

RESEARCH FOR NOVEL APPROACHES REVIEW RUBRIC

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Criterion 1: Comprehensive Review	Reviewers should consider the FULL proposal when scoring the following three questions.	15% of total score			
LEGISLATION	Does this project contribute to SARE's legislated purpose? These include: 1) maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of the soil; 2) conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources, and fish and wildlife habitat; 3) maintain and enhance the quality of surface, and ground water; 4) protect the health and safety of persons involved in the food and farm system; 5) promote the well being of animals; 6) increase employment opportunities in agriculture.	5%			
Does not address any legislative priorities.	References one or more priority but lacks detail on benefits.	Addresses one or more priority with examples of anticipated benefits.	Demonstrates clear benefits with measurable outcomes relevant to one or more priority.	Demonstrates strong benefits with ambitious, achievable, and measurable outcomes relevant to one or more priority.	
INNOVATION	Is this project innovative by addressing new practices, improving existing practices, or introducing existing practices to a new farmer audience?	5%			
Not innovative	Minimal demonstration of innovation.	Somewhat innovative.	The project is clearly innovative.	The project is highly innovative and proposes meaningful improvements.	
IMPACT	Will the project have substantive impact on service provider's and farmer's ability to steward resources to ensure sustainability, resilience, economic viability, and a high quality of life in the Northeast?	5%			
No impact	Minimal expected impact.	Somewhat impactful.	The project will have lasting impact that addresses present needs.	The project is highly and demonstrably impactful with a lasting impact that addresses present needs and anticipates future ones.	

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Section Criteria					These criteria apply to specific sections of the proposal. Reviewers should focus on the information in that section to score, but should also consider information found elsewhere in the proposal as relevant. The scores for these sections make up 85% of the total proposal score.	85% of total score
Criterion 2: CONTEXT					Includes Project Summary, Previous Work, Research Gap, Project Objective, Farmer Interest and Involvement, Citation List, Optional: Letters of Support	30%
The proof of concept rationale is not described. No evidence of farmer need for the project. Research gap is not defined. It is not clear how the problem or need was identified and why it is important to the community.	There is basic mention of challenge and previous work but weak integration. General or anecdotal evidence of farmer need for project. No farmer engagement in development of project. Limited or general support letters, lacking detail. It is somewhat clear how the problem or need was identified and why it is important to the community.	There is a clear description of project objective describing existing evidence, and research gap. Solid understanding of previous work and how project builds on it. Solid farmer connection with documented interest, need and/or value to farming community. Proof-of-concept rationale is clear, appropriate, and likely to benefit farmers and contribute to outcome statement.	The project objective demonstrates a strong integration of prior evidence with clear proof-of-concept rationale. The research gap, and how the project will bring meaningful research to a novel approach is clearly described. Well-documented farmer interest and/or need, and engagement plan. If included , letters are strong with clear examples of community need and the project's role in addressing it.	Exceptional integration of existing evidence, research gap, and farmer needs. Outstanding proof-of-concept rationale with transformative potential and deep farmer engagement. If included , letters show specific support for the project, interest, engagement and high potential impact.		
Criterion 3: PROJECT TEAM					Includes Project Leader, Project Team, Project Advisory Committee, Decision-Making Process, Team Commitment	15%

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No relevant experience or major gaps in experience. Missing or insufficient committee, no confirmation of team commitment and farmer involvement.	Minimal description of qualifications, team has expertise gaps and/or unclear roles, only partially defined. Advisory committee weak or incomplete. Limited engagement and detail.	Relevant experience well-described and appropriate, well-rounded team with clear roles and appropriate expertise. Clear committee with farmer representation and practitioner and/or expert representation. Acknowledgement of roles and commitments but lacking specificity around decision making.	Highly qualified team with clearly defined roles and commitments. Strong relationships with service providers and farmers. Strong committee with complementary representation. Detailed acknowledgement with planning and project proposal is evident, including description of decision making.	Complementary team with detailed roles, proven collaboration, and positive record of effective leadership and/or project management of similar work of projects of scale. Exceptional experience in proof-of-concept research and farmer engagement. Highly qualified advisory committee with representation directly relevant to project goals. Specific and verified commitments with demonstrated readiness and general confidence.	
Criterion 4: RESEARCH & OUTREACH					30%
No or inadequate research design. No adoption pathway or unrealistic steps to implementation. Missing or inadequate outreach plan.	Basic research design with significant concerns. Limited adoption planning with feasibility concerns. Basic outreach plan with limited scope.	Solid, appropriate research design for proof-of-concept testing. Clear, realistic adoption pathway with essential steps identified. Clear outreach plan with realistic dissemination activities.	Strong, rigorous research design well-suited for testing novel approach. Comprehensive adoption pathway with innovative, feasible steps and support mechanisms. Strong outreach plan with partnerships and identified audiences.	Exceptionally innovative research design perfectly aligned with proof-of-concept goals. Highly detailed, farmer-centered adoption pathway with multiple support mechanisms. Exceptional, multi-faceted dissemination strategy with diverse partners and sophisticated audience targeting.	
Criterion 5: BUDGET					10%
Missing or incomplete, unreasonable costs	Basic spreadsheet with unclear alignment to scope. Other funding sources seem to be necessary but are not described.	Clear, reasonable costs justified for scope. Presence of other funding sources is unclear.	Detailed, well-reasoned budget with clear alignment. Other Funding Sources are mentioned if relevant.	Exceptionally clear, transparent, reasonable budget with strong justification and alignment to scope. Other Funding Sources are clearly described if relevant.	