



USWBSI's FY09 Request for Project Pre-Proposals



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Pre-Proposal Preparation and Submission, Award Notification

Updated: 7/22/08

(FAQ also addresses common mistakes made during both the preparation and submission of pre-proposals)

A

Award Notifications

When will I know the funding outcome of my submitted pre-proposal(s)?

Award Notifications are normally distributed in January. Notifications are sent directly to the Principal Investigator (PI). The notification will include the USWBSI's funding recommendation for all pre-proposals submitted by the PI.

C

Collaborative Projects (Individual RA and MGMT Coordinated Projects)

Individual budget requests for collaborating PIs.

Individual budget justification forms from all collaborating PIs, along with a combined budget worksheet (Excel file converted to PDF), should be included in the submitted collaborative Pre-Proposal (Individual RA or MGMT Coordinated Project).

Common mistakes made during preparation and submission of pre-proposals.

Budget Page – Intent to attend Forum not indicated (Travel section (F) of Budget Page).

PI must indicate his/her intention to attend the USWBSI's Forum to be held during the Award Year by checking either 'Yes' or 'No' in Section F.

Budget Page – Indirect Cost Rate (IDC) rate not entered into Section J.

PI must enter IDC rate in designated area in Section J.

Cover Page – no designation of Research Area(s) (Box 15 for MGMT Coordinated Projects, Box 16 for Individual Research Areas).

PI must designate one research area for which the submitted pre-proposal best fits.

Cover Page – all currently funded USWBSI projects not listed in Box 13 (Individual Research Areas Pre-Proposals only).

PI should list all currently (FY08) funded USWBSI research projects regardless of their relationship to the submitted pre-proposal.

Collaborative Arrangements - letters of intent missing from pre-proposals.

If the proposed work involves collaborative arrangements, letters of intent from collaborators must be included with the submitted pre-proposals. The letter of intent must include specific details describing the services the collaborator will provide.

Improper use of ‘Bold’ formatting.

Bold formatting should only be used for section headings (within Project Description) or used minimally to emphasize importance or significance. Conformance to the format requirements will be strictly enforced.

Project Description – text exceeds page limit (5 pages), and/or entire Project Description (text and tables/graphics) exceeds 10 pages.

The page limit for the Project Description is 10 pages total (up to five pages for text plus additional pages for graphics i.e. tables, images, graphs). When graphics or tables are inserted throughout the text rather than at the end of the Project Description, PIs sometimes exceed the text limitation (five full pages). The total amount of text in the Project Description can be less than five pages, but it can not total more than five pages (even if graphics are included throughout text). The Project Description includes the following sections: Title, Introduction, Rationale and Significance, Research Methods and Materials (includes expected results).

Vitae and Publication List - exceeds maximum page limit per scientist.

A limit of four-pages is allowed for both (i.e. combined) the Vitae and Publication List of each individual listed in Section 10 on the Cover Page.

Confidentiality

How is my submitted pre-proposal handled so that confidentiality is maintained?

Pre-proposals submitted to the USWBSI are treated as confidential documents. Pre-proposals are only viewed by the administrative staff of the Networking & Facilitation Office (responsible party for processing, and facilitating the review of pre-proposals), and Reviewers (USWBSI Executive Committee (EC) and responsible Research Area Committee (RAC)). The Reviewers are instructed prior to their review that the content of all pre-proposals are confidential and thus should be handled accordingly. The NFO securely stores original pre-proposals for at least two years.

Current and Pending Support

Who should submit a Current and Pending Support Page?

A separate Current and Pending Support page should be included in the submitted pre-proposal for each individual listed on the 'Cover Page' under Box 10 (i.e. PI and all Co-PIs).

What is the difference between the two columns with subheadings "Total \$ amount" and "PI Allocation."

Grant awards may be divided among Investigators (PI and CO-PI), whereby the Total amount of the award may be different then the amount allocated each investigator (including PI). These columns should be used to indicate this type of scenario.

D

Deadlines

Where can I find important deadlines?

Please see page 5 (following Introduction) of the RFP for deadlines.

Deviation Authorization

What is the process for requesting authorization of a deviation from the FY09 RFP Pre-proposal preparation instructions?

The NFO must authorize any deviations from FY09 RFP instructions in advance of pre-proposal submission. Deviations may be authorized by receiving written approval from the NFO Director (dvs@email.uky.edu) or Manager (scabusa@scabusa.org). Requests for deviation of guidelines should be submitted in writing via e-mail to either the Director or the Manager of the NFO (e-mail address' above) prior to submission of the pre-proposal.

E

Electronic Pre-Proposal Submission (EPS) System

Can I submit my pre-proposal electronically?

All pre-proposals (individual research area and final MGMT Coordinated Projects) will be submitted using the EPS system.

Can I change the title of my pre-proposal after I have completed the Pre-Registration step of the EPS Process?

In short, yes. The title provided during the Pre-Registration simply acts as a 'placeholder' for the PI's pre-proposal within the EPS system.

F

Funding

How is approved funding handled on a Collaborative Project?

If you are part of a collaborative project, and your proposed project is approved for funding, the funding will come in the form of a direct agreement from USDA-ARS to you and your institution.

What is the USWBSI's funding cycle?

The USWBSI began moving toward a two-year budget cycle last year with the new commodity-based and VDHR Coordinated Projects (CP). These coordinated projects will not submit pre-proposals until FY2010.

The FY09 Request for Pre-proposals will begin a new two-year cycle for the following Research Areas:

- 1) FHB Management (Coordinated Projects and individual pre-proposals);
- 2) Food Safety, Toxicology and Utilization of Mycotoxin-contaminated Grain;
- 3) Gene Discovery and Engineering Resistance; and
- 4) Pathogen Biology and Genetics.

Therefore, all submitted FY09 pre-proposals should be based on two-year proposed research (i.e. project description, budget request).

I

Indirect Cost Rate

What is the Indirect Cost Rate (IDC) for pre-proposals submitted to the USWBSI?

The USWBSI's review process focuses on the **competitiveness of total project costs** (direct and indirect). Fusarium head blight is a severe problem for the U.S. wheat and barley industries, and the USWBSI's resources are limited. Therefore, institutions are advised to limit indirect costs to 5%; in no case are indirect cost rates to exceed 10%.

L

Letter of Intent (LOI) for a Coordinated Project

Where should I send my Letter of Intent for a Coordinated Project?

Letters of Intent should be sent (can be sent electronically via e-mail) to the designated contact of the Coordinated Project, as the Networking & Facilitation Office.

P

Pre-Proposal Sections

Cover Page – Do I need to complete all sections (i.e. boxes)?

Sections (i.e. boxes) 1 through 16 must be completed with the exception of Section 13 (Individual Research Area Pre-Proposals). This section applies only to those PIs who received funding from the USWBSI in FY08.

‘Summary of Progress for Ongoing Related Projects’ - What information should be included in this section?

The 'Summary of Progress for Ongoing Related Projects' applies to progress the PI has made during the current year of funding (i.e. what has been accomplished since the FY08 funding was received). The FY07 Final Performance Reports cover the entire grant year for FY07 which ended in April (approx.). Note that this is a summary and is limited to one page. Detailed data should be included in the 'Introduction' and/or 'Research Methods'.

What information should be included in the "References to Project Description" section of the proposal?

Reference information is required. Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal/book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. If the document is available electronically, the Website address also should be identified. PIs must be especially careful to follow accepted scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials relied upon when preparing any section of the proposal.

While there is no established page limitation for the references, this section must include bibliographic citations only, and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the project description.

R

Returns

For what reasons does the USWBSI/NFO return a pre-proposal?

Pre-proposals may not be considered by the USWBSI for the following reasons. The pre-proposal:

1. does not meet USWBSI pre-proposal preparation requirements, such as page limitations, or formatting instructions as specified in the FY09 RFP Guidelines; or
2. does not meet an announced pre-proposal deadline date (and time, where specified).

S

Signatures

Are Authorized Organizational Representative's signatures (electronic or otherwise) required on pre-proposals?

No. The USWBSI does not require signatures by the Authorized Organizational Representatives (AORs) on pre-proposals, therefore AORs will not be granted access to the EPS system.

T

Tuition Remission

Can tuition remission costs for graduate students be included in the proposed budget?

Tuition remission is **permitted** under USDA-ARS **extramural agreements** with any type of recipient organization (i.e. universities). Funding awarded to PIs (only those not affiliated with USDA-ARS) who submitted pre-proposals to the USWBSI comes in the form of Extramural Agreements. If tuition remission is budgeted as a direct cost, it should be included in the "Other Direct Costs" category of the Budget Page (Section H).