

Notice of Funding Opportunity: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-SOILS-21-NOFO0001107
2021 Soil Science Collaborative Research Proposals
Questions and Answers – As of 05/15/2021

Question 1. The NFO reads, "Eligibility is limited to institutions of higher education in the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) network (<http://www.cesu.psu.edu/>)." However, is it possible for co-PIs to be from non-CESU NGOs as long as the PI at the submitting institution is at a CESU network institution? In other words, can co-PIs be outside the CESU network?

Answer 1. Yes, the applicant institution (and PI) must be part of the CESU network, but co-PIs can be outside the CESU network.

Question 2. Can you please provide information about the possible applicability of Grant opportunity USDA-NRCS-NHQ-SOILS-21-NOFO0001107 to the project that we are undertaking?

Answer 2. Applicants must self-determine the applicability of their project using the NFO criteria. The agency will not make applicability determination prior to application review.

Question 3. I'm wondering if a Federal Agency (not NRCS) and NRCS would have to have a separate agreement to allow for the cooperative agreement funds to be utilized by an applicant who incorporated the non-NRCS Federal Agency into their proposal?

Answer 3. If an application incorporating involvement of a Federal Agency (not NRCS) was selected, the award structure would depend on the nature of the proposal and the structure of the project.

Question 4. I have a PI interested in responding to this opportunity and I wanted to be sure my entity was eligible to apply. We are a member of a CESU network, and we are a non-profit 501(c)3 research institution that is part of a public university system.

Answer 4. Per Section C. 1. of the NFO, the applicant's entity type will be the basis of eligibility. When deciding whether and how to apply, applicants must self-determine their eligibility using the NFO criteria. The agency will not make eligibility determination prior to application review.

Question 5. Based on the RFP, multi-state multi-institute collaboration is encouraged. For the NCSS cooperators, who is eligible?

Answer 5. Eligibility criteria are stated in section C.1. of the NFO.

Question 6. As my university is in the Western region, shall we only collaborate with universities in the region?

Answer 6. As you noted, the NFO encourages multiple NCSS cooperators (i.e., a multi-state project) – it does not restrict cooperation to regions.

Question 7. Collaboration between the NRCS Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD) and university cooperators is emphasized. Is there certain big-picture budget fraction we need to consider for the NRCS collaborators?

Answer 7. NRCS collaborators do not need to be budgeted.