

AFRI
Water for Agriculture Challenge Area
FY 2015
Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is the Water for Agriculture Challenge Area?
 - The Water for Agriculture Challenge Area is a fairly new program to help address critical water problems such as drought, excess soil moisture, flooding, quality changes and others in rural and agricultural watersheds across the United States. Funding will be used to develop management practices, technologies, and tools for farmers, ranchers, forest owners and managers, public decision makers, public and private managers, and citizens to improve water resource quantity and quality. NIFA's approach will link social, economic, and behavioral sciences with traditional biophysical sciences and engineering to address regional-scale issues with shared hydrological processes and meteorological and basin characteristics.
 2. What is the focus of the program?
 - The program focuses on developing solutions for water management that link food, water, climate, energy, and environmental issues. In FY2015, the RFA focuses on solutions for conserving higher quality water, human health and nontraditional water, and understanding the human behavior and its influence on decision making for agricultural water use.

3. What is the funding available for this year?
 - In FY 2015 approximately \$9 million will be available in support for this program. Funding of projects beyond FY 2015 is contingent upon the availability of funds, and the best interests of the US government. Funding in FY 2015 does not obligate NIFA to any future-year commitments.
4. How many awards will be made in FY2015?
 - Approximately 12 awards will be made for FY2015. 2 CAPS; 10 Standard Grants
5. What project types are available?
 - Both standard research-only and standard integrated projects. Standard integrated projects must include at least two of the three functions: research, education, and extension. Additional information on integrated projects is available at: <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/integrated/integrated.html>.
6. What grant types are available?
 - Coordinated Agricultural Projects (CAP)
 - Standard Grants
 - Conference Grants
 - Food and Agricultural Science Enhancement Grants (FASE) (NIFA's Strengthening Awards: New Investigator, Sabbatical, Equipment, Seed, CAP, and Conference)
7. What are some of the general requirements of the application?
 - All program area priority requires a letter of intent (LOI). For specific requirements and deadlines on program priorities please refer to the Request for Application (RFA).
8. What is an integrated project?
 - Integrated projects include two of the three functions of agriculture knowledge (i.e., research, education, extension). The functions should be interdependent and necessary for the success of the project, and no more than two-thirds of the project's budget may focus on a single component. Additional information on integrated programs, including tips for writing integrated project applications, is available at www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/integrated/integrated.html.
9. What is a CAP project?
 - A Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) supports large-scale, multi-million dollar integrated projects that promote collaboration, open communication, and the exchange of information; reduce duplication of effort; and coordinate activities among individuals, institutions, states, and regions.
10. What is a FASE project?
 - Food and Agricultural Science Enhancement (FASE) grants help institutions develop competitive projects and attract new scientists and educators to careers in high-priority areas of national need in agriculture, food, and environmental sciences.

11. What are the eligibility requirements for integrated projects?
 - Eligible applicants for integrated projects include: Colleges and universities, 1994 land-grant institutions (tribal colleges), and Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities.
12. What are the eligibility requirements for FASE projects?
 - FASE Grants have additional eligibility requirements; please see Part II, D 3 of the RFA for details.
13. Is a Letter of Intent (LOI) required to submit a full application?
 - Yes. An LOI is required and is a prerequisite for submission of a full application.
14. What is the page limit for a Letter of Intent?
 - The LOI is limited to **three** pages for CAP projects and **two** pages for all other project types.
15. What is the deadline to submit a Letter of Intent?
 - April 9, 2015 (5 p.m., ET)
16. What is the page limit for CAP and FASE project proposal narratives?
 - The CAP and FASE CAP proposal narratives are limited to 18 pages; all other proposal narratives are limited to 7 pages.
17. What is the deadline for full applications?
 - July 16, 2015 (5 p.m., ET)
18. If I receive an award, when can I expect to start?
 - At least 6 months after the submission deadline date for the program.
19. Where can I obtain more information?
 - For complete information please go to:
<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/waterforagricultureafri.cfm>
20. What is a Community-Engaged Research Framework (CEnRF)? (associated with Program Area Priority 3)
 - Community-Engaged Research (CEnR) is a framework or orientation for conducting research that supports the premise that people ought to be involved in the decisions, as well as the cultivation of information those decisions are guided by, that affect their lives. CEnR also acknowledges that communities harbor a wealth of information about their own experiences and perspectives that may be used to positively inform and shape research endeavors. It encourages recognition of the strengths of the community institutions and individual members. CEnR builds upon those strengths to help inform the research project and produce the results that may benefit both the academic or institutional researchers (henceforth referred to as just “researchers”) and community partners (e.g. community-based organizations). CEnR may incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and can be applied to a range of topics including environmental science and engineering, public health, and social sciences. CEnR is not a uniform approach, but can occur along a continuum in a variety of forms, from outreach, through more shared

leadership/participatory research approaches (e.g. community-based participatory research) to community-driven/community-led research.

CEnR continuum includes:

Outreach

Outreach describes one-way flows of information from researchers to the community. It provides the community with information on the status of the research, findings or interpretation of findings such as communication of risk and risk modification strategies. There is very little to no input into the research design or methods by the community.

Consultation

Consultation describes the process of obtaining the feedback or advice from the community to help inform the research project conducted by the researchers. The community input is primarily in the form of consultation, whereby the bulk of the design and methods are determined by the researchers. Community involvement typically occurs after researchers predetermine issues. Community's input is limited.

Involvement

Involvement describes more community input and bidirectional communication between the academic researchers and community partners. Communities may be able to provide input into the design, aims, methods, or research questions before these have been predetermined. Both parties cooperate with each other in a more mutual partnership.

Shared leadership/participatory

Shared leadership/participatory describes equal shared power, decision-making abilities and ownership of the research project. This is the ideal community-based participatory research (CBPR) partnership. Community partners in CBPR typically have equal footing with academic researchers in determining the direction of the project, communicating finding and ownership of the data and information. These projects may also develop research aims that better reflect local concerns and may be more applicable to translating the research findings into actions. CBPR projects may also enable far greater flexibility in the choice of topics to be investigated.

Community-driven

Community-driven describes strong community-led research projects where communities take the lead and initiative in directing the research project. The final decision-making ability lies with the community. They may consult with external academic partners to assist with technical questions.

Community is defined as a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action within similar geographical locations or settings. Community is not only defined by a common geography; communities may also develop around a particular interest, issue, identity, or subject matter.

21. How do I identify an international partner?
- NIFA relies entirely on applicants to use their own networks to identify partners.
22. Do international partnerships make my proposal more or less competitive?
- International partnerships are a dimension—nothing more or less—of a proposal, and are assessed as part of the entire proposal. Including an international partnership—even those in which the international partner brings his/her own funding to the proposed work—does not make the proposal more or less competitive. NIFA uses peer-review and the selection criteria described in the RFA to assess the merits of proposals. Any proposed international partnership must clearly address RFA goals and contribute to American agriculture.
23. What should I do if I want to make an application that includes an international partner?
- Prior to LOI submission and the development of a full collaborative application with an international partner, we **strongly encourage** U.S. applicants to engage the RFA's point of contact to confirm that the topic meets NIFA's mission to support high priority issues relevant to agriculture, to clarify application procedures, and to receive further instructions for a joint application. For additional guidelines visit <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/globalengagement.cfm> under resources tab.
24. How do I plan a budget with an international partner?
- Most international participants in NIFA research grants can receive funds from a sub-contract issued from the U.S award recipient's sponsored program management office. The roles and activities of the international collaborator should be clearly identified and integrated with the proposal objectives and described in the budget narrative. Funding modalities must be clear and, where needed, sub-contracts in place.
25. Is NIFA party to any current relevant international agreements of which I should be aware?

NIFA's strategy for global engagement centers on developing carefully considered partnerships that can advance U.S. agriculture and global food security. Examples include:

- In 2013, NIFA signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the U.S.-Israel Bi-national Agricultural Research & Development Fund. More information is available at <http://www.bard-isus.com/funddes.aspx> and <http://www.bard-isus.com/local.aspx?lfid=62>.
- Also in 2013, NIFA piloted a joint program with the UK's Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council on "Animal Health and Production and Animal Products". For more information please go to pages 14-17 of http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/rfas/pdfs/14_afri_foundation_mod.pdf.
- NIFA will continue to provide partnership opportunities with Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases with other USDA agencies. <http://www.globalresearchalliance.org/community/alliance-member->

[countries/member-country-page-usa/](#).

- Joint North American Carbon Program with United State Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), (US, Canada, and Mexico)
<http://nacarbon.org/carbona/>.
- Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research with USGCRP (Asia-Pacific countries) <http://www.apn-gcr.org/>.