successful applicants. Any notification by the program office regarding the selection of an institution is not an authorization to begin performance. The notice of award signed by the Deputy Administrator of USDA/FAS/OCBD is the authorizing document. This document will be sent by courier to the university. Both parties must sign this document before the agreement is in force. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the status of their application by email.

**B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

Certifications regarding debarment Suspension, Drug Free Workplace, Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status, and other national administrative assurances and policies are required. The cooperator must adhere to 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

**C. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

PIs are required to submit quarterly technical report to the SCRP Program Officers using SF-PPR and quarterly financial reports using SF-425. A mid-term evaluation update should be received within 30 days after the midpoint of the project completion, and other reports should be submitted upon request. *Invoices will not be paid without an applicable quarterly report on file.* PIs also are required to submit a final project report and final evaluation report no later than 90 days after the project completion date as listed in the original proposal. FAS reserves the right to refuse proposals from PIs that previously received an SCRP award but did not meet applicable reporting requirements.

**Section VII: Agency Contact**

Potential applicants can direct their questions or request help with problems before the deadline for submission of the application for these funding opportunities via the contact information below:
SCRP POINTS OF CONTACT:

- Edward Gerard: 202-690-1983; Email: Edward.Gerard@fas.usda.gov
- Molly Rumery: 202-690-0818; Email: Molly.Rumery@fas.usda.gov

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. **How do I know if I am eligible or my organization is eligible to apply to Scientific Cooperation Research Program (SCRP)?**
   Eligibility is determined by the legislative authorities and 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards listed in the “Legislative Authority” of the SCRP announcement, which is explained in the “Eligibility Requirements” section of the announcement.

   Principal Investigators and other team members representing the domestic institution must be legal U.S. citizens or possess a valid green card.

2. **Will SCRP accept applications that do not address a priority focus area or recommended topic?**
   SCRP will not accept proposals that do not meet the criteria discussed in this announcement.

3. **May I include salary and fringe benefits in my application budget?**
   Yes, salary and fringe benefits may be included, but must not exceed 20% of the requested program budget.

4. **Does SCRP require cost sharing?**
   SCRP does not require cost sharing; however, cash and in-kind contributions will be considered and given priority consideration. Third party contributions must include a letter, on official letterhead, signed by the contributing organization’s authorized representative and counter-signed by the recipient organization’s authorized representative.

5. **May I submit my application directly to the www.grants.gov portal?**
   No, FAS will only accept applications that are submitted to Edward.Gerard@fas.usda.gov or Molly.Rumery@fas.usda.gov

6. **What process does FAS use to evaluate SCRP applications?**
   USDA/FAS reviews proposals submitted to SCRP using a points-based system.

7. **When will I be notified if my application was accepted?**
It is expected that the appropriate SCRP Program Officers will notify applicants around mid-July.

8. **How soon after notification that my proposal has been accepted can I begin charging expenses against the project?**
   Successful applicants are not permitted to charge expenses against the project until both the USDA/FAS AR and the recipient’s AR have signed the cost reimbursable agreement and the start date of the agreement is effective. Charges associated with the agreement prior to complete signature are at the expense of the institution.

9. **What should I expect regarding reimbursements?**
   Reimbursements will be made on a monthly or quarterly basis. Payments will be made with proper request for reimbursement, using SF-270, Request for Advance or Reimbursement, at least monthly or quarterly. **Invoices will not be paid if applicable progress reports have not been submitted to the Program Manager.**

10. **What is the limit on indirect costs for this program?**
    Indirect costs may not exceed 10% of direct costs.

11. **What is the process to receive final payment and/or officially closing out the agreement?**
    Final billing must be made within 90 days of the end of the cooperative agreement period. Final payments will not be made until all activities identified in the agreement have been completed, including submission of any documentation.