

Methyl Bromide Transition Program

FY 2018 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: January 30, 2018.

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

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

METHYL BROMIDE TRANSITION PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.303, Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program.

DATES: Applications must be received by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on January 30, 2018**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding (see Part IV, C of this RFA). Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: We at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seek your comments about this RFA. We will consider your comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we'll use them to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). Submit your written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this notice via email to Policy@nifa.usda.gov. (This email address is only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and *not* for requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Methyl Bromide Transition Program RFA.

Visit the [NIFA website](#) to access a factsheet on the Center of Excellence (COE) designation process, including COE criteria, and a list of programs that offered COE opportunities in FY 2018. You may also review a recording of COE outreach webinars held in February and March of 2015 and COE implementation webinars held in August and September of 2015 from the site. We will update COE webpages as appropriate.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Methyl Bromide Transition (MBT) Program for fiscal year (FY) 2018 to support the discovery and implementation of practical pest management alternatives for commodities and uses affected by the methyl bromide phase-out. The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2018 is approximately \$1.8 million. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2018. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

In FY 2018 applications are sought for the following project types:

1. Integrated Projects
2. Extension-Only Projects
3. State of the Commodity Projects

This notice identifies the objectives for MBT projects, deadline dates, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, evaluation criteria, and application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a MBT grant.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

Section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) (7 U.S.C. 7626), as reauthorized by Section 7306 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246) and by Section 7302 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (H.R. 2642; Pub. L. 113-79), authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a competitive grants program that provides funding for integrated, multifunctional agricultural research, extension, and education activities. Subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this program, the Secretary may award grants to colleges and universities (as defined by section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3103)), as amended, on a competitive basis for projects that address priorities in United States agriculture and involve integrated research, education, and extension activities, as determined by the Secretary in consultation with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB).

Section 7206 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 amended section 406(b) of AREERA to add the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions as eligible to apply for grants under this authority. Section 7129 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246) amended section 406(b) of AREERA (7 U.S.C. 7626(b)) adding Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities (HSACU) as eligible entities for competitive funds awarded under this authority (see Part III, A. for more information).

B. Purpose and Priorities

This RFA solicits applications for the Methyl Bromide Transition (MBT) program. 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 (www.epa.gov/air/caa), 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), quarantine and pre-shipment exemptions (QPS).

The primary goal 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. In addition, State of the Commodity projects may address the economic and pest management outcomes resulting from the transition from methyl bromide for a given commodity or process. 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.

The MBT program encourages (but does not require) projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension (<https://extension.org/>).

The MBT program directly aligns with the [FY 2014-2018 USDA Strategic Plan](#) and specifically addresses Strategic Goal 1/Objective 1.2. The MBT program aligns with the [USDA, Research, Education, and Economics \(REE\) Action Plan](#) Goal 1/Sub-goal 1A. The MBT program also directly supports the [NIFA Strategic Plan for FY 2014-2018](#) Science Goal 1/Sub-goal 1.1.

C. Program Area Description

The MBT program supports three project types:

1. **Integrated** projects focus on research for new alternatives and extension to encourage adoption and implementation of methyl bromide alternatives.
2. **Extension-Only** projects increase levels of adoption and implementation of pest management strategies by producers and growers.
3. **State of the Commodity** projects provide in-depth scientific and economic system review of how commodities have been impacted by the loss of methyl bromide. These projects should address the economic and pest management outcomes resulting from the transition

from methyl bromide for a given commodity or process identified as a “critical use” between 2006 and 2017. These projects should be integrated projects.

Program Area Priority

In FY 2018, 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 the alternative methodology, and describe the methods to evaluate the cost/benefit of making the transition to adoption of the new strategy and provide a clear economic analysis of all aspects of implementation of the new strategies.

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 (<http://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/crop-protection-and-pest-management>).

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

- How can non-fumigant management options be developed and/or improved as part of a systems-based integrated pest management strategy?
- 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.
- 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?
- How can current methyl bromide alternatives be improved or combined to improve their effectiveness and economic viability?

1. Integrated Projects

If you are submitting an application for an integrated project (see Part II/section C of this RFA for more information), incorporate, and identify, 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. Also, include in your proposal: (1) the requirements listed below for integrated and extension-only projects and (2) the requirements listed below for all projects.

2. Extension-Only Projects

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 essential for all extension-only projects. Also, include in your proposal the: (1) requirements listed below for integrated and extension-only projects and (2) requirements listed below for all projects.

Requirements for Both Integrated and Extension-Only projects:

- *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.
- *Economic Analysis.* Integrated and Extension-only projects must include an economic analysis with direct comparison of cost effectiveness of proposed alternatives in the absence of methyl bromide to no treatment. Additionally, an analysis of the overall transition cost to a new technology, from acquisition of materials and knowledge to efficacy metrics, is required:
 - 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.
 - Changes in revenues (e.g., changes in the commodity price or more importantly, changes in quantity of the available commodity for marketing).
 - The appropriate expertise of the team submitting the application to conduct the economic analysis.

3. State of the Commodity Projects

NIFA solicits proposals for state of the commodity projects that evaluate current integrated pest management challenges and the economics of integrated pest management for commodities/processes where methyl bromide is no longer permitted. For the listing of commodities and industries that were registered for methyl bromide use, please see www.epa.gov/ozone/mbr/cueinfo.html. State of the commodity proposals should document current conditions, successful coverage or gaps in pest management, yield changes and cost of management changes (positive, negative, or neutral) resulting from the phase-out of methyl

bromide for any specific commodity or industry. The successful grants of this type must be as inclusive as necessary to address the overall situation in the United States or regionally. Also, include in your proposal: the (1) requirements listed below for state of the commodity projects and (2) requirements listed below for all projects.

Requirements for State of the Commodity projects:

- Create a report that is accessible by the public within one year of the project end date and present the report at an appropriate forum, such as, the annual International Methyl Bromide Alternatives Outreach Conference.
- Describe: (1) how commodity stakeholders will be recruited into the study, (2) the methods of data collection and analysis, and (3) where the data will be presented and published.

Requirements for all projects:

- **Justification.** Provide a justification statement in the Project Narrative (see Part IV/Section B3/b3a for more information): (1) to explain the issues and economic losses faced by their commodity since the phase-out of methyl bromide and (2) on how the proposed project could result in economically feasible methyl bromide alternatives.
- **Extension.** Clearly identify Extension personnel involved in the project in the proposal. 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.
- **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.
- **Logic model.** All applicants are required to: (1) submit a project-specific logic model chart as part of each application and (2) explain how the proposed work supports the programmatic logic model chart provided in Figure 1. Include in the logic model chart all of the following: inputs, outputs (activities and participants), outcomes, situation, assumptions, and external factors of the proposed project. See Program Area Description (Part I/section C) and Application and Submission Information (Part IV/section B3/b8) for specific requirements for the inclusion of the logic model within the application. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at: www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/integrated/integrated_logic_model.html and www.ipm.gov/LogicModels.

Please note: The programmatic logic model chart for the MBT program (Figure 1) 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.

Figure 1: Methyl Bromide Transition Logic Model

Situation: Re-emerging diseases, insects, weeds and other pests continue to negatively impact U.S. agricultural commodities and industries impacted by the phase-out of methyl bromide. System-based methyl bromide alternatives that involve science-based IPM knowledge are needed to address the pest management needs in these communities.

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

*Change in Knowledge; **Change in Actions/Behavior; ***Change in Condition

- **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 if 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. Show your requests for funds for project director meetings in the budget and budget narrative of the application.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for MBT grants in FY 2018 is approximately \$1.8 million. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2018. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

The Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA. For more information see:

https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsservices/gov/pmt/asap/asap_home.htm.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2018, you may submit applications to the MBT Program as one of the following types of requests:

New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the MBT Program. We will review all new applications competitively using the screening for administrative requirements, review panel evaluation of proposals using evaluation criteria and selection process described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

Resubmitted application. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the NIFA but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV). We must receive resubmitted applications by the relevant due dates. We will evaluate resubmitted applications in competition with other pending applications in the appropriate area to which they are assigned and review them according to the same evaluation criteria (Part V, B) as new applications. If you are submitting a resubmission application, enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously-submitted application in the Federal field (Field 4 on the SF 424 (R&R) form).

C. Project and Grant Types

1. Project Types

Three project types are solicited in this RFA:

- **Integrated projects:** not to exceed \$500,000 total (including indirect costs) for a project period of up to three years.
- **Extension-Only projects:** not to exceed \$250,000 total (including indirect costs) for a project period of up to three years.

- **State of the Commodity projects:** not to exceed \$250,000 total (including indirect costs) for a project period of up to three years.

Applicants may submit a proposal for each type; however, when applicants submit more than one application, the projects must be completely independent of one another and execution of the project must not rely on funding from another application. In accordance with Part III/Section 5 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, duplicate, essentially duplicate or predominantly overlapping applications submitted to one of more NIFA programs in any one fiscal year will not be reviewed.

Include specifics about how the proposal will conduct economic analyses and how the project will be relevant to the needs of the commodities that are/have transitioned from methyl bromide.

D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

For information about the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research, see <http://nifa.usda.gov/responsible-and-ethical-conduct-research>.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by colleges and universities (as defined in section 1404 of NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3103) to the MBT Competitive Grants Program. Section 1404 of NARETPA was amended by section 7101 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) to define Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs) and to include research foundations maintained by eligible colleges or universities. Section 406(b) of AREERA (7 U.S.C. 7626), was amended by section 7206 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to add the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions as eligible to apply for grants under this authority.

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.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

In accordance with Section 1492 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3371), as added by section 7128 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79), for grants awarded after Oct. 1, 2014, the recipient of an award from the MBT program must provide funds, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both, from sources other than funds provided through such grant in an amount that is at least equal to the amount awarded by NIFA unless one of the exemptions described herein is applicable. Note that NIFA included information at http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/matching_require.html to further assist you in determining if you must meet the new matching requirement.

The matching funds requirement does not apply to grants awarded:

1. To a research agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); or
2. To an entity eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure program (as defined in section 251(f)(1)(C) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, 7 U.S.C. 6971(f)(1)(C)), including a partner (see Part VIII, D., Definitions, for definition of partnership) of such an entity.

Entities eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure program and exempt from the matching funds requirement include:

- a. 1862 land-grant institutions, including State Agricultural Experiment Stations receiving funding under the Hatch Act of 1887;
- b. 1890 land-grant institutions;
- c. 1994 land-grant institutions;

- d. Entities eligible to receive funds under the of Continuing Animal Health and Disease, Food Security, and Stewardship Research, Education, and Extension Program Funds — Capacity and Infrastructure Program (CIP);
- e. Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU);
- f. Insular area schools eligible to receive funds from the Distance Education/Resident Instruction Grant Programs;
- g. Entities eligible to receive funds under the of McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program Funds;
- h. Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) – (for exemption from the new matching requirement, these applications must include NLGCA certification, see instructions for requesting certifications at <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/form/form.html> and for attaching the certification, in Part IV, B of this RFA);
- i. Entities eligible to receive funds under a program established under Section 1417(b) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)), including: (1) 1890 Institution Teaching, Research, and Extension Capacity Building Grants Program; (2) Higher Education Challenge Grants Program; (3) Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program; and (4) Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship Grants Program; and
- j. Individual public or private, nonprofit Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions of higher education (see 20 U.S.C. 1059d).

Proposal submissions to this RFA may indicate that multiple entities will complete work as a collaborative partnership. All partners must have a substantial involvement in the project throughout the life of the project. Proposals for partnerships among multiple entities must clearly identify the following:

- 1) A narrative that clearly establishes each entity's role in the project;
- 2) How each project partner will contribute to execution of project objectives; determine experimental design; develop the project work plan and time table; and submit collaborative, timely reports; and
- 3) A comprehensive project budget that reflects each entity's financial or third party in-kind contribution (see section 2 of 7 CFR 3430 or section 96 of 2 CFR part 200) to the total project budget costs.

If a proposal indicates that multiple entities, as partners, complete work on the project, and at least one entity is exempt from the matching requirement under #2 above, the entire project will be exempt from the matching requirement. Any partner entity may serve as the lead entity on the project. All partners must be significantly involved in the project.

NIFA will examine proposals recommended for award to determine if the proposed division of work reflects substantial involvement of all entities involved. If a proposal is recommended for award to a lead entity that is not otherwise exempt from the matching requirement, and the proposal does not reflect substantial involvement of at least one partner that is exempt under #2 above, then the matching requirement will apply. Exemption from the matching requirement for an entity not otherwise exempt is limited to the project for which it is a partner.

Waiver of Match: NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a recipient for one year for a competitive grant that involves research or extension activities that are consistent with the priorities established by the National Agricultural Research, Education, Extension and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB) for the year involved. Refer to the [2014 Research, Education and Economics Action Plan](#) to determine whether proposed activities are consistent with the priorities of the NAREEEAB. See R&R Budget under Part IV, B, of this RFA.

C. Centers of Excellence

Pursuant to Section 7214 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79), beginning in Fiscal Year 2015, for applicable competitive research and extension programs, NIFA will recognize and provide priority in the receipt of funding to applications from “centers of excellence” that carry out research, extension, and education activities that relate to the food and agricultural sciences. NIFA held listening sessions in July 2014 and accepted written comments from stakeholders to inform NIFA’s implementation of the COE provision. Information from the webinars and a summary of the input are available on NIFA’s website at <http://nifa.usda.gov/centers-excellence>.

A COE is composed of one or more of the following entities that provide financial or in-kind support to the COE.

- (A) State agricultural experiment stations;
- (B) Colleges and universities;
- (C) University research foundations;
- (D) Other research institutions and organizations;
- (E) Federal agencies;
- (F) National laboratories;
- (G) Private organizations, foundations, or corporations;
- (H) Individuals; or
- (I) any group consisting of two or more of the entities described in (A) through (H).

COE designation is available only to CAP and standard grant applicants. Part IV, B., 3. of this RFA contains additional requirements for COE consideration.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA. We urge you to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For information about the pre-award phase of the grant lifecycle see <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101/pre-award-phase.html>.

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, we recommend that the Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) first contact an Authorized Representative (AR, also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative, or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If not (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed PRIOR to submitting an application. It can take as long as two weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations, the AR should go to “**Register,**” in the top right corner of the Grants.gov web page (or go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>), for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov. Part II,1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the registration process. Refer to item 2, below, to locate the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.”

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

To receive application materials:

1. You must download and install a version of [Adobe Reader](#) compatible with Grants.gov to access, complete, and submit applications. For basic system requirements and download instructions, see <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>. Grants.gov has a test package that will help you determine whether your current version of Adobe Reader is compatible.
2. To obtain the application package from Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/download-application-package.html> and enter the funding opportunity number where appropriate.

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-ICGP-006409

Click “Search” on the displayed page, click the corresponding link to continue. A Grant Application Package is tied to a particular funding opportunity. You may submit an application ONLY to the particular funding opportunity to which the Grant Application Package is associated.

Contained within the application package is the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” This guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If you require assistance to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms) **or submitting the application**, refer to resources available on the Grants.gov website (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>). Grants.gov assistance is also available at:

Grants.gov customer support

800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035

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

Email: support@grants.gov

Grants.gov iPortal (see <https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants>):

Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self-service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. ET).

Have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of agency you are applying to
- Specific area of concern

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications are to be prepared following Parts V and VI of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A of this part). The following is **additional information** you need to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.**

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III, Section 3 of the guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or whether attachments are in PDF format; see Part III, Section 6.1 of the guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. We will accept subsequent submissions of an application until close of business on the closing date in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).

Proposals that are non-compliant with the requirements for the project narrative content will be at risk of having those omissions considered in the evaluation of the proposal by the technical review panel.

For any questions related to the preparation of an application, review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable RFA. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:

- Email: electronic@nifa.usda.gov
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET, excluding [federal holidays](#).

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. See Part V, Section 2.18 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for the required certifications and assurances (e.g., Prohibition Against Entities Requiring Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements).

2. SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 3 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 4 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract.

The project summary must list the names and institutions of the 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” or “This is a State of the Commodity project.” Also include in the summary the relevance of the project to the goals of MBT. See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

NOTE: The Project Narrative must not exceed **18** pages of written text, figures, and tables regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced with font size no smaller than 12 point. We have established this maximum (**18** pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Include all of the following in the project narrative:

- (1) Response to Previous Review (if applicable):** This requirement only applies to Resubmitted Applications as described in Part II, B. Respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than two (2) pages, titled “Response to Previous Review”. These two pages will not be counted against the page limit of the project narrative. Please provide the NIFA proposal number of the previous submission.
- (2) Introduction:**
 - (a) State the project type (Integrated, Extension-Only, State of the Commodity).
 - (b) Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and list the objectives of the proposed project.
 - (c) 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.

- (d) 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.
- (e) Reference all works cited [see Bibliography & References Cited (Part IV, B., c. Field 9)].

(3) Rationale and Significance:

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

(4) Objectives:

- (a) Provide clear, concise descriptions of the specific objectives of the proposed project. Clearly number the objectives.
- (b) Include the description of the appropriate economic analysis for the respective project type. For Integrated and Extension-Only proposals include the methodology and design for the economic analysis. For State of the Commodity proposals include the description and design of the evaluation of the economics of the methyl bromide transition and replacement technology.

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

- (a) A description of the activities proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed.
- (b) Methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the methods.
- (c) 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).
- (d) 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.
- (e) Describe pitfalls that may be encountered.
- (f) Describe limitations to proposed procedures.
- (g) Describe stakeholder involvement in identification of project priorities, their implementation, and adoption.

- (6) **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.**
- (7) **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.
- (8) **Logic Model Chart: Required. Three-Page Limit. All applications require submission of a logic model chart. See the specific requirements for logic models in Part I, C.** The project-specific logic model must provide details for the: inputs, outputs (activities and participants), and outcomes, situation, assumptions, and external factors of the proposed project. The logic model planning process may also be used to develop your project before writing your application. Format this information as a logic model chart. Refer to the logic model chart in your project description, evaluation plans, and elsewhere, as applicable. Title the attachment as ‘Logic Model’ and save file as ‘LogicModel’ and attach at Field 12. Other Attachments. The font for the logic model chart may be smaller than the 12 point font required for the project narrative. The pages for the logic model chart do not count toward the 18 page limit for the project narrative. **Proposal that are non-compliant with the requirements for a logic model chart will be at risk of being excluded from NIFA review.** For samples and templates see www.ipm.gov/LogicModels; additional information is available on the NIFA and University of Wisconsin web sites: www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/integrated/integrated_logic_model.html; <https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/logic-model-planning-process>; and <http://fyi.uwex.edu/programdevelopment/>.
- (9) **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.
- (10) **Center of Excellence Justification:**
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 you meet the standards of a COE, based on the following criteria:

(A) 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;

(B) 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;

(C) 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; and

(D) 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 as a result of 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, certified Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) (list of certified NLGCA is available at http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/pdfs/nlgca_colleges.pdf), and schools of veterinary medicine).

c. Field 9. Bibliography & References Cited. Refer to Part V Section 4.9 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for details.

d. Field 12. Add Other Attachments.

See Part V. Section 4.12 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide (Field 12 on the form) for instructions regarding mandatory Felony Convictions or Tax Delinquent Status.

Logic Model. Refer to Program Area Description (Part I, C.) and Application and Submission Information (Part IV, B., 3., b., (8)) in this RFA.

Non-Land Grant College of Agriculture (NLGCA) Certification. If you claim exemption from the new matching requirements as a NLGCA, then you must attach the NLGCA certification letter you requested and received from NIFA. Title the attachment ‘NLGCA Certification’ and save the file as ‘NLGCACertification.’ To request certification as an NLGCA, complete the form at <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/form/form.html>. Note that certification can take up to 30 days from submission of request form. **See Part III Section 3.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for NIFA attachment specifications.**

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 5 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This section of the guide includes instructions about senior/key person profile requirements, and details about the biographical sketch and the current and pending support, including a link to a suggested template for the current and pending support.

5. R&R Personal Data

As noted in Part V, 6 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. Part V.6 also notes the importance and use of the information.

6. R&R Budget

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 7 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Matching.

If you conclude that matching funds are not required as specified under Part III, B. Cost-Sharing or Matching, you must include an explanation for your conclusion in the Budget Justification. We 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.

For grants that require matching funds as specified under Part III, B, the Budget Justification must list matching sources along with the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match as well as the total dollar amount being pledged. NIFA is no longer requiring written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement). However, you are still subject to documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, etc. as specified in 2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (the Uniform Guidance),” 7 CFR 3430, “Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions,” and program-specific regulations, as applicable. In instances where match is required, any resulting award will require the signature of an Authorized Representative. Only when NIFA receives the award signed by the AR will award funds be released and available for drawdown.

You must establish the value of applicant contributions in accordance with applicable cost principles. Refer to 2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (the Uniform Guidance),” for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

Indirect Costs.

For further information and instructions regarding indirect costs, refer to Part V, section 7.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. For indirect cost funding restrictions, refer to Part IV, D. of this RFA.

7. Supplemental Information Form

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part VI, 1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

- a. **Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name “**Methyl Bromide Transition**” and the program code “**112.C**”. Note that accurate entry of the program code is very important for proper and timely processing of an application.
- b. **Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** See Part VI, 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

C. Submission Dates and Times

We recommend that you conduct an administrative review of the application before submission of it via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review. While you should use the checklist to check the application for completeness, the application should be checked for the following required items. This list includes:

- Project Summary/Abstract
- Project Narrative
- Logic Model Chart
- Timeline
- Bibliography and References Cited.

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on January 30, 2018**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV. A for Grants.gov contact information.

We send email correspondence to the AR regarding the status of submitted applications. We strongly encourage you to provide accurate email addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, contact the Agency Contact identified in Part VII of the RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

Section 713 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Pub. L. 115-31) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total federal funds provided (or 42.857 percent of total direct costs) under each award. Similar language may be included in the FY 2018 appropriation, therefore, when preparing budgets, you should limit your request for the recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of your institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded. See Part V section 7.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further indirect cost information.

You may not use grant funds awarded under this authority to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such space; or the plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construction of buildings or facilities.

E. Other Submission Requirements

You should follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV, Section 1.9 in the document entitled “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.”

For information about the **status of a submitted application**, see Part III, Section 6 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

We evaluate each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, a technical review panel will evaluate applications that meet the administrative requirements.

We select reviewers based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

- 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;
- Need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields;
- Need to include other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs;
- 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;
- Need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and
- 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, the responsible program staff of MBT will recommend that your project be approved for support from currently available funds or be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

MBT reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or with 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.

We will send copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments to the PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Evaluation Criteria

We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

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 goals of the MBT program. Elements 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 which demonstrate feasibility of the proposed research.
- f. Properly designed economic analysis methodology that clearly demonstrate 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. The absence of this information will impact the proposal evaluation for this criterion because it makes it difficult for the peer review panel to accurately evaluate the proposal.
- g. The level of scientific originality and risk-reward balance that indicate a high probability of project success.

State of Commodity 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 goals of the MBT program. Elements considered include:

- a. The description and documentation of project objectives and outcomes of the problem for the commodity to be addressed including the need for scientific and economic system review for the commodity.

- b. Documentation of the current conditions, successful coverage or gaps in pest management, yield changes, and cost of management changes (good, bad or neutral) resulting from the phase out of methyl bromide for the specific commodity.
- c. 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.
- e. Preliminary data which demonstrates the feasibility of the proposed research.
- f. Properly designed evaluation of the economics of the methyl bromide transition and the replacement technology.

All Proposals

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 research objectives.
- b. Awareness of the team of previous and alternative approaches to the identified problem.
- c. The institutional capacity and competence to complete the proposed area of work.
- d. The capacity of support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation are to accomplish the project.
- e. Sufficient timelines to complete objectives on schedule, administer and manage the project partnerships/collaborations, translate outcomes, and coordinate project participants and institutions.
- f. Descriptions and delineation in the project budget and proposal budget narrative of all extension and economic analysis activities. Inclusion in the budget of estimated travel expenses, beginning in the second year of funding, of a funding request for at least one member of the project team to attend an annual International Methyl Bromide Alternatives Conference (www.mbao.org) or an approved alternative meeting.

3. Project Relevance (35 points)

This criterion 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. Elements considered include:

- 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.

All eligible applicants will be competitively peer reviewed (as described in Part V/Sections A and B of this RFA), and ranked in accordance with the evaluation criteria. Those that rank highly meritorious and requested to be considered as a COE will be further evaluated by the peer panel to determine whether they have met the standards to be a COE (Part III/Section C and Part IV/Section B). In instances where they are found to be equally meritorious with the application of a non-COE, based on peer review, selection for funding will be weighed in favor of applicants 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.

In addition, the applicant’s Notice of Award will reflect that, for the particular grant program, the applicant meets all of the requirements of a COE. 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.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, we take extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. See www.nifa.usda.gov/business/competitive_peer_review.html for further information about conflicts of interest and confidentiality as related to the peer review process.

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted one-time, with updates on an as-needed basis. This requirement is part of the responsibility determined prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. We will provide you copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors 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 involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

E. Application Disposition

An application may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the application. Each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by MBT for a period of three years.

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the NIFA awarding official shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. 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 at 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E.

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in [2 CFR 200.210](#).

See www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html to view current NIFA award terms and conditions.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These may include, but are not limited to, the ones listed on the NIFA web page – <http://nifa.usda.gov/federal-regulations>.

NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide – a compendium of basic NIFA policies and procedures that apply to all NIFA awards, unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary – is available at <http://nifa.usda.gov/policy-guide>.

Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

Refer to Part II, D for more information.

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

The output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions (see www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html for information about NIFA award terms). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, they will be identified in the award.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Herbert Bolton

Title: National Program Leader

Unit: Institute of Food Production and Sustainability

Location: 3343 Waterfront Centre

Phone: (202) 401-4201

Email: hbolton@nifa.usda.gov

Rubella Goswami

Title: National Program Leader

Unit: Institute of Food Production and Sustainability

Location: 3105 Waterfront Centre

Phone: (202) 401-0628

Email: rubella.goswami@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contacts –

Towana DeShazo

Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management

Location: 2162 Waterfront Centre

Phone: (202) 401-4155

Email: tdeshazo@nifa.usda.gov

Rochelle McCrea

Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management

Location: 2174 Waterfront Centre

Phone: (202) 401-2880

Email: rmccrea@nifa.usda.gov

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds; Changes

1. 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.

2. Changes in Budget or Project Plans

- (i) Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring prior written approval).
- (ii) Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award.
- (iii) The disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project, by the approved project director or principal investigator.
- (iv) The inclusion, unless waived by the federal awarding agency, of costs that require prior approval in accordance with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E—Cost Principles of this part 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 Part 31, “Contract Cost Principles and Procedures,” as applicable.
- (v) The transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs as defined in §200.75 Participant support costs to other categories of expense.
- (vi) Unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards, the subawarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount subawards as described in §200.332 Fixed amount subawards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
- (vii) Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity.
- (viii) The need arises for additional federal funds to complete the project.

The awardee will be subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award. See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> for information about NIFA award terms.

B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. We will retain for three years a copy of an application that does not result in an

award. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

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. Definitions

Refer to [7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Financial Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions](#), for applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program. For the purpose of this program, the following additional definitions are applicable:

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is “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 (2013) provides further description of IPM (see <http://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resources/National%20Road%20Map%20for%20Integrated%20Pest%20Management.pdf>).

Integrated project means 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.

MBTOC is the Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee.

Multidisciplinary project means 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.

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 time table, 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.

State of the Commodity projects are integrated projects (research and extension) that evaluate current pest management challenges and the economics of pest management in the absence of methyl bromide for those commodities phased off of methyl bromide (i.e., had a critical use exemption in 2006 - 2017).