

Q&A Session: FFAR Seeding Solutions Program

Overview of the FFAR Seeding Solutions Program

The Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR) was established in the 2014 Farm Bill to address food and agriculture challenges. Seeding Solutions is an annual grant program supporting innovative research across four Priority Areas. We award approximately 10 grants ranging from \$300,000 to \$1 million, with grantees required to provide matching funds through non-federal partners. See: [2024 Seeding Solutions Request for Applications](#).

Q&A Transcript

Q1: How can applicants determine which Priority Areas their proposal falls under?

A1: Applicants can select the Priority Area that best fits their project. If deemed necessary in the initial review process, we will shift the application to align with the most suitable Priority Area. There is no penalty for pinning yourself to the wrong Priority Area.

Q2: Are matching funds required for FFAR grants?

A2: Yes, applicants are responsible for securing matching funds of at least 50% of the entire budget. It is important to remember that half of the match must be cash match while the remaining can be in-kind. The cash match can include non-federal salary. See: [FFAR Matching Funds Guidelines](#).

Q3: Can applicants use matching funds that were spent before the award?

A3: Seeding Solutions is required to fund new research. We cannot fund existing research or supplement existing projects. However, we do realize the challenge of coordinating sponsorship funds in the research, so there is some flexibility. In that regard, applicants are encouraged to work with FFAR and our Grants team to make sure we can maximize that alignment.

Q4: Is there a preference given to proposals based on funding amount?

A4: No. Proposals are evaluated based on merit, feasibility and alignment with program goals, regardless of funding amount.

Q5: What happens if a proposal is unsuccessful?

A5: While only applicants invited to submit full proposals can compete for funding in a given year, unsuccessful pre-proposal applicants are encouraged to resubmit in subsequent rounds. FFAR provides feedback to support improvement.

Q6: Does FFAR assist in finding matching partners for projects?

A6: While we do not directly facilitate partner matching, we are happy to provide suggestions and guidance during one-on-one conversations. However, FFAR does not have the capacity to provide that development.

Q7: Is there an opportunity to respond to reviewer comments during the application process?

A7: Typically, we do not offer the opportunity to respond to reviewer comments. However, in certain cases, conditional awards may provide an opportunity for dialogue to address concerns.

Key Takeaways & Conclusion

- Multistakeholder Collaboration: The idea of the public-private partnership match requirement is to ensure that we are supporting applied research that is relevant to agricultural management and decision making. While university match certainly fulfills our match requirements, your proposal will be strengthened if you can bring in representation or sponsorship from the agricultural community. This can include working with producers, industry, nonprofit organizations and others who have an interest in advancing our collective goals.
- Type of Research: We can only fund hypothesis-based research. We cannot fund implementation or outreach projects; nor can we fund model applications or development. We can fund projects that, for example, compare different outreach strategies to evaluate how best to create awareness, willingness or capacity to adopt a practice. In addition, we can fund modeling projects that explore underlying assumptions and help us understand the uncertainty of the model predictions, and where additional research is needed to strengthen those models.
- We are a Resource: We often find it most helpful to have one-on-one conversations to think about how applicants can adapt or present their projects in a way where it fits within our funding criteria.

Thank you to interested applicants for their insightful questions and engagement with the FFAR Seeding Solutions program. We are here to support applicants throughout the application process and look forward to collaborating on innovative solutions in food and agriculture.