

Southern SARE Research and Education Grants 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 |
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| Qualifications of Applicant and Major Participants | Detail the area of expertise and specific role of the principal investigator of the lead institution. Detail the specific role of each co-principal investigator if applicable. | Are the investigators qualified to conduct the proposed project? Are the roles of all investigators and participants adequately defined and appropriate? | Principal investigator and major participants have the experience to complete the proposed research project. | 5 |
| Alignment with SARE Legislation | Proposed projects must focus on Southern SARE’s program objectives in developing sustainable agriculture systems or moving existing farming systems toward sustainability, as defined by Congress in the 1990 Farm Bill. | How well does the project align with SARE’s legislated purpose? | Align the project with SARE legislation. This means an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will over the long-term: Satisfy human food and fiber needs, enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends, make the most efficient use of nonrenewable and on-farm resources, sustain the economic viability of farm operations, and enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole. | 10 |
| An Approach to Systems Research | Describe the farming system and how the Approaches and Methods contribute to a whole-systems approach to sustainable agriculture. List at least three (3) cooperating farmers in the project, who must confirm their participation. Each farmer listed must have a unique and detailed role. The proposed project should involve multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary researchers. | Does the project demonstrate a whole systems approach to sustainable agriculture and incorporate the three pillars of sustainability: profit, people, places? Does the proposal have a realistic plan for assembling an appropriate team of participants and devising an effective team strategy for successful project outcomes? Are at least three farmer cooperators identified and confirmed to participate? | The proposal demonstrates a whole systems approach to sustainable agriculture, focusing on more than one component system and including SARE’s three pillars of sustainability. | 10 |
| Statement of the Problem, | State the problem being addressed in the project and the rationale and justification for the objectives. State the potential economic, | Can the project goals be attained? How do the project outcomes contribute to | The project provides a clear description of a problem facing agriculture in the | 10 |

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| Rationales and Significance | environmental, and social impact of the anticipated project outcome. | sustainable agriculture and the priorities of Southern SARE? | South, and identifies a need to finding a more sustainable solution. | |
| Objectives | Provide a numbered list of concise project objectives. | Can the objectives be realistically completed with the proposed time frame? Are the goals feasible to obtain by the methods stated? | The objectives demonstrate clear goals of the project. They can be realistically completed within the proposed time frame. | 20 |
| Approaches and Methods | <p>The research and education/outreach methodology should be described for each objective listed.</p> <p>The Approaches and Methods should demonstrate how your solution works in addressing the Statement of the Problem, Rationale and Significance.</p> <p>Be specific in describing project activities. The approach should lead to the development of quality educational materials and multiple format delivery methods with long shelf lives. The educational materials should be useful in future trainings. It is appropriate to conduct small focused educational sessions or trainings using the materials to verify how successful they are and improve the approach as well as determine participation rates. The applicant must make a defensible attempt to show how many will be educated and the makeup of the audience to be educated or trained.</p> | 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. | 20 |
| Outreach Plan | Indicate your outreach or educational plan for your project outlining the target audience participating in the project and the target audience for information/education and outreach components of the project. | 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. | 10 |
| Evaluation and Impact | The evaluation plan assesses project process and outcomes. It includes mechanisms for self-evaluation and monitoring and/or external evaluation. State the expected outcomes and how they will be measured. | Is the assessment plan an integral part of the development of each objective and evident in conducting the project? How will the benefits be measured? How do farmers benefit from the project? What is the environmental benefit of the project? What are the potential economic and social benefits of the project? | Describes an assessment plan with expected outcomes, timeline, evaluative criteria, methodology, and a defined level of minimum success to document the project's impact. | 10 |
| Budget | The budget is a list of allowable expenses required to conduct your project. The items in your budget | Is the budget request reasonable and realistic? Is it clear on | Clear budget with allowable and realistic requests. | 5 |

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| | 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. | 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? | Items are itemized and justified with clear descriptions of how they will be used in the project. | |
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