

SAMPLE NARRATIVE

Request For Applications (RFA): Research and Implementation Partnerships for Risk Management Development

This sample narrative may be used for additional guidance in the preparation of an application in response to the *Federal Register* announcement for research partnerships that was released July 1, 2002. **This sample narrative does not address all relevant requirements of the RFA and should only be used as supplemental guidance.** Complete requirements can only be found in the RFA.

The narrative portion of your application provides you with the opportunity to describe your project in detail to the review panel. The project you describe in the narrative must be designed to help us, the Risk management Agency (RMA), accomplish the goals and objectives listed in the RFA. In the narrative, you will describe your plan to meet the objectives of the Request for Applications. A well-crafted narrative is important because:

- It will assist the review panel in understanding the merits of your project.
- It will be the basis for a "Statement or Description of Work" section of a partnership agreement with RMA, if your project receives funding, and
- It will help any partners you are working with understand their specific roles in the project.

We have instructed the review panel members to examine each application with respect to the objectives established in the *Federal Register* notice. To that end, we have asked the panel to disregard information in the narratives that does not directly contribute to an assessment of the application against the evaluation criteria. Therefore, providing extraneous commentary in a narrative will not benefit an applicant.

The only requirement for a narrative is that it be limited to ten single-sided pages, not including a title page that includes a brief 1-2 paragraph Executive Summary of your project proposal and any information that will help us in contacting you. No set format for the narrative is required. However, it would help us if you provide a title page. We strongly suggest that you number each page of the proposal. You may also include an e-mail address that will help us in notifying you quickly when we receive your application. ***If you elect to include a title page for the narrative, it will NOT count as one of the ten narrative pages.***

The review panel will want to be able to match the information you provide in the narrative of your application with the evaluation criteria listed in *Federal Register* notice. Therefore, we suggest that your narrative consists of four sections - one for each of the four criteria: Research Objectives; RMA Involvement and Non-Financial Benefits; Research Approach and Methodology; and Management. The following are suggestions for each of these sections to assist you:

- **Research Objectives.** In this section you can describe how the proposed research project meets the goals of partnerships as defined in section 522 (d)(3)(A) through (E) and (G) of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 (ARPA). (This RFA specifically excludes section 522(d)(3)(F), which was a separate RFA.) In preparing this section it would be useful to refer to the specific project objectives for partnerships as described in the *Federal Register* notice (Part I.C.) Applications that do not address at least one of the project objectives as specified in the *Federal Register* notice will be disqualified.

- **RMA Involvement and Non-Financial Benefits.**

In this section you may describe the areas of **substantial involvement of RMA** (required for all partnerships). Some examples of substantial involvement of RMA could include providing technical assistance, analytical assistance, and materials or data. RMA could also provide relevant feedback and evaluation.

Also, you could describe the **non-financial benefits** from the partnership that extend beyond the financial benefits of the research proposal. For example, a non-financial benefit for an educational institution may be the provision of research opportunities to students and enhancing community involvement of the institution.

Another example of non-financial benefits may include language such as: “...given the regional focus of this study this research is consistent with the institution’s/entity’s regional mission, helping and improving the state’s agriculture. The institution/entity will also benefit from the funding of meaningful research work employing the primary researcher, the research assistant and several graduate students.”

- **Research Approach and Methodology.** In this section you may describe the research methodology to be used and how your approach to the proposed research is unique or innovative. You might want to include items such as the purpose of the research, pertinent background material, the statement or description of the work to be performed, technical approach, and a proposed project timetable. You might also want to include a table summarizing the tasks and milestones along with your responsibilities, RMA's responsibilities, and a timetable for the project.
- **Management Section.** In this section you can introduce yourself to the review panel as the project leader along with the organization you represent and the specific research program goal you are trying to accomplish through this project. If you have assembled a project team, you might introduce the team members and briefly describe their experience. You may include as an appendix, a short resume from key project personnel. Indicate any subcontracting arrangements, identifying the parties and the extent of their involvement.

Please be sure the proposal clearly demonstrates that the applicant has the ability and the resources to coordinate and manage the proposed research and development project. You may include quality assurance plans developed for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the various aspects of the project to ensure that standards of quality are met.