THE EXPERIMENT STATION SECTION

GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL RESEARCH SUPPORT PROJECTS (NRSPs)

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I. MISSION OF NATIONAL RESEARCH SUPPORT PROJECTS

The activity of a National Research Support Project (NRSP) focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (e.g., collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research.

II. GENERAL

National Research Support Projects are created to conduct activities that enable other important research efforts. Ideally, a NRSP would facilitate a broad array of research activities. The primary purpose of NRSPs shall not be solely to conduct research as there are other available mechanisms for creating these types of projects including the multistate research projects and the National Research Project (NRP) options. Examples of NRSP activities might include collection of data that are widely used by other research groups and efforts; development of databases; or development of critical technologies.

All NRSPs must involve a national issue, relevant to and of use by most, if not all, regions. These projects draw on the best minds and resources within and outside the State Agricultural Experiment Station (SAES) system. All projects must pass scientific scrutiny. Where appropriate, linkages to similar international activities are encouraged. Although priority for funding will be given to NRSPs that address and meet one or more of the national priority areas identified by ESCOP, general consideration will be given to assuring that the portfolio of NRSP projects has sufficient diversity so as to make best use of limited funds.

National Research Support Projects are initiated by use of Hatch funds drawn from the total federal allocation prior to the formula distribution to state agricultural experiment stations (SAESs). This funding process is called "off-the-top" and in total represents less than 1% of the federal formula funds to SAES.

The National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS) is the official repository for NRSP project information. NIMSS is a web application for management of the Multistate Research Activities in a paperless environment. It is an information technology tool that facilitates the online submission of proposals, reports, and reviews. NIMSS also serves as the central repository of records pertaining to multistate research projects and activities since September 2003. Information can be accessed anywhere, anytime at www.nimss.umd.edu.

III. ORGANIZATION of the NRSP REVIEW COMMITTEE

A. General

A NRSP Review Committee (hereafter referred to as the committee) with broad oversight responsibility for the NRSP portfolio has been established and charged with providing general oversight, consistency in review and approval processes, and a national perspective relative to research support needs. The committee does not have responsibility for micromanaging individual projects.

The committee has been delegated authority by the Experiment Station Section (ESS) to:

- Make recommendations on new opportunities for NRSP investments
- Make 5- year budget recommendations to be adopted by the ESS
- Conduct annual and midterm reviews (year 3) of each project
- Invest up to $2,000,000 in NRSPs

While playing a gatekeeper function for the SAES system, it is also important that the committee's role is clearly advisory to the system. It makes recommendations to the ESS concerning existing and new projects. A key component of their role is to oversee implementation of sunset clauses whereby an NRSP reduces or eliminates its dependence on off-the-top funding. The committee brings its recommendations to the annual ESS meeting. It reports on the final project proposals and 5 year budgets, as well as their final recommendation. The SAES Directors vote (one vote per institution contributing off-the-top funding) on approval of the project and its five-year budget. A simple majority vote is required to overturn the committee's recommendation.

One of the specific charges to the committee is to use the national priorities and needs as a basis for the review and evaluation of existing and new NRSP projects. It is responsible for assuring that the NRSP portfolio is monitored and is responsive to needs. The committee will identify specific areas of research support needs or at least utilize input from an established ESCOP mechanism such as the Planning Committee because of their focus on emerging issues and needs. The committee has the authority to proactively identify research support needs. The committee has access to resources available to seed the creation of new NRSPs responsive to emerging needs.

The committee is directly responsible for the review of progress and budget for existing NRSPs. It has the authority to ensure that the criteria contained in these guidelines are satisfactorily met by NRSPs.

Relative to the evaluation of revised and new projects, the committee oversees review by peer and merit panels. It develops criteria for the reviews, selects reviewers, assists in establishing protocols for review, and prepares the specific charge to the panels. Utilizing the results of the reviews and the committee's understanding of national research support needs, the committee makes recommendations concerning revised and proposed projects to the ESS.

A final role for the committee is one of broad advocacy for the NRSP system. It insures the documentation of system and individual project impacts. It serves as the point entity for marketing the system and bringing it to national level prominence.

B. The NRSP Review Committee Composition

1. One representative from each of the four SAES regions (1862 experiment stations) who is a current or past member of an MRC, and one from the ARD region (1890 Research Directors), appointed by the regional association chair. Each unit represented on the NRSP Review Committee will also designate an alternate to insure representation. For the geographical regional associations, a logical alternate would be the regional MRC chair.

2. One representative from Extension appointed by the ESCOP Chair following the recommendation of the ECOP Chair.

3. One representative from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), preferably a National Program Leader, recommended by the NIFA Director and appointed by the ESCOP Chair.

4. One stakeholder representative, possibly a Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, & Teaching (CARET) representative, appointed by the ESCOP Chair.

5. Two regional Executive Directors appointed by the ESCOP Chair. One of the Executive Directors is from the same region as the chair of the committee and will serve as the Executive Vice Chair, administratively supporting the committee. These two appointed Executive Directors will be voting members of the committee. The other three regional Executive Directors [both SAES and/or Association of Research Directors (ARD)] not assigned to the committee may attend meetings as ex officio, non-voting members.

6. Officers will include a chair and chair-elect chosen by the committee from the representatives' four SAES regions. The position of chair will rotate among the four geographical regions in the following order: North Central, Western, Southern, and Northeast.

C. NRSP Review Committee Operations

1. Term of appointment to the committee will be four years. Terms of the four SAES regions' representatives will be staggered so as to provide continuity to deliberations.

2. The committee may meet face-to-face at least once per year prior to the annual ESS meeting. Other business of the committee will be conducted electronically through conference calls and e- mails. All expenses will be borne by member's respective institutions except for the stakeholder representative. Travel funds for the stakeholder representative will be provided by ESS/ESCOP.

3. The committee will coordinate peer reviews of new and revised NRSP proposals and associated five-year budgets.

4. The committee and NIFA jointly arrange for external peer review of NRSPs at the beginning of year 5.

5. The committee reports at the ESS annual meeting on new or revised NRSP project proposals, five-year budgets, and any subsequent budget revisions, and makes a recommendation for approval or rejection.

6. During a project's third year, the committee reviews the midterm review results and the first three year's annual reports of active NRSPs,and makes a recommendation for approval or disapproval of the remaining two years' budgets at the annual ESS meeting.

IV. ESTABLISHING NEW NRSPs
(Also refer to Appendix A1 for NRSP Calendar for New NRSP Projects, Appendix B for the NRSP criteria, Appendix C for the NRSP proposal format, Appendix D for the NRSP Peer Review Form, and Appendix F for Regional Association Review Form.)

In addition to addressing the criteria previously described in Section III. A. General, a proposal for a new NRSP must contain elements detailed below.

A. Relevance
The proposal must identify stakeholders and indicate their involvement in project development, review, and/or management plan. The proposal must indicate how the project meets stakeholder needs and indicate the relationship with the research to be supported. (The real stakeholders are the researchers and the funding agencies that will use the information or services generated.) The proposal must also include a mechanism for assessing stakeholder use of project outputs.

B. Management and Business Plan
Each NRSP should have a well-developed business plan that describes how the project will be managed and funded for a five-year period. This plan should include a management structure that adequately integrates the efforts of multiple participants. The plan should include provisions for linking multiple sources of funding and leveraging those sources with the limited off-the-top research funds. This plan should include efforts to bring in new agencies, organizations, industry, foundations, and others to help address the issues and provide funding for the project.

All project proposals must provide evidence of contributions from agricultural experiment stations across the nation beyond what is available through off-the-top funds.

In general, NRSPs should expect a finite period of off-the-top funding. This is not a reflection of the quality of work being conducted or the research being supported by the project, rather, it allows the SAES system to continually assess needs and develop new projects as necessary. For this reason, the business plan of project renewals must include a transition plan and provisions for developing alternative funding or reducing off-the-top funding to a minimal level.

C. Objectives and Projected Outcomes
Objectives, milestones and deliverables should be described in sufficient detail such that progress can be measured. Indicate the prospects for meaningful impacts within the proposed duration of the project. The proposal must indicate what approaches will be used to assess outcomes and how these assessments will be used in program planning.

D. Integration
Where applicable, projects should indicate how efforts are integrated with extension or academic programs and how results might be of use by other potential stakeholders.

E. Outreach, Communications and Assessment
All projects must have a sound outreach, communication, and assessment plan that seeks to convey the project's goals, accomplishments, and outcomes/impacts. The communication plan must detail how results

will be transferred to researchers and other end users and should contain the following elements:

1. Clear identification of the intended audience(s) of the NRSP. Since this is a Research Support Project, in most instances the primary beneficiary of the results will be other scientists. However, careful consideration should be given to other possible users of the information (i.e., consumers; producers; local, state, and federal governmental agencies; general public; etc.)

2. Clear description of the engagement of stakeholders in the definition and/or conduct of the research support project.

3. Thorough description of the methodology to measure the accomplishments and impacts of the NRSP. Methods such as surveys, town meetings, conferences, analyses of reference data (e.g., citation index, etc.), and use of professional evaluators should be considered.

4. Specific description for development of communication pieces describing the activities, accomplishments, and impacts of the NRSP. The communication pieces will be used with SAES/ARD directors, stakeholders and their organizations, funding sources and agencies, and congressional delegations.

5. Plans should include mechanisms for distribution of project results. Examples include sharing the results at annual meetings of stakeholders, providing material to the Budget and Advocacy Committee of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) Board on Agriculture Assembly and other appropriate committees within the SAES/ARD organization, and assisting NIFA is preparation of appropriate documents highlighting the impacts of the project.

F. Budget
(Also see Appendix G for the reporting projected participation and Appendix H for the NRSP budget request)

Project budgets must take into account all sources of funds (e.g., Multistate Research Funds, industry, federal agencies, grants and contracts, and SAESs). For the SAESs, the project should estimate the in- cash and in-kind contributions. The budget narrative should provide an estimate of the per cent contribution from each funding source.

Once approved, an NRSP is provided with a five year budget by the ESS, which is subject to any changes in Hatch funding provided by Congress. For example, if Hatch funding is reduced by 1%, all NRSPs would be reduced also by 1%, accordingly.

V. MIDTERM REVIEW
Also see Appendix D for the midterm review form.

Effective January 2013, all NRSPs must undergo a progress review in the third year. This review is conducted by the Administrative Advisors of the particular project and then reviewed by the NRSP RC. Pending satisfactory progress as detailed below, the committee will forward its recommendation to the regional associations for informational purposes in time for their respective spring meetings and to the ESS for continued funding at the approved level in years four and five. Should an NRSP fail to meet performance expectations or funding commitments, the committee may recommend that funding approval be altered or termination by the ESS.

The midterm review shall consider the requirements and criteria set forth above for the development/approval of an NRSP in *Section IV. Establishing New NRSPs*.

1. **NRSP Mission**
   Does the project demonstrate consistency with the mission of the NRSP Program?

2. **Relevance to National Issue**
   Is there evidence that the NRSP is continuing to address a national issue, relevant to and of use by most, if not all regions.
   a. **Relevance to Stakeholders**
      Is there evidence of stakeholder use of project outputs? Are there project outcomes that aide in development of or contribute to the discussion of public policy. If so please describe.

3. **Management and Business Plan**
   The midterm review must reflect progress toward meeting external funding expectations. Failure to meet funding goals may result is alterations to the off the top budget contribution provided by the SAES system.

4. **Progress Toward Objectives and Projected Outcomes**
   In the midterm review the project must demonstrate productivity, progress toward original objectives and the relationship between projected goals, actual accomplishments and any impacts to date. As appropriate, this assessment must include an evaluation of stakeholders' use of project outputs to date.

5. **Integration**
   As appropriate, the NRSP must indicate how efforts are integrated with extension or academic programs and how results might be of use by other potential stakeholders. The midterm review the project must demonstrate actual collaborations and any new partnerships built during the project period. The report should address the degree to which the full team is engaged in project planning and implementation. Discuss plans to correct any weaknesses that may have been identified.

6. **Outreach, Communications and Assessment:**
   The midterm review must demonstrate the extent that the NRSP is working to effectively communicate project results to the intended audiences and others who need them.

VI. RENEWAL OF A NRSP
(Also refer to Appendix B for the NRSP criteria, Appendix C for the NRSP proposal format, and Appendix E for the NRSP Review Forms.)

Prior to renewal, each NRSP must undergo an external peer review according to the schedule presented in *Section VII. Review and Approval Timelines for New NRSPs or Renewal of an Existing NRSP*. Each NRSP seeking renewal must meet/address all of the criteria for a new NRSP previously described in *Section IV. Establishing New NRSPs*. In addition, renewal requests must address the following:

1. **General**: NRSPs should expect a finite period of significant levels of off the top funding. This allows "the system" to undertake new initiatives and address new priorities. For this reason the business plans of applications for renewals will be carefully scrutinized. For renewals, proposals must demonstrate direct relationship in support of continuing national priority need(s). The proposal should discuss its support activities relative to other NRSPs. The renewal application builds on the previous project and provides a logical progression.

2. **Relevance**: Proposals must demonstrate continued need as evidenced by stakeholder use of project outputs and impacts of research efforts that are supported by the activity.

3. **Assessment of Outcomes**: The proposal must address productivity, completion of original objectives and the relationship between projected goals and actual accomplishments. The proposal must include an assessment of the outcomes and/or impact of the previous project period. This assessment must include an evaluation of stakeholders' use of project outputs.

4. **Objectives**: The proposed objectives must reflect appropriate revision (e.g., evolution or building to greater depth, and/or capacity). All project revisions must reflect ongoing, new, or emerging stakeholder needs. Renewals will be judged as to the degree to which project has been on task, on time, and within budget for the previous funding period.

5. **Management and Business Plan**: In general, NRSPs should expect a finite period of off-the-top funding. This is not a reflection of the quality of work being conducted or the research being supported by the project. Rather, this allows the SAES system to continually assess needs and develop new projects as necessary. For this reason, the business plan of project renewals *must* include a transition plan and provisions for developing alternative funding or reducing off-the-top funding to a minimal level. Included would be an assessment of transition options, and/or alternative funding sources.

   However, not all projects may be shifted to other funding sources. Projects seeking to continue with significant amount of off the top funding should fully justify the request.

   The renewal application should include a critical assessment of the original plan and address any shortcomings to ensure that the project will function more smoothly or effectively in the future. The proposal must indicate what additional resources have been generated or leveraged and indicate how those and any additional resources will be continued or sought. *NOTE: Not all projects can be transitioned to other funding sources and, if the project meets an ESCOP priority, the project may continue with off-the-top funding.*

6. **Integration and Documentation of Research Support**: The business plan must indicate the diversity of partners involved in the project and the multiple sources of leveraged funding. The renewal proposal should indicate any new partnerships built during the project period. The renewal proposal should address the degree to which the full team is engaged in project planning and implementation and discuss plans to complement any weaknesses that may have been identified.

   In addition, the renewal proposal should contain a description of how research activities nationwide will be supported by the project.

7. **Outreach and Communications**: The renewal proposal should assess the success of the project's outreach and communications plan and indicate any steps to be taken to improve effectiveness. A clear description of impacts resulting from the project is required.

8. **Budget**: The renewal proposal must present an annual budget for each of the five years (See Appendix H). The budget must take into account all sources of funds (Multistate Research Funds, industry, federal agencies, grants and contracts, and SAESs). There are two tables in Appendix H, one for MRF and one for Other Sources. For the SAESs, the project should estimate the in- cash and in-kind contributions. The budget narrative should provide an estimate of the percent contribution from each funding source.

VII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL TIMELINES FOR NEW NRSPs OR RENEWAL OF AN EXISTING NRSP

(Also, refer to Appendix A1 for the NRSP Calendar for New NRSP Projects, Appendix A2 for the NRSP Calendar for Renewal of NRSP Projects, and Appendix A3 for the NRSP Calendar for Continuing NRSP Projects)

A. New NRSP Development

Not Later than September 1. Individuals interested in creating a new NRSP are required to submit an outline of the proposed NRSP's objectives, justification, and tentative budget to the NRSP Review Committee for a preliminary review no later than September 1 of the year prior to the proposed start date, for example, September 1, 2010 for a start date of October 1, 2011. If this review is positive then the following steps should be followed to formally submit a proposal for consideration by the ESS:

Note: Transmission of materials to the Regional Executive Directors throughout this process implies subsequent transmission to members of corresponding regional associations for consideration by their multi-state review committee.

1. Sponsoring SAES Director(s) submits a request to establish a regional development committee to one of the Executive Directors following that region's standard process for initiating new multistate activities.
2. Sponsoring regional association assigns lead Administrative Advisor and solicits names of co-advisors from other Executive Directors. Sponsoring regional association follows the normal process for approving the establishment of a development committee and soliciting additional participants.
3. NRSP development committee membership, in consultation with Administrative Advisors, prepares initial project proposal, including projected five-year budget.
4. Administrative Advisors submit the project proposal and projected five-year budget, and arranges for at least three external peer reviews of the proposal. Peer reviewers should be instructed to use the peer review form shown in Appendix E. The Administrative Advisors work with the NRSP development committee to revise the proposal and budget based on the peer review comments.

Not later than January 15. Administrative Advisors submit revised proposal and five-year budget, along with peer review comments and the committee's responses, to the NRSP Review Committee Chair. NRSP Review Committee Chair reviews package for completeness and then forwards it to the regional Executive Directors.

February—April. Appropriate regional committees review the project proposal and projected five-year budget using the review form shown in Appendix E and report to AES Directors at their spring regional association meeting. The sponsoring Executive Director transmits comments and/or concerns along with a summary of the review form results to the assigned Administrative Advisors and NRSP Review Committee.

April. NRSP Development Committee addresses any comments and/or concerns received from the regional association spring meetings and finalize the proposal in NIMSS for submission to the NRSP Review Committee.

June. NRSP Review Committee meets and prepares preliminary recommendation relative to project proposal. The preliminary recommendation is transmitted to the regional Executive Directors.

July.   The NRSP Review Committee recommendations are shared with and reviewed by the regional associations. The Review Committee also reports preliminary recommendations to ESCOP.

August. NRSP Review Committee finalizes recommendations that will be presented at the annual ESS meeting.

September.   The NRSP Review Committee reports at the ESS annual meeting on the final project proposal and projected budget, and its recommendation. SAES Directors vote (one vote per institution contributing off-the-top funding) on approval of the project and five-year budget. A simple majority vote is required to overturn the NRSP Review Committee recommendation.

October 1. Approved NRSP starts five-year cycle with five-year budget approved.

B. During Project Term (Years 2-4)
(Also refer to Appendix A3 for the Calendar for Continuing NRSP Projects)

Annually. NRSP Committee holds an annual meeting and subsequently submits an annual report (see below) in NIMSS using the SAES-422 form within 90 days of the annual meeting. Note that a midterm progress report is needed in year three as described below.

If a change in the annual budget from the approved five-year budget is requested, a detailed justification must be submitted to the NRSP Review Committee and regional Executive Directors for consideration by the regional associations.

October—November (Year 2): NRSP Mid-Term review forms are assigned via email to NRSP AAs. AAs review project activities and accomplishments and email completed midterm review form to the NRSP-RC by January 15. The AA review should be a combined effort between all four NRSP AAs. Only one form is required per project.

February 28 (Year 3): NRSP AA midterm review forms due to NRSP-RC. The NRSP-RC reviews these forms and conducts their own evaluations prior to their June meeting/teleconference.

February—April. Regional associations review budget requests for new projects and any alteration to existing project budgets during spring meetings and transmit comments to the NRSP Review Committee.

April—September.   The NRSP Review Committee interacts with NRSP Administrative Advisors and NIFA to determine and recommend any budget changes for the next year to the ESS.

The NRSP Review Committee meets in person or via teleconference in June to discuss proposed budgets and feedback from regional associations. The budget recommendations are forwarded to the regional Executive Directors and each NRSP Administrative Adviser.

September.   The NRSP Review Committee reports at the ESS annual meeting on the final project proposals with projected budgets, project midterm reviews, and its recommendations. SAES Directors vote (one vote per institution contributing off-the-top funding) on approval of the project and its five-year budget. A simple majority vote is required to overturn the NRSP Review Committee recommendation.

October 1. NRSPs continue.

C. Renewal of an Existing NRSP

Year 4. NIFA and the NRSP Review Committee jointly arrange for peer review of the NRSP that is due to terminate at the end of year five. The review organizer consults with the NRSP Review Committee and NRSP Administrative Advisors regarding review protocol, charge, etc.

Year 5.

September—December. External peer review team conducts review of past four years progress and provides feedback to the NRSP project on a draft renewal proposal. The peer review team should use the peer review form shown in Appendix E to guide review of the draft renewal proposal.

December. NRSP Committee completes proposal based on external review comments.

No Later than January 15. Renewal proposal, budget, and external peer review responses are sent to the NRSP Review Committee Chair. NRSP Review Committee Chair reviews package for completeness and then forwards it to the regional Executive Directors.

February—April. Appropriate regional committees review the renewal proposal using the review form shown in Appendix E. Regional associations discuss renewal proposal and budget at their spring meetings and each regional Executive Director transmits comments and/or concerns along with a summary of the review form results to the Administrative Advisors and the NRSP Review Committee.

April—May. NRSP Review Committee addresses any comments and/or concerns identified through renewal proposal reviews and/or budget revisions and/or separate responses.

June. The NRSP Review Committee meets in person or via teleconference to discuss the project proposal, budget, and feedback from regional associations. The project proposal and budget recommendations are forwarded to the regional Executive Directors and each NRSP Administrative Adviser. If desired, the final recommendations can be discussed at the summer regional association meetings.

September. The NRSP Review Committee reports at the ESS annual meeting on the final project proposal and budget, and its recommendation. SAES Directors vote (one vote per contributing institution) on approval of the project and five-year budget. A simple majority vote is required to overturn the NRSP Review Committee recommendation.

October 1. NRSP approved for renewal starts five-year cycle with five year budget approved. A NRSP not approved for renewal receives a one-year project approval, with a budget equal to the previous year's budget, to transition off NRSP funding to other sources or downsize the project.

VIII. ANNUAL REPORT OF AN NRSP

Annually each NRSP will prepare a State Agricultural Experiment Station 422 Report (SAES-422) and include the following information:

1. Stakeholders: A description of the interaction and engagement with the stakeholders during the past year and brief description of plans for next year.

2. Activities, Accomplishments, and Impacts: A description of the activities (i.e., meetings, etc.), accomplishments (i.e., publications, information sharing, etc.), and impacts (i.e., demonstration of adoption of new techniques, advancement in sharing information, change is stakeholders' techniques, knowledge, or action, etc.) for the past year and a brief description of plans for next year.

3. Communication Plan: A description of the implementation of the Communication Plan as stated in the proposal and a brief description of plans for next year.

4. Research Support activities: Describe how project contributes to and supports related research programs nationwide.

VIII. REVISION OF GUIDELINES

These guidelines will be modified using the following process:

1. Periodically, the guidelines will be reviewed by the NRSP Review Committee. Proposed changes will be drafted by the Committee and incorporated into this document.

2. The proposed changes will be submitted to ESCOP for review, editing, and approval.

3. Changes will be presented to the ESS for approval by a simple majority vote at the annual meeting.

APPENDIX A1 - NRSP CALENDAR FOR NEW NRSP PROJECTS

Not Later than September 1 of the Year Prior to the Proposed Start Date
• Regional association or NRSP Review Committee recommends development of new project as NRSPs and notifies NIFA (and NRSP Review Committee if they are not already aware). • Potential NRSP committee is created through a regional association development committee.

Not Later than January 15
Administrative Advisors submit NRSP proposal and five-year budget, along with peer review comments from review form in Appendix E and the committee's responses, to the NRSP Review Committee Chair via NIMSS.

February-April
Appropriate regional committees review the project proposal and projected five-year budget using review form in Appendix E and report to AES Directors at their Spring regional association meeting.

April-June
NRSP Development Committee addresses any comments and/or concerns received from the regional association spring meetings and finalize the proposal in NIMSS for submission to the NRSP Review Committee.

June
The NRSP Review Committee meets in person or via teleconference to discuss proposal and budgets and feedback from regional associations.

July 1
Final project proposal, projected five-year budget, and preliminary recommendation from the NRSP Review Committee are transmitted to the Executive Directors so all information can be shared with regional associations. The Review Committee also reports preliminary recommendations to ESCOP.

August 1
NRSP Review Committee finalizes recommendations that will be presented at the annual ESS meeting.

September
The NRSP Review Committee reports at the ESS annual meeting on the final project proposal and projected budget, and its recommendation. Directors vote on recommendations.

October 1
Approved NRSP starts five-year cycle with five-year budget approved.

APPENDIX A2 - NRSP CALENDAR FOR RENEWAL OF NRSP PROJECTS

September—December
External peer review of NRSP occurs.

December
NRSP Committee develops renewal proposal based on external review comments.

January 15
Administrative Advisors submit NRSP proposal and five-year budget, along with peer review comments from review form in Appendix E and the committee's responses, to the NRSP Review Committee Chair via NIMSS.

February—April
Appropriate regional committees review the project proposal and projected five-year budget using review form in Appendix E and report to AES Directors at their Spring regional association meeting.

April-June
NRSP Development Committee addresses any comments and/or concerns received from the regional association spring meetings and finalize the proposal in NIMSS for submission to the NRSP Review Committee.

June
The NRSP Review Committee meets in person or via teleconference to discuss proposal and budgets and feedback from regional associations.

July 1
Budget recommendations from the NRSP Review Committee are transmitted to the Executive Directors so all information can be shared with regional associations.

August 1
NRSP Review Committee finalizes recommendations that will be presented at the annual ESS meeting.

September
The NRSP Review Committee reports at the ESS annual meeting on the final project proposal and projected budget, and its recommendation. Directors vote on recommendations.

October 1
Approved NRSP starts five-year cycle with five-year budget approved. NRSP not approved for renewal receives one-year project approval, with a budget equal to the fifth year, to transition off NRSP funding to other sources or downsize project.

APPENDIX A3 - NRSP CALENDAR FOR CONTINUING NRSP PROJECTS

January 15
Annual budget and explanation only required if there are changes in the total annual budget from the approved 5-year budget.

February 28 (Year 3 only)
Administrative Advisors submit midterm review form to the NRSP-RC.

February-April
Appropriate regional committees review any alteration to existing project budgets and report to AES Directors at their Spring regional association meeting.

April-June
NRSP Development Committee addresses any comments and/or concerns received from the regional association spring meetings and finalize the budget for submission to the NRSP Review Committee.

June
The NRSP Review Committee meets in person or via teleconference to discuss any proposed budget changes and feedback from regional associations.

July 1
Budget recommendations from the NRSP Review Committee are transmitted to the Executive Directors so all information can be shared with regional associations.

August 1
NRSP Review Committee finalizes budget recommendations that will be presented at the annual ESS meeting.

September
The NRSP Review Committee reports at the ESS annual meeting on the final project proposals with projected budgets, project midterm reviews, and its recommendations.

October 1
NRSPs continue.

APPENDIX B - CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING OR RENEWING A NATIONAL RESEARCH SUPPORT PROJECT

Established September 22, 2003

These criteria are based on the NRSP Guidelines adopted by the Experiment Station Section in January 2003. The Experiment Station Section adopted these specific criteria on September 22, 2003. The following statement defines the mission of the NRSP program:

MISSION OF NATIONAL RESEARCH SUPPORT PROJECTS
"The activity of an NRSP focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research. Ideally, an NRSP would facilitate a broad array of research activities. The primary purpose of NRSPs shall not be solely to conduct research as there are other available mechanisms for creating these types of projects including the multistate research projects and the National Research Project (NRP) options. Examples of NRSP activities might include collection of data that are widely used by other research groups and efforts; development of databases; or development of critical technologies."

Based on the mission of NRSPs, all proposals (new and renewals) will be evaluated using the following criteria (renewal of an NRSP must meet all of the criteria for a new NRSP in addition to the specific criteria identified for a renewal):

A. Prerequisite criteria for NRSPs

    1. **Mission**: All NRSPs must be consistent with the mission of an NRSP.

    2. **National Issue:**

        a. All NRSPs must involve a national issue, relevant to and of use by most, if not all regions. These projects draw on the best minds and resources within and outside the State Agricultural Experiment Station (SAES) system to address the issues. The proposal should discuss its support activities relative to other NRSPs.

        b. For renewals, proposals must demonstrate direct relationship in support of continuing national priority need(s). The renewal application builds on the previous project and provides a logical progression.

B. These are the criteria addressing the rationale for the NRSP.

    1. **(20 points) Priority Established by ESCOP/ESS:** Priority for funding will be given to NRSPs that address and support one or more of the national priority areas identified by ESCOP (see ESCOP Science and Technology Committee and Science Roadmap).

    2. **(20 points) Relevance to Stakeholders:**

        a. The proposal must identify stakeholders and indicate their involvement in project development, project activities, review and/or management plans. The proposal must indicate how the project meets primary and secondary stakeholder needs and indicate the relationship of the stakeholders with the research to be supported. The proposal must also include a mechanism for assessing stakeholder use of project outputs. Identify project outcomes that aide in development of or contribute to the discussion of public policy.

b. Renewing proposals must demonstrate continued need as evidenced by stakeholder use of outputs and impacts of research efforts that are supported by the activity.

C. Criteria for implementing the NRSP proposal

1. (15 points) Management and Business Plan:

a. Each NRSP should have a well-developed business plan that describes how the project will be managed and funded for a five-year period. This plan includes a management structure to adequately integrate the efforts of multiple participants. The plan should include provisions for linking multiple sources of funding and leveraging those sources with the limited off-the-top research funds. The plan should demonstrate that alternative funding sources have been explored. This plan should include efforts to bring in new agencies, organizations, industry, foundations, etc. to help address the issues and provide funding for the project. All project proposals must provide evidence of contributions from experiment stations across the nation beyond what is available through off-the-top funds.

b. The business plan for project renewals must include a funding plan including development of alternative funding for reducing off-the-top funding to a minimal level. Renewals will be judged as to the degree, to which the project has been on task, had an impact, on time and within budget for the previous funding period. The renewal application should include a critical assessment of the original plan and address any shortcomings to ensure that the project will function more smoothly or effectively in the future. The proposal must indicate what additional resources have been generated or leveraged and indicate how those and any additional resources will be continued or sought.

2. (15 points) Objectives and Projected Outcomes:

a. Objectives, milestones and deliverables should be described in sufficient detail such that progress can be measured. Indicate the prospects for meaningful impacts within the proposed duration of the project. The proposal must indicate what approaches will be used to assess outcomes including stakeholder use and how these assessments will be used in program planning.

b. For renewals, the proposal must address productivity, completion of original objectives and the relationship between projected goals and actual accomplishments. The proposal must include an assessment of the outcomes and/or impact of the previous project period. This assessment must include an evaluation of stakeholders' use of project outputs. The proposed objectives must reflect appropriate revision, e.g. evolution or building to greater depth, and/or capacity. All project revisions must incorporate stakeholder needs.

3. (15 points) Integration and Documentation of Research Support:

a. Projects should indicate how efforts are integrated with extension or academic programs and how results might be of use by other potential stakeholders.

b. For renewals, the proposal should indicate any new partnerships built during the project period. The proposal should address the degree to which the full team is engaged in project planning and implementation. Discuss plans to correct any weaknesses that may have been

identified.

c. Proposals should indicate specifically how the project will support research activities nationwide.

4. (15 points) Outreach, Communications and Assessment:

a. All projects must have a sound outreach, communications and assessment plan that seeks to communicate the programs goals, accomplishments and outcomes/impacts. The communication plan must detail how results will be transferred to researchers and other end users and contain the following elements:

i. Clear identification of the intended audience(s) of the NRSP. Since this is a Research Support Project, in most instances the primary beneficiary of the results will be other scientists. However, careful consideration should be given to other possible users of the information (such as consumers, producers, governmental agencies (local, state and federal), general public, etc.)

ii. Clear description of the engagement of stakeholders in the definition and/or conduct of the research support project.

iii. Thorough description of the methodology to measure the accomplishments and impacts of the National Research Support Project and effectiveness of the communication plan. Methods such as surveys, town meetings, conferences, analyses of reference data (e.g., citation index, etc.), and use of professional evaluators should be considered.

iv. Specific description for development of communication pieces describing the activities, accomplishments, and impacts of the NRSP. The communication pieces will be used with SAES/ARD directors, stakeholders and their organizations, funding sources and agencies, and congressional delegations.

v. Suggested mechanisms for distribution of the results of the research support project. Examples include sharing the results at annual meetings of stakeholders, providing material to the Budget and Advocacy Committee of the APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly and other appropriate committees within the SAES/ARD organization, and assisting NIFA is preparation of appropriate documents highlighting the impacts of the project.

b. For renewals, the proposal should assess the success of the project's outreach and communications plan and indicate any steps to be taken to improve effectiveness. A clear description of impacts resulting from the project is required.

APPENDIX C - NRSP PROPOSAL OUTLINE

Project Title: (140 characters):
Requested Duration:
Administrative Advisor:
NIFA Representative:

STATEMENT OF ISSUES AND JUSTIFICATION:

Prerequisite Criteria:
1. How is the NRSP consistent with the mission? *(8,000 characters)*

a. Mission: The activity of an NRSP focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research. Ideally, an NRSP would facilitate a broad array of research activities. The primary purpose of NRSPs shall not be solely to conduct research, as there are other available mechanisms for creating these types of projects including the multistate research projects and the National Research Project (NRP) options. Examples of NRSP activities might include collection of data that are widely used by other research groups and efforts; development of databases; or development of critical technologies."

2. How does this NRSP pertain as a national issue? *(10,000 characters)*

a. All NRSPs must involve a national issue, relevant to and of use by most, if not all regions. These projects draw on the best minds and resources within and outside the State Agricultural Experiment Station (SAES) system to address the issues. The proposal should discuss its support activities relative to other NRSPs.

b. For renewals, proposals must demonstrate direct relationship in support of continuing national priority need(s). The renewal application builds on the previous project and provides a logical progression.

Rationale:
1. Priority Established by ESCOP/ESS: Priority for funding will be given to NRSPs that address and support one or more of the national priority areas identified by ESCOP (see ESCOP Science and Technology Committee and Science Roadmap). *(8,000 characters)*

2. Relevance to stakeholders: *(8,000 characters)*

a. The proposal must identify stakeholders and indicate their involvement in project development, project activities, review and/or management plans. The proposal must indicate how the project meets primary and secondary stakeholder needs and indicate the relationship of the stakeholders with the research to be supported. The proposal must also include a mechanism for assessing stakeholder use of project outputs.

Identify project outcomes that aide in development of or contribute to the discussion of public policy.

b. For renewals, proposals must demonstrate continued need as evidenced by stakeholder use of outputs and impacts of research efforts that are supported by the activity.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. Objectives and Projected Outcomes: *(4,000 characters)*

    a. Objectives, milestones and deliverables should be described in sufficient detail such that progress can be measured. Indicate the prospects for meaningful impacts within the proposed duration of the project. The proposal must indicate what approaches will be used to assess outcomes including stakeholder use and how these assessments will be used in program planning.

    b. For renewals, the proposal must address productivity, completion of original objectives and the relationship between projected goals and actual accomplishments. The proposal must include an assessment of the outcomes and/or impact of the previous project period. This assessment must include an evaluation of stakeholders' use of project outputs. The proposed objectives must reflect appropriate revision, e.g. evolution or building to greater depth, and/or capacity. All project revisions must incorporate stakeholder needs.

2. Management, Budget, and Business Plan: *(16,000 characters)*

    a. Each NRSP must have a well-developed business plan that describes how the project will be managed and funded for a five-year period. This plan includes a management structure to adequately integrate the efforts of multiple participants. The plan should include provisions for linking multiple sources of funding and leveraging those sources with the limited off-the-top research funds. The plan should demonstrate that alternative funding sources have been explored. This plan should include efforts to bring in new agencies, organizations, industry, foundations, etc. to help address the issues and provide funding for the project. All project proposals must provide evidence of contributions from experiment stations across the nation beyond what is available through off-the-top funds.

    b. The business plan for project renewals must include a funding plan including development of alternative funding for reducing off-the-top funding to a minimal level. Renewals will be judged as to the degree, to which the project has been on task, had an impact, on time and within budget for the previous funding period. The renewal application should include a critical assessment of the original plan and address any shortcomings to ensure that the project will function more smoothly or effectively in the future. The proposal must indicate what additional resources have been generated or leveraged and indicate how those and any additional resources will be continued or sought.

    c. On approval by the NRSP RC and endorsement by the Experiment Station Section, a 5 year budget approval will be provided. This approval is contingent of satisfactory meeting requirements set forth in the midterm review section below.

    d. In the event that federal funds are reduced, NRSP budgets will be reduced by a similar percentage.

3. Integration and Documentation of Research Support: *(5,000 characters)*

    a. Projects should indicate how efforts are integrated with extension or academic programs and how results might be of use by other potential stakeholders.

    b. For renewals, the proposal should indicate any new partnerships built during the project period. The proposal should address the degree to which the full team is engaged in project planning and implementation. Discuss plans to correct any weaknesses that may have been identified.

c. Proposals should indicate specifically how the project will support research activities nationwide.

4. Outreach, Communications and Assessment: *(15,000 characters)*
a. All projects must have a sound outreach, communications and assessment plan that seeks to communicate the programs goals, accomplishments and outcomes/impacts. The communication plan must detail how results will be transferred to researchers and other end users and contain the following elements:

i. Clear identification of the intended audience(s) of the NRSP. Since this is a Research Support Project, in most instances the primary beneficiary of the results will be other scientists. However, careful consideration should be given to other possible users of the information [such as consumers, producers, governmental agencies (local, state and federal), general public, etc.].

ii. Clear description of the engagement of stakeholders in the definition and/or conduct of the research support project.

iii. Thorough description of the methodology to measure the accomplishments and impacts of the National Research Support Project and effectiveness of the communication plan. Methods such as surveys, town meetings, conferences, analyses of reference data (e.g., citation index, etc.), and use of professional evaluators should be considered.

iv. Specific description for development of communication pieces describing the activities, accomplishments, and impacts of the NRSP. The communication pieces will be used with SAES/ARD directors, stakeholders and their organizations, funding sources and agencies, and congressional delegations.

v. Suggested mechanisms for distribution of the results of the research support project. Examples include sharing the results at annual meetings of stakeholders, providing material to the Budget and Advocacy Committee of the APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly and other appropriate committees within the SAES/ARD organization, and assisting NIFA is preparation of appropriate documents highlighting the impacts of the project.

APPENDIX D - NRSP MIDTERM REVIEW , CRITERIA, AND FORM

The Administrative Advisor team for each NRSP shall conduct a midterm progress review during the third year of each project's funding cycle. The intent of this review is to assure that adequate progress toward meeting goals, objectives and funding obligations is being made. This review will cover the criteria set forth for initial approval of NRSPs modified below.

To aid in the review, year one and two annual reports and an interim progress report (year three) shall be considered.

The results of this review will be reported to the Regional Associations and to the Experiment Station Section at its Annual Meeting as an integral element of the five year budget approval and management plan for the NRSP Program

MISSION OF NATIONAL RESEARCH SUPPORT PROJECTS
The activity of an NRSP focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research. Ideally, an NRSP would facilitate a broad array of research activities. The primary purpose of NRSPs shall not be solely to conduct research as there are other available mechanisms for creating these types of projects including the multistate research projects and the National Research Project (NRP) options. Examples of NRSP activities might include collection of data that are widely used by other research groups and efforts; development of databases; or development of critical technologies.

A. **Relevance to National Issue**
   All NRSPs must address a national issue, relevant to and of use by most, if not all regions. These projects draw on the best minds and resources within and outside the State Agricultural Experiment Station (SAES) system to address the issues. The proposal should discuss its support activities relative to other NRSPs.

   During the midterm progress review, the project must continue to demonstrate direct relationship in support of continuing national priority need(s).
B. **Implementation**
   1. **Management and Business Plan**
      Each NRSP must have a well-developed business plan that describes how the project will be managed and funded for a five-year period. This plan includes a management structure to adequately integrate the efforts of multiple participants. The plan should include provisions for linking multiple sources of funding and leveraging those sources with the limited off-the-top research funds. The plan should demonstrate that alternative funding sources have been explored. This plan should include efforts to bring in new agencies, organizations, industry, foundations, etc. to help address the issues and provide funding for the project. All project proposals must provide evidence of contributions from experiment stations across the nation beyond what is available through off-the-top funds.

      The midterm review must reflect progress toward meeting funding expectations. Failure to do so may result is alterations to the off the top budget contribution provided by the SAES system.

   2. **Progress toward Objectives and Projected Outcomes:**
      a. Objectives, milestones and deliverables should be described in sufficient detail such that progress can be measured. Indicate the prospects for meaningful impacts within the

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proposed duration of the project. The proposal must indicate what approaches will be used to assess outcomes including stakeholder use and how these assessments will be used in program planning.

b. The midterm review must demonstrate productivity, progress toward original objectives and the relationship between projected goals, actual accomplishments and any impacts to date. As appropriate, this assessment must include an evaluation of stakeholders' use of project outputs to date.

3. **Integration and Documentation of Research Support:**
   a. Projects should indicate how efforts are integrated with extension or academic programs and how results might be of use by other potential stakeholders.
   b. Proposals should indicate specifically how the project will support research activities nationwide.
   c. The midterm review must address actual collaborations and any new partnerships built during the project period. The report should address the degree to which the full team is engaged in project planning and implementation. Discuss plans to correct any weaknesses that may have been identified.

4. **Outreach, Communications and Assessment:**
   a. All projects must have a sound outreach, communications and an assessment plan that seeks to communicate the programs goals, accomplishments and outcomes/impacts. The communication plan must detail how results will be transferred to researchers and other end users and contain the following elements:
      i. Clear identification of the intended audience(s) of the NRSP. Since this is a Research Support Project, in most instances the primary beneficiary of the results will be other scientists. However, careful consideration should be given to other possible users of the information (such as consumers, producers, governmental agencies (local, state and federal), general public, etc.)
      ii. Clear description of the engagement of stakeholders in the definition and/or conduct of the research support project.
      iii. Thorough description of the methodology to measure the accomplishments and impacts of the National Research Support Project and effectiveness of the communication plan. Methods such as surveys, town meetings, conferences, analyses of reference data (e.g., citation index, etc.), and use of professional evaluators should be considered.
      iv. Specific description for development of communication pieces describing the activities, accomplishments, and impacts of the NRSP. The communication pieces will be used with SAES/ARD directors, stakeholders and their organizations, funding sources and agencies, and congressional delegations.
      v. Suggested mechanisms for distribution of the results of the research support project. Examples include sharing the results at annual meetings of stakeholders, providing material to the Budget and Advocacy Committee of the APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly and other appropriate committees within the SAES/ARD organization, and assisting NIFA is preparation of appropriate documents highlighting the impacts of the project.
   b. The midterm report must assess the success of the project's outreach and communications plan and indicate any needed steps to be taken to improve effectiveness. A clear description of impacts resulting from the project is required.

C. Project Participation (NIMSS Appendix E)

D. LITERATURE CITED

E. BUDGET

The NRSP must present an annual budget for each of five years (See Appendix H). Information should be provided on funding from MRF and funding from other sources (i.e., industry, federal agencies, grants and contracts, and SAESs). **(Refer to Appendix H)**

NRSP Midterm Review Form

Project Number:

Dates Covered (list the 3-year period since last renewal/inception):

Reviewer Name:

According to the National Guidelines, all NRSP projects shall undergo a midterm progress review according to the following criteria:

Mission and Relevance:

1. **Mission:**

    The activity of an NRSP focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research. Ideally, an NRSP would facilitate a broad array of research activities. The primary purpose of NRSPs shall not be solely to conduct research, as there are other available mechanisms for creating these types of projects including the multistate research projects and the National Research Project (NRP) options. Examples of NRSP activities might include collection of data that are widely used by other research groups and efforts; development of databases; or development of critical technologies."

    Are the activities of this NRSP consistent with the mission of the NRSP program?

    Yes_____No_____

2. **(20 points) Relevance to National Issue:**

    All NRSPs must involve a national issue, relevant to and of use by most, if not all regions. These projects draw on the best minds and resources within and outside the State Agricultural Experiment Station (SAES) system to address the issues.

    Does this NRSP address a national issue?

    Yes_____No_____

Comments:

Total Points: _____ / 20

3. ***(20 points) Relevance to Stakeholders****:*

Is there evidence of stakeholder use of project outputs? **Yes_____No_____**

Are there project outcomes that aide in development of or contribute to the discussion of public policy? **Yes_____No_____**

If so, please describe:

Implementation of the NRSP:

1. *(15 points) Management and Business Plan:*

   Each NRSP must have a well-developed business plan that describes how the project will be managed and funded for a five-year period. This plan includes a management structure to adequately integrate the efforts of multiple participants. The plan should include provisions for linking multiple sources of funding and leveraging those sources with the limited off-the-top research funds. The plan should demonstrate that alternative funding sources have been sought. This plan should include efforts to bring in new agencies, organizations, industry, foundations, etc. to help address the issues and provide funding for the project. All project proposals must provide evidence of contributions from experiment stations across the nation beyond what is available through off-the-top funds.

   The midterm review must reflect progress toward meeting funding expectations. Failure to meet funding goals may result in alterations to the off the top budget contribution provided by the SAES system.

   Comments:

2. ***(15 points) Progress Toward Objectives and Projected Outcomes:***

    a. Objectives, milestones and deliverables should be described in sufficient detail such that progress can be measured.

    b. The midterm review of the project must demonstrate productivity, progress toward original objectives and the relationship between projected goals, actual accomplishments and any impacts to date. As appropriate, this assessment must include an evaluation of stakeholders' use of project outputs to date.

    Comments:

    Total points: _____/15

3. ***(15 points) Integration:***

    a.   Project proposals should indicate how efforts are integrated with extension or academic programs and how results might be of use by other potential stakeholders.

    b.   In the midterm review, the project must address actual collaborations and any new partnerships built during the project period. The report should address the degree to which the full team is engaged in project planning and implementation. Discuss plans to correct any weaknesses that may have been identified.

Comments:

Total points:_____/15

4. *(15 points) Outreach, Communications and Assessment:*

All project proposals must have a sound outreach, communications and an assessment plan that seek to communicate the program's goals, accomplishments and outcomes/impacts. The communication plan must detail how results will be transferred to researchers and other end users and contain the following elements:

a. Clear identification of the intended audience(s) of the NRSP. Since this is a Research Support Project, in most instances the primary beneficiary of the results will be other scientists. However, careful consideration should be given to other possible users of the information (such as consumers, producers, governmental agencies (local, state and federal), general public, etc.) **Yes_____No_____**

b. Clear description of the engagement of stakeholders in the definition and/or conduct of the research support project. **Yes_____No_____**

c. Thorough description of the methodology to measure the accomplishments and impacts of the National Research Support Project and effectiveness of the communication plan. Methods such as surveys, town meetings, conferences, analyses of reference data (e.g. citation index, etc.), and use of professional evaluators should be considered. **Yes_____No_____**

d. Specific description for development of communication pieces describing the activities, accomplishments, and impacts of the NRSP. The communication pieces will be used with SAES/ARD directors, stakeholders and their organizations, funding sources and agencies, and congressional delegations. **Yes_____No_____**

e. Suggested mechanisms for distribution of the results of the research support project. Examples include sharing the results at annual meetings of stakeholders, providing material to the Budget and Advocacy Committee of the APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly and other appropriate committees within the SAES/ARD organization, and assisting NIFA is preparation of appropriate documents highlighting the impacts of the project.

   The midterm review must demonstrate the extent to which the NRSP is working to effectively communicate project results to those who need them and their use by target audiences. **Yes_____No_____**

   Comments:

APPENDIX E - NRSP PROPOSAL PEER REVIEW FORM

The following statement defines the mission of the National Research Support Projects (NRSP's):
"The activity of an NRSP focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research."

Based on this mission statement, please rate the proposed NRSP using the following criteria.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Unacceptable
Mission:				
Consistency with the mission of an NRSP	____	____	____	____
Relevance:				
Addresses and supports a high priority national issue	____	____	____	____
Demonstrates clear/tangible benefit to the scientific community as a whole	____	____	____	____
Clearly identified sponsoring "stakeholders"/ beneficiaries	____	____	____	____
"Stakeholder" involvement in project development, project activities, review and/or management plans	____	____	____	____
Technical Merit:				
Overall technical merit (sound scientific approach, achievable objectives, appropriate scope of activity)	____	____	____	____
Potential for significant outputs (products) and outcomes and/or impacts	____	____	____	____
Implementation Plan:				

Benchmarks for success clearly identified   ____   ____   ____   ____

Management structure that adequately
coordinates efforts of multiple participants   ____   ____   ____   ____

Well developed business plan that links
multiple sources of funding and leverages
limited off-the-top research funds   ____   ____   ____   ____

Funding plan that develops of alternative
funding sources to reduce off-the-top
funding in future years   ____   ____   ____   ____

Efforts integrated with extension and/or
academic programs   ____   ____   ____   ____

Outreach, communications and assessment
plan that communicates the programs goals,
accomplishments and outcomes/impacts   ____   ____   ____   ____

Comments (Please add general and specific comments on strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, including specific revisions that would improve the proposal. Use as much space as needed for your comments.):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Recommendation: ___Approve   ___Approve with revision   ___Disapprove

APPENDIX F - NRSP PROPOSALS REGIONAL ASSOCIATION REVIEW FORM

The following statement defines the mission of the NRSP program:

MISSION OF NATIONAL RESEARCH SUPPORT PROJECTS

"The activity of an NRSP focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research. Ideally, an NRSP would facilitate a broad array of research activities. The primary purpose of NRSPs shall not be solely to conduct research as there are other available mechanisms for creating these types of projects including the multistate research projects and the National Research Project (NRP) options. Examples of NRSP activities might include collection of data that are widely used by other research groups and efforts; development of databases; or development of critical technologies."

Based on the mission of NRSPs, all proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

A. Prerequisite criteria for NRSPs:		Circle One:
1. Mission: Is the NRSP consistent with the mission of an NRSP?		**Yes / No**
2. National Issue:		
	1. All NRSPs must involve a national issue, relevant to and of use by most, if not all regions. These projects draw on the best minds and resources within and outside the State Agricultural Experiment Station (SAES) system to address the issues. The proposal should discuss its support activities relative to other NRSPs.	**Yes / No**
	2. For renewals, proposals must demonstrate direct relationship in support of continuing national priority need(s). The renewal application builds on the previous project and provides a logical progression.	**Yes / No**
Comments:		

B. These are the criteria addressing the rationale for the NRSP:		Total Points:
1. (20 points) Priority Established by ESCOP/ESS: Priority for funding will be given to NRSPs that address and support one or more of the national priority areas identified by ESCOP (see ESCOP Science and Technology Committee and Science Roadmap)		**___ / 20**
2. (20 points) Relevance to Stakeholders:		**___ / 20**
	a. The proposal must identify stakeholders and indicate their involvement in project development, project activities, review and/or management plans. The proposal must indicate how the project meets primary and secondary stakeholder needs and indicate the relationship of the stakeholders with the research to be supported. The proposal must also include a mechanism for assessing stakeholder use of project outputs. Identify project outcomes that aide in development of or contribute to the discussion of public policy. **b.** For renewals, proposals must demonstrate continued need as evidenced by stakeholder use of outputs and impacts of research efforts that are supported by the activity.	
Comments:		

C. Criteria for implementing the NRSP proposal	Total Points:
1. (15 points) Management, Budget and Business Plan:	**___ / 15**
a. Each NRSP should have a well-developed business plan that describes how the project will be managed and funded for a five-year period. This plan includes a management structure to adequately integrate the efforts of multiple participants. The plan should include provisions for linking multiple sources of funding and leveraging those sources with the limited off-the-top research funds. The plan should demonstrate that alternative funding sources have been explored. This plan should include efforts to bring in new agencies, organizations, industry, foundations, etc. to help address the issues and provide funding for the project. All project proposals must provide evidence of contributions from experiment stations across the nation beyond what is available through off-the-top funds. **b.** The business plan for project renewals must include a funding plan including development of alternative funding for reducing off-the-top funding to a minimal level. Renewals will be judged as to the degree to which the project has been on task, had an impact, on time and within budget for the previous funding period. The renewal application should include a critical assessment of the original plan and address any shortcomings to ensure that the project will function more smoothly or effectively in the future. The proposal must indicate what additional resources have been generated or leveraged and indicate how those and any additional resources will be continued or sought.	
2. (15 points) Objectives and Projected Outcomes:	**___ / 15**
a. Objectives, milestones and deliverables should be described in sufficient detail such that progress can be measured. Indicate the prospects for meaningful impacts within the proposed duration of the project. The proposal must indicate what approaches will be used to assess outcomes including stakeholder use and how these assessments will be used in program planning. **b.** For renewals, the proposal must address productivity, completion of original objectives and the relationship between projected goals and actual accomplishments. The proposal must include an assessment of the outcomes and/or impact of the previous project period. This assessment must include an evaluation of stakeholders' use of project outputs. The proposed objectives must reflect appropriate revision, e.g. evolution or building to greater depth, and/or capacity. All project revisions must incorporate stakeholder needs.	
3. (15 points) Integration and Documentation of Research Support:	**___ / 15**
a. Projects should indicate how efforts are integrated with extension or academic programs and how results might be of use by other potential stakeholders. **b.** For renewals, the proposal should indicate any new partnerships built during the project period. The proposal should address the degree to which the full team is engaged in project planning and implementation. Discuss plans to correct any weaknesses that may have been identified. c. Proposals should indicate specifically how the project will support research activities nationwide.	

4. (15 points) Outreach, Communications and Assessment:			___ / 15
	a. All projects must have a sound outreach, communications and assessment plan that seeks to communicate the programs goals, accomplishments and outcomes/impacts. The communication plan must detail how results will be transferred to researchers and other end users and contain the following elements:		
		i) Clear identification of the intended audience(s) of the NRSP. Since this is a Research Support Project, in most instances the primary beneficiary of the results will be other scientists. However, careful consideration should be given to other possible users of the information (such as consumers, producers, governmental agencies (local, state and federal), general public, etc.)	**Yes / No**
		ii) Clear description of the engagement of stakeholders in the definition and/or conduct of the research support project.	**Yes / No**
		iii) Thorough description of the methodology to measure the accomplishments and impacts of the National Research Support Project and effectiveness of the communication plan. Methods such as surveys, town meetings, conferences, analyses of reference data (e.g. citation index, etc.), and use of professional evaluators should be considered.	**Yes / No**
		iv) Specific description for development of communication pieces describing the activities, accomplishments, and impacts of the NRSP. The communication pieces will be used with SAES/ARD directors, stakeholders and their organizations, funding sources and agencies, and congressional delegations.	**Yes / No**
		v) Suggested mechanisms for distribution of the results of the research support project. Examples include sharing the results at annual meetings of stakeholders, providing material to the Budget and Advocacy Committee of the APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly and other appropriate committees within the SAES/ARD organization, and assisting NIFA is NIFA preparation of appropriate documents highlighting the impacts of the project.	**Yes / No**
	b. For renewals, the proposal should assess the success of the project's outreach and communications plan and indicate any steps to be taken to improve effectiveness. A clear description of impacts resulting from the project is required.		
Comments:			

Total Points	___ /100

APPENDIX G - FORMAT FOR REPORTING PROJECTED PARTICIPATION (NIMSS APPENDIX E)

For each participant in this activity, include his/her name and e-mail address, employing institution/agency, and department; plus, as applicable:

- For research commitment, indicate the classifications [Knowledge Area (KA), Subject(s) of Investigation (SOI), and Field of Science (FOS)], and estimates of time commitment (FTE) by Scientists Years (SY) (not less than 0.1 SY), Professional Years (PY), and Technical Years (TY);
- For extension commitment, indicate FTE and one or more of the seven extension programs (http://daisy.uvm.edu/cris/kacs.htm); and,
- Objective(s) under which the each participant will conduct their studies.

Project or Activity Designation and Number (if applicable): _____
Project or Activity Title: _____
Administrative Advisor: _____

Participant Name and E-Mail Address	Institution and Department	Research						Extension		Project Objectives				
		Classification Codes			Personnel									
		KA	SOI	FOS	SY	PY	TY	FTE	National Program	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX H - NRSP BUDGET REQUESTS SUMMARY

Project Number and Title

DESCRIPTION	MRF FUNDING									
	Proposed FY (year 1)		Proposed FY (year 2)		Proposed FY (year 3)		Proposed FY (year 4)		Proposed FY (year 5)	
	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE
SALARIES										
FRINGE BENEFITS										
WAGES										
TRAVEL										
SUPPLIES										
MAINTENANCE										
EQUIPMENT/ CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT										
TOTAL										

OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

Please check one of the following: Industry   Federal Agencies   Grants/Contracts   SAESs

Other (please list): _____

DESCRIPTION	Proposed FY (year 1)		Proposed FY (year 2)		Proposed FY (year 3)		Proposed FY (year 4)		Proposed FY (year 5)	
	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE
SALARIES										
FRINGE BENEFITS										
WAGES										
TRAVEL										
SUPPLIES										
MAINTENANCE										
EQUIPMENT/ CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT										
TOTAL										