

Southern SARE On-Farm Research Grant Review Rubric

Section	Question in Call for Proposals in Grants Management System	From “How this proposal will be reviewed” in the Call for Proposals	What Reviewers are Looking For	Points
Statement of the Problem	Provide a clear description of the production/marketing problem farmers are facing. Indicate how the problem is related to, or affects, sustainable agriculture and discuss why the problem needs to be addressed. Your explanation should address one or more of the three pillars of sustainability: Farmer profit, environmental conservation, and community quality of life.	Does the applicant clearly describe the problem and why the problem needs to be addressed?	The project provides a clear description of a problem facing agriculture in the South, and identifies a need to finding a more sustainable solution. Addresses one or more of the three pillars of sustainability	15
Statement of the Proposed Solution	The Statement of the Proposed Solution is the identification of your research question and objectives. It is the opportunity to identify whether the new approach is an improvement over the current problem. Your solution should be specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic. The Statement of the Proposed Solution is a clear statement of what you expect the outcome of your research project to be. In this section, provide a description of the proposed solution to the problem and its relevance to sustainable agriculture. Your solution should lead to a more sustainable outcome.	Does the project demonstrate an improvement over the current problem? Is the solution new, creative and innovative, or builds on existing knowledge? Does it move the needle in more sustainable farming practices?	Proposed solution should be clear, specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic. The solution is a new and creative innovation or leads to a more sustainable outcome by building on and/or adding to existing knowledge.	15
Approaches and Methods	The Approaches and Methods section is where you will test your expected outcome through a research experiment or observational study. In this section you should outline: • The site where you will conduct your research; • Your experimental design if your research calls for one; • What you are measuring and the ways you will be measuring it; • The materials and supplies you will be using to conduct your research; • How you will collect your data, how often you will collect it, and what tools you will use; • How you will analyze your data, and what tools you will use; • How you will interpret your data and draw conclusions.	Is the Approaches and Methods clearly thought out and well designed so that useful and applicable results can be obtained? Does the Approaches and Methods align with the budget request?	Approaches and Methods effectively demonstrate how the solution would work in solving the stated problem. Potential results are practical and useful. Approaches and Methods outline what is needed in the budget.	25

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	The Approaches and Methods should demonstrate how your solution works in addressing the Statement of the Problem. Be specific in describing project activities.			
Timetable	The timetable is an outline of project activities in a chronological timeline that states where, what, when and how long it will take for you to perform your research. Provide a timetable of the work to be completed from project start date to project end date. Be specific in describing project activities, including any recordkeeping throughout the research. Include your outreach plan in your timetable.	Based on the information in the timetable, can the project be effectively completed in the timetable provided?	Effective completion of the project based on the goals and proposed solution.	10
Literature Cited	Supports the justification of the research project being proposed.	Does the literature cited demonstrate how well the applicant prepared their proposal based on published literature of the research topic?	Cited literature supports the problem, demonstrates knowledge of the research topic, and contributes to existing published works.	5
Outreach Plan	Indicate your outreach or educational plan for your project. Outreach plans may include workshops, field days, on-farm demonstrations, farmer training, online training efforts, curriculum development, videos and webinars, educational publications, journal articles or presentations at meetings or conferences.	Is the outreach plan well thought out and a benefit to its intended audience? Are the methods for implementing the outreach plan the most effective way of reaching farmers and ranchers?	The project includes a clear, well thought out outreach plan that will reach a large number of audiences who could benefit from the project and its results.	20
Budget	The budget is a list of allowable expenses required to conduct your project. The items in your budget should align with the your Approaches and Methods. Fill in a budget and provide a justification for each allowable item listed in your budget. Refer to the budget checklist attached to this Call for Proposal, as well as the sample budget and budget justification as a guideline.	Is the budget request reasonable and realistic? Is it clear on what the funds will be spent on? Are the requested funds allowable? Are budget items itemized with clear justifications on how they will be used in the project?	Clear budget with allowable and realistic requests. Items are itemized and justified with clear descriptions of how they will be used in the project.	10