

funded will depend on the quality of proposals received and the amount of funding requested. A proposal may be partially funded or funded in its entirety. The maximum amount of Federal funds through this grant initiative awarded for any one proposal will be \$50,000.

Selection Criteria

The proposal will initially be reviewed to determine whether the entity submitting the proposal meets the eligibility requirements and whether the proposal application contains the information required. After this initial evaluation, the following criteria will be used to rate and rank proposals received in response to this notice of funding availability. Failure to address any one of the criteria will disqualify the proposal. Equal weight shall be given to each of the criterion listed below and points will be awarded to each criterion on a scale of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. A score of 5 indicates that the proposal was judged to be highly relevant to the criterion and a score of 1 indicates that the proposal was judged not to sufficiently address the criterion.

Each proposal will be evaluated and judged using the following criteria:

1. Potential Industry Impact—Describe the proposed project and demonstrate how it will stimulate the U.S. sheep or goat industries. Provide a detailed analysis of the sheep or goat industry issue that is being addressed by the proposal by including the:

(a) Product or group that will be impacted by the proposal;
(b) Geographic area affected;
(c) Target audience or end user; and
(d) Expected results. The NSIIC will evaluate whether the industry issue and need are well-defined and the proposed project provides an effective and efficient approach to resolving the identified need.

2. Industry Commitment—Describe the commitment of the producers, processor, end-users or other involved parties in participating in the proposed project. This may include, but is not limited to, individual producers, producer groups, processors, seminar participants, local organizations, local or state governments or trade associations. The NSIIC will evaluate whether there is a commitment from all who are expected to participate and benefit from the proposed project.

3. Business Soundness—Provide a timetable and objectives along with a quantifiable benchmark and expected results. The NSIIC will evaluate whether the proposal includes (a) a clear objective; (b) well-defined tasks that will accomplish the objectives; (c)

realistic benchmarks; and (d) a realistic timetable for the completion of the proposed tasks and whether a business strategy had been adequately developed?

4. Financial Feasibility—Provide a well-defined budget for the proposal. The NSIIC will evaluate whether the funding requirements and budget for the project are well defined and financially feasible and the matching funds or other resources that will be used to leverage the requested funds in the proposal are identified.

5. Management Ability—Identify the management team needed to complete the proposal objectives and describe their qualifications. The NSIIC will evaluate whether the management team is identified and capable of implementing the proposal.

Selection Process

The Board of Directors of the NSIIC will evaluate proposal applications. Applications will be evaluated competitively and points awarded as specified in the Selection Criteria section of this notice. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to eligible entities. A proposal may be partially funded. After assigning points based upon the selection criteria, applications will be funded in rank order until all available funds have been expended. The Board of Directors reserves the right to award up to five additional points in order to provide a diversity of projects targeting various (1) situations, (2) geographic areas, or subjects, or for proposals with over 50 percent in matching funds. Projects that are approved for further processing will be subject to the grant terms that are negotiated between the applicant and the Board of Directors including, but not limited to, the amount to be funded, project goals, timetables, completion date or other terms as deemed necessary.

Proposal Submission

All proposals, except for forms, are to be submitted on standard 8.5" x 11" paper with typing on one side of the page only. In addition, margins must be at least 1", type must be 12 characters per inch (12 pitch or 10 point) or larger, no more than 6 lines per inch, and there should be no page reductions.

Content of a Proposal

A proposal should contain the following:

1. Form SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance."
2. Form SF-424A, "Budget Information-Non Construction Programs."

3. Form SF-424B, "Assurances-Non Construction Programs."

4. Table of Contents—For ease of locating information, each proposal must contain a detailed Table of Contents immediately following the required forms. The Table of Contents should include page numbers for each component of the proposal. Page numbering should begin immediately following the Table of Contents.

5. Project Summary: The proposal must contain a project summary of 1 page or less on a separate page. This page must include the title of the project and the names of the primary project contacts and the applicant organization, followed by the summary. The summary should be self-contained and should describe the overall goals and relevance of the project. The summary should also contain a listing of all organizations involved in the project. The Project Summary should immediately follow the Table of Contents.

6. Project Narrative: The narrative portion of the Project Proposal is limited to 10 pages of text and should contain the following:

a. Introduction. A clear statement of the goals and objectives of the project. The problem should be set in context of the present-day situation. Summarize the body of knowledge which substantiates the need for the proposed project.

b. Rationale and Significance. Substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe the impact of the project on the U.S. sheep or goat industry. Describe the project's specific relationship to the segment of sheep or goat industry issue, product or market being addressed.

c. Objectives and Approach. Discuss the specific objectives to be accomplished under the project. A detailed description of the approach must include:

(i) Techniques or procedures used to carry out the proposed activities and for accomplishing the objectives; and
(ii) The results expected.

d. Timetable. Tentative schedule for conducting the major steps of the project.

e. Evaluation. Provide a plan for assessing and evaluating the accomplishments of the stated objectives during the project and describe ways to determine the effectiveness (impact) of the end results upon conclusion of the project. Awardees will be required to submit written project performance reports on a semi-annual basis.

f. Coordination and Management Plan. Describe how the project will be coordinated among various participants