

U.S. Forest Service National Agroforestry Center Fiscal Year 2019 Request for Proposals & Instructions

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

A. Background

The U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) requests proposals to substantially expand and accelerate the availability of science-based information to inform landowner decisions on the adoption and design of agroforestry systems. Agroforestry is the intentional integration of trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming systems to create environmental, economic, and social benefits.

The agreements awarded under this announcement will support the USDA goal to strengthen the stewardship of private lands through technology and research, and the need of natural resource professionals for information that supports landowner adoption of agroforestry. This Request for Proposals supports the efforts of the National Agroforestry Center as identified in Section 8502 of the 2018 Farm Bill.

B. Dates

The application deadline is July 15, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. eastern daylight time (see [Section III, Part C](#)). Please note that there will be no additional extensions, even if the government is closed.

C. For More Information

Please direct all questions regarding this announcement to: Richard Straight (richard.straight@usda.gov); or Kate MacFarland (katherine.macfarland@usda.gov)

D. Available Funding

The Forest Service plans to award up to \$85,000 under this announcement, with a general limit of \$45,000 to any one recipient.

E. Goals

The Forest Service seeks proposals to create regionally-applicable and practice-specific agroforestry educational materials. These materials will support natural resource professionals in assisting landowners and producers at different levels of interest and commitment towards implementing an agroforestry practice. More specifically, proposals will produce a suite of science-based technology transfer materials on alley cropping, forest farming (multi-story cropping), or silvopasture that are applicable to a specific multi-state or multi-territory region of the United States. Pacific Islands and Caribbean Islands are included.

This Request for Proposals focuses on the USDA National Agroforestry Center goals:

1. Increase the understanding and adoption of agroforestry
2. Provide educational materials and training on agroforestry
3. Develop technologies and tools in support of agroforestry

F. Intent and Examples

The intent of this opportunity is to expand the resources available on the NAC web site. These new resources are to be regionally-specific and relevant to the practices of alley cropping, forest farming (multi-story cropping), or silvopasture. The expectation is an assembly of publications, videos, and economic information based on landowner/producer experience and operations. Examples of landowners and producers practicing agroforestry can be a helpful motivator for others.

Materials developed for this project will be distributed in a digital format on the NAC website and will include NAC's name and website, the USDA logo, and other information to help connect users of these resources to NAC. These resources should be new materials developed for this project that fill gaps where regionally-specific information about this practice does not yet exist or is not publically accessible. As required by law, all materials should be in compliance with Section 508 accessibility standards.

Project proposals must include the following elements:

- Five to seven producer case studies that focus on the agroforestry practice and region specified in the proposal. These will include basic information about the operation (farm and producer name, location, years in operation, farm size, details about the agroforestry practice (size, species, etc.), USDA or other technical or assistance received, market outlets, future plans), as well as photos. The 1-2 page case studies should be designed in an attractive PDF format that can be shared for educational uses. High quality photo files will also be supplied to NAC; photos provided will have signed USDA photo release forms from the photographer, producer and/or people pictured in the photos.
- Producer testimonial videos. The project should produce four to six short videos (approximately 3-5 minutes each) that feature producers from the region specified in the proposal explaining how and why they use the specified agroforestry practice. The final product should be in a format that is usable across various mediums and platforms. It should conform to industry standards and best practices. Videos will have signed USDA release forms from the videographer, producer and/or people pictured in the videos.
- Agroforestry scenarios. A set of two to four very specific agroforestry scenarios that are known to be economically and agronomically viable in the region. The intent of these scenarios is not to describe a case study of a particular operation, but instead to provide potential producers with a detailed description of a sample production system. A scenario should recommend a specific combination of trees, crops, and/or forage and livestock. A scenario should also include site conditions; spacing, management activities, yields, markets, price information, seasonal workflow, and/or value-added opportunities. Because agroforestry practices change over time from establishment to a mature enterprise, description of what a producer can expect over time should be included. This information should be drawn from project team's experience and existing on-farm operations, not research sites. These descriptions must be presented in a format that is easily accessible by natural resource professionals and include educational materials that can be provided to landowners. This format should be described in detail in the proposal (media, length, etc.).

Project proposals may include the following optional elements:

- Enterprise budgets for identified agroforestry scenarios. If detailed cost and yield information is available for the chosen agroforestry scenarios, the project could create one or more enterprise budgets that provide this information in an easy to use format. This format (excel, webform, other) should be described in the proposal.
- Educational videos. Building on the success of previous videos published through the eXtension Forest Farming Community of Practice, the project could produce short videos (approximately 3-5 minutes each) that feature “how to” information about chosen agroforestry practice in the specific region. The final product should be in a format that is usable across various mediums and platforms. It should conform to industry standards and best practices. Videos will have signed USDA release forms from the videographer, producer, and/or people pictured in the videos.
- Other creative ideas for meeting project goals. These other approaches and how they meet project goals should be described in detail in the proposal.

G. Preferences

Preference will be given to proposals that:

- Include a range of farm sizes
- Include case studies from multiple states.
- Include participation by Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers and/or materials are targeted for use by Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers.

Note:

1. Basic research, equipment purchases, and construction will NOT be considered.
2. Expenses for self-marketing and self-promotion are not an eligible expense (company brochures, company business cards, company display materials, etc.).

H. Award Information

This will be an award of Federal Financial Assistance, and as such the regulations at 2 CFR 200 apply. The Forest Service plans to award up to \$85,000 under this announcement. The maximum for an award is anticipated to be \$45,000; however, the Forest Service may consider awarding more to a proposal that shows significant impact. All awards are based on availability of funding.

Awards under this announcement will be concluded by August 1, 2021. The Forest Service will notify a recipient if their proposal is selected for an award and indicate whether any additional forms or information is required and an estimate of when the recipient may proceed. The Federal government will incur no legal obligation until appropriated funds are available and a Forest Service Grant Officer returns a fully executed award letter to a successful applicant.

If your proposal is selected for an award, 10 percent of the Federal funds may be held by the administrator until final reporting is completed and approved.

Note: *An award to a for-profit entity will generate an Internal Revenue Service (IRS)*

Form 1099 Miscellaneous Income that will be filed with the IRS and provided to the awardee. The Forest Service expresses no opinion on the taxability, if any, of the awarded grant funds.

II. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are for-profit entities; State, local, and Tribal governments; not-for-profit organizations; institutions of higher education.

B. Cost Sharing/Matching

Applicants must match the Forest Service requested funds, 1:1. For every \$1 of Federal funding requested, applicants must provide at least \$1 in match. For example, if the requested Federal amount is \$45,000, the applicant match must be at least \$45,000. The applicant's match must come from non-Federal sources. The match may include cash or in-kind contributions. All matching funds must be directly related to the proposed project. Please note: *Applicants must submit letters of support from any third-party organizations confirming the amount of cash or in-kind services to be provided.*

The match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to match provisions in Federal regulations. For information about Federal cost principles and related topics, go to 2 CFR 200 at the [Government Publishing Office Web site](#).

Applicants should use this [budget detail worksheet](#) as a guide to determine project costs.

Additional funds can be shown as leverage, but letters of financial commitment are not required.

Applicants should list all other funds (Federal, State, private) received for this project within the last 3 years (include agency, program name, and dollar amount).

III. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. SAM Registration

Prior to submitting a proposal, the applicant must be registered at www.sam.gov.

B. Application Package

This announcement contains all instructions to complete an application package and includes Web links to required financial forms. In addition, this information and related Web links can be viewed and downloaded by visiting the [USDA National Agroforestry Center home page](#).

C. Content and Form of Application Submission

The proposal package must include all of the materials listed below. Requirements for the application include:

- a. Submit all parts of the application at one time, including letters of support and appendices. Separate letters of support, appendices, etc., will not be accepted.
- b. E-mail submittal only (July 15, 2019, 5:00 p.m. eastern daylight time). No proposals will be accepted by fax machine or hard copy.

- c. Each submittal must consist of two separate PDF (or Word) files, as follows:
 - 1. Part 1: Cooperator Contact Information, Narrative, and any appendices, preferably in a searchable PDF
 - 2. Part 2: Required Financial Forms
- 1. Project Application, Part 1: Cooperator Contact Information and Narrative, including Appendices
 - a. Formatted to print on 8½- by 11-inch plain paper with 1-inch margins.
 - b. 11-point font (Arial, Calibri) or larger.
 - c. Page numbers.
 - d. Each “page” of the application is one side of a single-spaced, typed page.
 - e. A maximum of **five pages** per proposal for Part 1 of the Application, not including the Cooperator Contact Information page or appendices:
 - 1. Basic Project Information
 - 2. Project Goals and Objectives
 - 3. Project Description
 - 4. Qualifications of Team and Partners
 - 5. Budget Summary and Justification in Support of SF–424A

Documentation exceeding the maximum five-page limit will not be considered.

- f. Appendices should be well organized with an index so reviewers can readily find information of interest. Include only relevant information in the appendices that will help the review panel better understand and evaluate your project. Below are examples of information that can be included in the appendices:
 - 1. Letters of support from partners, individuals, or organizations, especially those playing a key role or providing matching funds. Letters of support should display the degree of collaboration occurring between the different entities engaged in the project. *Applicants must submit letters of support from third-party organizations confirming the amount of cash or in-kind services to be provided, up to the minimum required match.*
 - 2. List of all other funds (Federal, State, private) received for this project within the last 3 years (include agency, program name, and dollar amount).
 - 3. Curricula vitae for team members.
- 2. Project Application, Part 2: Required Financial Forms [all]

The following forms need to be completed and submitted with your proposal. Forms a-f below are all on the same [Grants.gov website](https://www.grants.gov). Search the “Form Name” column for the appropriate form.

- a. SF–424: Application for Federal Assistance
- b. SF–424A: Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- c. SF–424B: Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (unless certified in SAM

registration)

- d. USDA AD–1047: Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension
- e. USDA AD–1049: Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace (or USDA AD–1052 for States and State agencies)
- f. USDA AD–3030: Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporation Applicants
- g. [FS–1500–35: Certificate Regarding Lobbying Activities](#)
- h. [FS–1500–22: Financial Capability Questionnaire](#)

D. Submission Date and Time

Applications must be **received** electronically at the e-mail address for Rich Straight (richard.straight@usda.gov) *5:00 p.m. eastern daylight time* on July 15, 2019. NO EXCEPTIONS. No proposals will be accepted by fax or hard copy.

Incomplete proposals and those received past the official deadline will not be accepted. If any part of the application is missing, the proposal will not be accepted.

E. Funding Restrictions

To develop an application and budget consistent with Forest Service grants and agreements requirements, use [these guidelines](#).

F. Confidentiality

Materials submitted to the Forest Service, such as grant applications and progress reports, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Upon request, the Forest Service may be obligated to disclose such records. However, documents or portions of documents will be protected if they satisfy the requirements of one or more FOIA exemptions. FOIA Exemption 4 protects commercial and financial information that constitutes a trade secret, or whose release would cause competitive harm to the organization that provided the information. FOIA Exemption 6 protects information whose release “would reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.”

In the event that the Forest Service receives a FOIA request seeking information provided by your organization, we are required by Executive Order 12600 to consult with you regarding the potential release of this information. When assembling your application, you may wish to highlight any information that constitutes a trade secret, whose release would cause you competitive harm, or whose release would impact personal privacy. For more information about the FOIA and its exemptions, please consult the Department of Justice [Guide to the Freedom of Information Act](#).

IV. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign points to each proposal based on its ability to meet the following criteria. Each proposal can earn a maximum of 100 total points.

1. Project Goals and Objectives (10 points total)
 - a. Alignment with goals of the USDA National Agroforestry Center (5 points)

- b. Alignment with preferences and the intent of the USDA National Agroforestry Center Funding Opportunity (5 points)
- 2. Project Description (40 points total)
 - a. Clear and reasonable deliverables and outcomes given funds requested (30 points)
 - b. Creativity and use of appropriate technology (10 points)
- 3. Project Impact (35 points total)
 - a. The selected agroforestry practice is well suited to the selected region and the proposal meets the outreach and education needs (15 points)
 - b. Breadth of audience targeted resources, from general awareness to more technical in nature (15 points)
 - c. Leveraged activities and actions and/or leveraged funds above the minimum required match that maximize proposed project benefits (5 points)
- 4. Qualifications of Staff, Organization, and Partners (15 points)
 - a. Team member(s) qualifications and past performance (15 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be evaluated against the criteria listed in [Section IV, Part A](#). All applications will be screened to ensure compliance with the administrative requirements as set forth in this Request for Proposals. **Applications that do not follow the directions for submission or incomplete applications will be disqualified without appeal.**

A panel of Federal experts or their designees will perform a thorough technical review of eligible proposals and evaluate the proposals according to the criteria outlined in this announcement. Reviewers independently evaluate each proposal for merit and assign a score using the criteria listed in [Section IV, Part A](#). In addition, the Forest Service may consider performance and status of previous or ongoing Federal grants and awards in making awards under this program and authority.

C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Date

June 1: Issuance of Request for Proposals

July 15: Proposal submission deadline

August 15: Approximate date for award announcement

September 1: Approximate date of award

V. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

It is expected that applicants will be notified about funding decisions on or around **August 15, 2019**, by e-mail. Successful applicants will receive notification from the appropriate Forest Service Grants and Agreements Office.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements Financial Checklist

If your proposal is selected for funding, this checklist will help in its smooth processing.

1. Register in the System for Award Management (formerly Central Contracting Registration).

If you are not currently registered or are unsure of your current expiration date, please go to www.sam.gov. This process can take time; please ensure your registration is up to date, if awarded.

2. Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) Number

Do you have a DUNS number that identifies your organization as listed on your application, or do you "share" this number with other parts of a larger organization? Do you have more than one DUNS number? If so, please use the DUNS number that matches the Employer Identification Number (EIN) assigned by the IRS.

3. Employer Identification Number (EIN)

Do you have an EIN that is specifically assigned to your organization, or do you "share" this number with other parts of a larger organization? Do you have more than one EIN? If so, please provide the one EIN that matches the IRS letter required in Part 1 of this section showing your current not-for-profit or for-profit tax status.

4. Indirect Costs

- a. Do you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with your cognizant agency if you intend to show indirect costs for reimbursement with Federal funds or as a component of your match? If not, you can use the de minimis rate of 10% and avoid the negotiation process.
- b. For university applications, indirect costs should be at the **non-research rate** (if one is assigned). This grant does not support basic research.

C. Reporting

1. Semi-Annual Progress Reports

Semi-Annual Progress Reports are required on a six month basis from the date of award. The reports provide an overview of accomplishments of the goals and objectives listed in the approved project narrative, including draft versions of resources for review by NAC staff.

2. Semi-Annual Financial Report

Federal Financial Reports ([SF-425](#)) are required. Specific requirements will be provided in the official Award letter if your proposal is selected for funding.

3. Review of Materials

- a. One month before the conclusion of the agreement, materials will be reviewed by NAC for content consistent with USDA programs and policies. Final changes

requested by NAC will be made by the project team.

- b. One month before the conclusion of the agreement, materials will be reviewed by NAC to ensure they meet the standards and specifications outlined in the agreement and NAC needs for outreach and education.

4. Final Progress Reports

A detailed Final Progress Report is required. The Final Progress Report includes the following items:

- a. Final Summary Report – A brief overview of resources created included in the approved agreement. This should include a description of publications, videos, tools, etc.
- b. Final Accomplishment Report – A detailed report that includes a project overview; goals and objectives; methodology; results; discussion; findings; recommendations; and photo release forms for all images. This report can include lessons learned to be considered for similar future projects.

5. Required Statements on All Documents, Publications, Audiovisual Material, and Electronic Media

The following statements need to be included on all documents, publications, audiovisual material, electronic media, and related informational pieces for public distribution that result from projects funded by this National Agroforestry Center Funding Opportunity:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

If the material is too small to permit the full statement to be included, the material

must, at minimum, include the following statement, in print size no smaller than the text: *"This institution is an equal opportunity provider."*

6. Communication About Publicity

Communication about media events or activities generated by the award should be provided to the National Agroforestry Center *in advance of the event or media release* and also be included in the Annual Progress Report. This ongoing communication about media activity will enable the Forest Service to raise the visibility of the work completed from this award.

D. Agency Contacts

For questions regarding this Request for Proposals or administrative regulations, contact Richard Straight (richard.straight@usda.gov; or Kate MacFarland (katherine.macfarland@usda.gov)