

Appendix A - State Plan Format

The State plan should include the following sections for each project with the exception of the cover page and granting processes which only needs to be included once at the beginning of the State plan.

FORMAT: In order to make the State plan easier to review, each project should be outlined together. For example, Project 1 should include a section for project title and abstract, project purpose, potential impact, expected measurable outcomes, work plan, etc. and then project two should include a section for project title and abstract, project purpose, potential impact, etc. The style of presentation and length may vary, depending on the nature of the project(s) and the requirements of the State agency submitting the proposal. The acceptable font size for the narrative is 11 or 12 pitch and all margins at 1 inch.

Cover Page and Granting Processes – The following information should be included in this section. The recommended length of this section is ½ pages. This section only needs to be included once at the beginning of the State plan.

Project Coordinator: This is the person directly responsible for administering the State plan.

Organization: This is the State plan administrator’s organization.

Outreach Plan: Provide a description of the affirmative steps taken to conduct outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers and beginning farmers of specialty crops. Also, describe how outreach was conducted to identify funding priority needs, including any focus on multi-state projects, in enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops. The description should include:

- Methods used for identifying these groups.
- Methods used to reach out to them.
- Identification by project title if an award was made to either a socially disadvantaged or beginning farmer
- Steps taken to conduct outreach to specialty crop stakeholders to receive and consider public comment to identify state funding priority needs in enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops. We encourage you to provide your identified priority needs.
- If outreach was not performed to these groups, explain why not.

Competitive Process: Provide a description of the affirmative steps taken to conduct a competitive grant process. The recommended length of this section is ½ pages. The description should include:

- Methods used to solicit proposals that meet specialty crop stakeholder’s needs, including any focus on multi-state projects. State departments of agriculture may also provide a copy of the request for proposals.
- How many grant proposals were received?
- Process used to review proposals in a fair and equitable manner.

- How were members on the review panel selected to ensure they were free from conflicts of interest (i.e. they are not reviewing and scoring their own grant applications or reviewing an affiliated organization's grant application)?
- How were members selected to ensure that the review panel consisted of a community of experts in given fields, who were qualified and able to perform impartial reviews? What fields were the members from?
- Were review results of the peer review panel given to the grant applicants ensuring the confidentiality of the review panel members?

If a competitive grant process was not used, provide a justification why not.

Project Title and Abstract – The following information should be included in this section:

Project Title: The title should adequately describe the project.

Abstract: Include a project abstract of 200 words or less. The project abstract must contain a summary of the proposed project suitable for dissemination to the public. It should be a self-contained description of the project and should contain a statement of objectives and methods to be employed.

Partner Organization - Include the partner organization's name that plans to oversee the project.

Project Purpose – The following questions should be addressed in this section:

- What is the specific issue, problem or need to be addressed by the project?
- Why is the project important and timely?
- What are the objectives of the project?
- If the project is a state marketing program, how will the State ensure that funding is being used to solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops? (Ex: using the registration process for a conference to ensure that only specialty crop farmers attend; matching 50% of the funds to cover a portion of the project that does not benefit specialty crops)
- If the project builds on a previously approved project, how does this project compliment work done previously? Provide a summary (3 to 5 sentences per project) of the results of the completed work on this project, the long-term quantifiable effects of these results (especially as they impact on the specialty crop industry), and how this year's funding will supplement or build on previous funding from the SCBGP or SCBGP-FB .
- Has the project been submitted to or funded by another Federal or State grant program? Does the project duplicate efforts of the SCBGP-FB and the other Federal or State grant program? If it does not, how does it supplement funding efforts?

Example 1

The recent introduction of X virus has threatened specialty crop production; the virus has already caused enormous crop losses in many States (PROBLEM). This research proposal will assess the likely spread of the virus from the initial introduction point and will identify plant reservoir hosts for the disease to form the basis for an integrated pest management strategy to prevent further crop losses (IMPORTANCE and OBJECTIVE). This project was submitted to grant program X to provide one-half salary for the Senior Research Specialist. This individual will coordinate most of the laboratory operations and perform a majority of the laboratory and greenhouse experiments. This project will not duplicate efforts, but rather enhances the program by providing additional dollars to elevate the part-time position to full time status.

Example 2

Many school children do not have access to healthy fruits and vegetables (ISSUE). The School Nutrition Association will subsidize installation of salad bars in forty schools to increase access to nutritious fruits, vegetables and nuts in school breakfasts and lunches (OBJECTIVE). Not only will this result in increased purchases from specialty crop growers, but the evaluation component also will provide a model for other schools in their efforts to market healthy meals to children (IMPORTANCE). This project has not been submitted or funded by another Federal or State grant program.

Example 3

This project would establish a crisis communication plan for the fruit and vegetable industry (OBJECTIVE) in case of emergency such as extreme drought (IMPORTANCE). The previous year's grant funds were used to complete Phase 1 which comprised of research and an audit of the fruit and vegetable industry and created recommendations for handling a crisis. Phase 2 continues the project by implementing and disseminating these recommendations throughout the State (SHOWS HOW PROJECT COMPLIMENTS PREVIOUS WORK). This project has not been submitted or funded by another Federal or State grant program.

Example 4

The State will partner with a production team to create a suite of six television and radio public service announcements to introduce and promote locally produced specialty crops (OBJECTIVE) thereby changing the purchasing behavior of consumers and retailers to "buy local" (NEED). This project is a State marketing program. The State will only promote eligible specialty crops (may include comprehensive list of eligible specialty crops) and will not use grant funds to generically cross-market other commodities which fall under state marketing programs but are outside the scope of the specialty crop definition (STATE MARKETING PROGRAM). This project has not been submitted or funded by another Federal or State grant program.

Potential Impact - This section should show how the project potentially impacts the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. The following questions should be answered:

- Who are the beneficiaries of the project?
- How many beneficiaries will be impacted?
- How will the beneficiaries be impacted by the project?
- What is the potential economic impact of the project if available?

Example 1

This project will impact the State's approximately 3000 farms involved in growing the specialty crops (BENEFICIARIES IMPACTED AND #'s). These crops represent approximately \$1 billion in farm income and are the largest crop in the State (ECONOMIC IMPACT). In order to continue the growth this industry has experienced in recent years, this project will develop and conduct marketing efforts to increase their market share (HOW BENEFICIARIES WILL BE IMPACTED).

Example 2

Existing and new specialty crop growers taking part in the grower education will receive an extensive education on many aspects of participating in specialty crop production and direct retail marketing (BENEFICIARIES). It is estimated that the number of specialty crop growers that will be participating in the educational workshops is 50 (# OF BENEFICIARIES). Through grower education, farmers will be exposed to information on how to grow crops and successfully sell their produce at direct-to-consumer markets (HOW BENEFICIARIES WILL BE IMPACTED).

Example 3

In 2008, according to USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the State's specialty crop industry occupied 3100 acres and had a value for utilized production of \$20 million. This is evidence of the success and potential for this program. New specialty crop varieties being developed through this program will enable the State's 150 farmers (# OF BENEFICIARIES) to be competitive in growing and marketing these specialty crops (HOW BENEFICIARIES WILL BE IMPACTED). These new crops could provide \$10 - \$15 million in additional farm income (POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT).

Expected Measurable Outcomes – The following questions should be answered in this section.

- What is at least one distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcome that directly and meaningfully supports the project's purpose and is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries? The measurable outcome, when possible, should include the following:

- GOAL
 - PERFORMANCE MEASURE
 - BENCHMARK
 - TARGET
- How will performance toward meeting the outcome(s) be monitored?
 - Define who your data sources are
 - How will data be collected
 - If using a survey, provide information on the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used, and the population to be surveyed
 - If a draft questionnaire is available, you may want to include a copy with your application
 - How will data gathered be used to correct deficiencies and improve performance, both as it gathered and analyzed and in subsequent project periods?

Examples of outcome measures may include, but are not limited to: per capita consumption, consumer awareness as a percent of target market reached, market penetration based on sales by geographic region, dollar value of exports, or web site hits. For research grants they may include generation of new knowledge, research quality, attainment of leadership in the field, or the development of human resources (e.g., providing opportunities for graduate students).

Steps to Developing Outcome Measures

Whenever possible, the outcomes should include a goal, performance measure, benchmark, and a target. The following four steps provide guidance on how to develop outcome measures.

1) Determine what the project will accomplish, i.e., the intended results of the project, generally expressed as a GOAL or OBJECTIVE.

Goals or objectives should be: a) based on a needs analysis and be specific, realistic results you hope to achieve through the project activities; b) specific; and c) outcome-oriented. Outcome-oriented objectives identify the ultimate result, while the work plan activities identify how you intend to achieve the objectives. When developing outcome-oriented objectives, ask yourself “why” are you performing each grant activity; and specify not only what will be achieved, but also when those results will be achieved.

2) Figure out how to measure the results and select the PERFORMANCE MEASURE.

For each objective identified in step 1, select the performance measure. Performance measures are measures/indicators used to observe progress and measure actual results compared to expected results. They are usually expressed in quantifiable terms and should be objective and measurable (numeric values, percentages, scores and indices); although in certain circumstances qualitative measures are appropriate.

3) Determine the BENCHMARK for each measure and set TARGET goals for future performance.

For each measure identified in step 2, determine the benchmarks against which you will measure. Benchmarks are usually determined by researching past circumstances in the area you are trying to measure. As an alternative, you may use benchmarks established by third parties accepted as the standard-setters in your industry. If data does not exist, describe the lack of data. It may be appropriate in the first year to set vaguer targets, such as “improvement” where any increase represents outcome achievement, and set more concrete targets in subsequent years when benchmark data is available.

Use the benchmark data to set targets for the quantity of change expected. Targets may be framed in terms of:

- a) Absolute level of achievement (ex: feed 150 homeless people);
- b) Change in level of achievement (ex: feed 150 homeless people, 35 more than last year);
or
- c) Change in relation to the scale of the problem (ex: feed 150 homeless people, approximately 10% of the city’s homeless population.)

If you are starting up a new project or trying new approaches remember that little or no measurable progress will be evident in the project start-up phase. This delay in seeing measurable results should be reflected in target-setting. When setting targets, you should take into account external factors that influence your success. You may have a grand ultimate goal, but you should view annual targets as small steps toward that ultimate goal.

You may also want to set stretch goals by using benchmarks as your targets. Benchmarks tell you how the rest of the industry is doing; when you gather data for benchmarks, you look at the results of other organizations serving your type(s) of customers, doing your type of work. In your State plan, you may want to stick to a modest level of planned achievement and reserve your stretch goals for internal use. Another alternative is to include minimum and maximum targets in your application. For example, “We plan, at a minimum, for a 5% increase. However, we will strive for a 10% increase, which our data shows is possible if all external factors work in our favor and our new methodology yields the same results in the demonstration phase.”

4) Develop your performance monitoring plan or data collection plan.

Define who your data sources are and how the data will be collected. If the project involves a survey, provide some information about the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used and the population to be surveyed. If a draft questionnaire is available, you may want to include a copy with the application. Outline how data gathered will be used to correct deficiencies and improve performance, both as it gathered and analyzed and in subsequent project periods. This data collection plan should be integrated into your work plan and budget. Define who your data sources are and how the data will be collected. If the project involves a survey, provide some information about the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used and the population to be surveyed. If a draft questionnaire is available, you may want to include a copy with the application. Outline how data gathered will

be used to correct deficiencies and improve performance, both as it is gathered and analyzed and in subsequent project periods. This data collection plan should be integrated into your work plan and budget. When expected measurable outcomes are monitored outside the grant period, include the performance monitoring plan in the work plan and indicate how monitoring will occur after the grant period ends without Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funding.

Examples of Outcome Measures

The following are examples of outcome measures. They do not include examples of a performance monitoring plan.

Example 1

The GOAL of this project is to promote specialty crop X in Mexico in order to increase the volume.

Volume Increase:

BENCHMARK 2007: Actual volume (20# equiv. cases) of specialty crop exported to Mexico: 53, 969

TARGET 2008: 60,000

TARGET 2009: 70,000

TARGET 2010: 80,000

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Derive from specialty crop commission assessment reports at the end of each year.

Example 2

Increase the number of specialty crop farmers following Good Agricultural Practices (GOAL) from the current 18 (BENCHMARK) to 55 in two years (TARGET) measured by the number of GAP audits passed (PERFORMANCE MEASURE).

Example 3

Increase fruit and vegetable purchases (GOAL) from the current level of \$2.50 (BENCHMARK) to at least \$3 per enrolled student in awarded schools in one year (TARGET) measured by bi-annual school reports (PERFORMANCE MEASURE).

Example 4

Work directly with specialty crop industry X to develop a uniform tool to assess the health of their specialty crops to give the industry early warning of potential problems in order to optimize their management practices (GOAL). No such tool currently exists (BENCHMARK). The success of the evaluation will be measured by interviewing 20 stakeholders at the end of three years to determine if they developed the tool (TARGET and PERFORMANCE MEASURE).

Example 5

Develop a predictive model for the spread of the specialty crop disease, an analysis of virus resistant varieties, and a foundation for an integrated pest management (IPM) strategy to combat the disease (GOAL). No such model currently exists (BENCHMARK). The information will be shared with more than 700 tomato growers, increasing awareness of the model, at the 2008 conference break-out session (TARGET) measured by attendance at the session (PERFORMANCE MEASURE).

Example 6

Increase visits to the Specialty Crop Website (GOAL) 25% over the course of one year (TARGET) from the current 9,000 annual hits (BENCHMARK) by measuring website visits each month over the next year (PERFORMANCE MEASURE).

Example 7

Increase consumer awareness of specialty crops by distributing 1000 pieces of informational materials containing locations where to purchase specialty crops (GOAL). Six months after distribution, survey 50 locations (PERFORMANCE MEASURE) to determine if sales increased by 25% (TARGET) from the level before distribution of marketing materials (BENCHMARK).

Work Plan – The following information should be included in this section.

- Identify the activities necessary to accomplish the project objectives. Make sure to include your performance monitoring/data collection plan activity described in the expected measurable outcome section in the work plan. When expected measurable outcomes are monitored outside the grant period, include the performance monitoring plan in the work plan and indicate how monitoring will occur after the grant period ends without Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funding.
- Indicate who will do the work of each activity. If collaborative arrangements or subcontracts are used, make sure you specify their role and responsibilities in performing project activities.
- Include timelines for accomplishing each activity. Make sure to include the month and year the project is scheduled to begin.

The work plan section may be in any format you choose as long as it contains the appropriate information. The following are three examples of work plans:

Example 1

Project Activity	Who	Timeline
Assemble the specialty crop steering committee to provide	Agricultural Marketing Council, specialty crop	January 2008

direction throughout project	industry representatives from the mushroom, apple, and peach councils	
Develop statement of work for literature review	Ag Marketing Council	January
Procure literature reviewer	Ag Marketing Council	January – February
Conduct literature review on the post-harvest nutritional content of specialty crops and report gaps to steering committee	ABC Consultant	February - March
Prioritize research gaps; develop/issue Request for Proposals (RFP) for original research	ABC Consultant	March - April
Receive proposals; distribute to steering committee	ABC Consultant	April - May
Review and select proposals	Specialty crop steering committee	April - May
As appropriate, refer proposals to individual commodity research and promotion programs	Specialty crop steering committee and individual research and promotion programs	April - May
Develop and execute research grant agreements for selected projects	Ag Marketing Council	May - June
Obtain progress reports from researchers; synthesize for steering committee	Ag Marketing Council	September, December, March 2009, June 2009
Disseminate research results to steering committee and SCBGP-FB showing progress toward project outcomes	Ag Marketing Council	June 2009

Example 2

The Nursery and Landscape Association (NLA) will be responsible for implementing a media campaign to promote the Specialty Crop Program. This project will be implemented from November 2008 until May 2010. Following the approval and funding of the project, a marketing committee will be assembled to assist in the development of the media campaign. The NLA will develop a request for proposal (RFP) which will be distributed to advertising and media relations firms serving the State. The RFP will include plans for television and print media, production schedule, information on demographics for targeted audience, and costs associated with production and delivery.

The media campaign will consist of television, radio, and print advertisements. The advertisements will promote the Specialty Crop Program, educate consumers on why they should “Buy Local” when selecting trees, shrubs, and flowers to plant on their properties and encourage consumers to consult with Nursery Certified Professionals when purchasing these plants. The advertisements will be placed in key markets of the state during the spring and summer of 2009 when consumers are most likely to be purchasing plants and plant materials.

The NLA will also be responsible for measuring the expected outcomes of the project. To gauge consumer awareness of the Specialty Crop Program, the NLA will survey consumers in February and March 2009 at its three annual Garden and Patio Shows to measure consumers’ knowledge of the Specialty Crop Program and buying trends. In 2010, consumers will again be surveyed to determine the increase in consumer awareness due to the Specialty Crop Advertising Campaign. In addition, the NLA will survey targeted producers after the advertising campaign to see how many of the selected Specialty Crop Program plants were sold the previous year and how many were sold in the year of the campaign, to judge the residual effectiveness of the campaign. Producers will be surveyed in 2009 and 2010.

Example 3

Project Activity	Who	Timeline
Create a survey to assess growers’ background, current pest control program, and perceptions of IPM	State University Personnel	Begin January 2009 0-4 months
Administer survey to about 200 vegetable growers at an annual local growers meeting	Cooperative Extension Personnel	4 - 5 months
Compile survey results for background info on general practices and attitudes	Cooperative Extension Personnel	5-6 months
Review surveys for likely cooperator candidates	State University Personnel	5 months
Interview and select candidates for one-on-one IPM and biocontrol training and a control group	State University Personnel	6 months
Meet weekly with selected growers at crop initiation (greenhouse)	State University Personnel	4-6 months
Conduct periodic scouting visits during crop growth	Cooperative Extension Personnel	Every 2 months
Meet weekly with selected growers at crop fruition (field)	State University Personnel	10-13 months
Collect data from both grower groups on pest densities, crop damage, crop yield and quality, pesticide usage, pest	State University Personnel	14-15 months

management costs and other pest mgmt. techniques used by growers		
Survey growers completing year one in the IPM program as to attitudes and understanding of IPM techniques	Cooperative Extension Personnel	10 months
Compare survey results to initial survey; assess impact of program outcomes	State University Personnel	10-11 months
Incorporate most successful ideas/ techniques into IPM field guide with scouting procedures, pest life cycle calendars, and cultural controls, reduced-risk pesticides, and biocontrol Cooperative Extension Personnel options for different pests	State University Personnel	10-13 months
Develop/ deliver annual grower workshops to introduce/ improve field guide	Cooperative Extension Personnel	27-36 months

Budget Narrative – See [Appendix D](#) for guidance on preparing the budget narrative.

Project Oversight – The following questions and information should be addressed in this section:

- Who will oversee the project activities?
- How will oversight be performed? Include timelines.
- *State Department of Agriculture Oversight* - Make sure to also describe the State department of agriculture’s oversight practices that provides sufficient knowledge of subgrantee activities to ensure proper and efficient administration. Please include how and when the State Department of Agriculture will oversee the grant activities. This section can be included once in the State Plan to describe all oversight activities associated with all projects. If grant funds will be used by the State department of agriculture to fund an FTE to administrate the program, include the amount and a budget breakdown for this amount. Also, include the administrative project on the SF-424A.

Example

The Director of Marketing and Development, John Doe, will work directly with the individuals identified as representing each partnering entity. Mr. Doe will coordinate the execution of cooperative agreements with each participating entity and monitor progress throughout the year long grant period. He will contact the principals of each project by phone at least once during each quarter to determine if the projects are on-track.

Project Commitment – Provide the following information in this section:

- Who supports this project?
- How will a grant partners work toward the goals and outcomes of the project?

Multi-state Projects – Provide the following information in this section:

- Describe how the States are going to collaborate effectively.
- Each state participating in the project should submit the project in their State plan.
- Indicate the State taking the coordinating role (State will be responsible for performance reporting).
- Indicate the percent of the budget covered by each State.

Example

Grant request:	\$50,000
State A portion	\$30,000
State B portion	\$20,000

State A and State B will work together on the project through our 10 member board of directors. The board has members and associates serving on committees including research, advertising and promotions, market development, State A’s legislation, State B’s legislation, transportation, water and long range planning.

This project has the full support of both the State A and State B Departments of Agriculture. State A will take the coordinating role in monitoring the progress of this project.